

Handbook of Research on

Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies



Víctor Hernández-Santaolalla and Mónica Barrientos-Bueno



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Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies

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The establishment of mobile media and the development of Web 2.0, in parallel to the current omnipresence of user interfaces and the multiscreen landscapes, have led to the consolidation of changes in all spheres of life. Subsequently, and due to the hybridization and remediation processes inherent to the digital environment, the more conventional media have been considerably affected by these transformations in the media ecosystem. Accordingly, this chapter examines the influences and formal loans in film and television language by analyzing the aesthetic transfers occurring in fiction and non-fiction.

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The second screen has become a new resource for accessing information in addition to what you can see on television. This allows for an enhanced viewing experience through the generation of new services, apps, and changes in the production of content. Sporting events, especially large ones that are broadcast live, have especially developed this innovation. This chapter examines the distinctive features that the second screen contributes to televised sporting events, considering the type of production as well as the effects that are generated in the reception of the content and the alteration to the way the treatment the audiovisual content may receive. To achieve this, real cases from the Spanish context are studied, such as two major cycling events: La Vuelta 2017 (rtve.es) and the Tour de France 2019 (rtve.es and Eurosport Player App).

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In the past, there was always a clear delineation between fiction and the news or fiction and documentary film. Today, however, elements of crossover and hybridization it can be observed in most formats: reality and fiction, public and private, are intermingled. Life itself seeps into fictional accounts, approaching the eternal comedy. Digital formats permit the multiplication of stories and the democratisation of productions. They create a true amalgam of new and old hybrid products, such that comedy also infuses the non-fiction content. Social change is convincingly reflected in the stories that each collective elaborates and consumes. Today, without question, audiovisual stories offer a clear, in-depth analysis of all the social transformations in which we currently find ourselves immersed, therefore this chapter offers an exploration of the novel formats that are extended into the stories that are told on television and on the internet.

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Ángeles Martínez-García, University of Seville, Spain

Hulu knew what they were doing when they bet on the underlying story of *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017-), which manifests the importance of storytelling in the creation of modern myths. The series directly appeals to the human need for identity, belonging, and redemption. Based on Margaret Atwood's novel of the same name, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a depiction of a dystopian society, characterised by an absence of rights and freedoms. It has become a chilling political commentary focusing attention on the control of women's fertility, the objectification of women, religious fanaticism, women's roles in the persecution of other women in a patriarchal system, the persecution of homosexuality, and hyper-vigilance.

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This chapter analyses the transmedia strategy followed by the creators of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-13). This web series uses different platforms to recreate the plot of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, the usage of these platforms encourages fan participation and engages the audience. In order to explore the employment of transmedia, different approaches are applied to understand the construction of the series and the role of the audience. Furthermore, different transmedia strategies to plan the story are also considered. This analysis is particularly relevant because it shows how transmedia can be employed to adapt a classic novel for a digital generation, and how the audience becomes part of the story itself.

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Milagros Expósito Barea, University of Seville, Spain

Primitive is a multi-screen video installation created by the independent filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul. The multi-platform project presents strong ties to Thai culture and consists of a video installation with simultaneous interrelated screens, two short films, a book of art that includes a series of photographs, a journal, a draft text, and its final product, one of his most recognized films, *Uncle*

Boonmee, *Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010), which was awarded the Palme D'Or at the Cannes film festival. The project aims to convey a unified idea and achieves this through stimulating the spectator in various formats. Apichatpong's films use non-conventional narrative structures which explore the juxtapositions between man and nature; rural life and city life; and personal memories alongside political ones. The film maker creates his own universe, which is a recurring theme throughout his filmography. Primitive is destined to be experienced as a dream of "reincarnation and transformation."

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Miguel Ángel Pérez-Gómez, University of Seville, Spain

In 1996, with the advent of video game franchises like *Pokemon* (Game Freak, 1996-), the concept of media mix (originally a Japanese concept that refers to the communicative strategies in which media content is spread across multiple platforms) began to take off. However, media mix is not exclusively limited to Japanese productions. In 2009, Novarama, in collaboration with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, launched the Spanish Augmented Reality video game *Invizimals*. A decade later, this universe has notably expanded across different platforms, evolving considerably from its original format: but falling short of integrating the entire universe. In this chapter, we examine hybridation between transmedia strategies and media mix through the *Invizimals* universe to demonstrate how the franchise has expanded a decade later to the point where it has consolidated its own strategic model for developing content.

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Luis Navarrete-Cardero, University of Seville, Spain

The poetic processes that underlie the production of narrative and literary works, film or television screenplays are adapted to transtextual and intertextual logic, which facilitates the transition of the text from its sense to its meaning. All narrative production generates its own sense in the act of linear reading by the reader and/or the spectator. However, the access to the sphere of meaning can only be found in the within the whole of the relationships that a given work maintains with other works that are absent. From this point of view, we propose to apply the logic of the poetics of sense and meaning to the realm of the videogame. Our goal is to prove that such a logic may exist. Yet, videogames have certain rules which regulate their lending and borrowing, thus a legal framework replaces a discursive influence.

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Juan J. Vargas-Iglesias, University of Seville, Spain

Since the end of the twentieth century, game studies have concentrated on epistemological positions seemingly unable to make significant distinctions between traditional games and video games. This approach has hindered the development of a post-modern ontology for decades, in a medium—video games—that is decidedly postmodern. This chapter proposes going beyond the mechanistic notion of considering observable reality as a combination of a determined state of things, which is a prevalent feature in today's game studies. To achieve this, the author argues from the Deleuzian notion of the "event." When referring to the concept of the "ideal game," as proposed by Deleuze, is intended to enunciate an epistemology that describes the implicit potentialities of digital media in general. The application of the epistemology would comprise memetic and viral statements, generative aesthetics and the forms of video games themselves.

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Symbolic consumption is defined as a process by which people use symbols—products and brands—to construct and communicate ideas about themselves; to transmit identity on the social stage. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the phenomenon of fashion influencers for a deeper understanding of the concept of symbolic consumption; a phenomenon that has not received the attention it deserves. Fashion influencers share their outfits, purchases and ideas online and they inspire other people to imitate the way they dress and therefore drive the way their followers consume. Influencers participate in symbolic consumption because they select brands that coincide with the images they have of themselves or that they wish to convey to their followers. Fashion influencers offer themselves as sources of inspiration for followers who aspire to be like them by buying and consuming the same brands and products. To support our thesis, we rely on a case study of Chiara Ferragni, who won the number one place on the Forbes list of fashion influencers.

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When referring to the cultural industry, it can be said that literature is a product like any other, a product that can be sold. As such, publishing companies seek to make their products profitable. In order to sell books, physical books or e-books, publishing companies resort to marketing them as if they were any other product. The same concepts used to sell a car are used to sell a book, although the strategy and tactic does not have to be the same. In the continuous change and evolution that society undergoes, promotion techniques and, in particular, those related to literature, must be updated in order to overcome market fluctuations, changes in consumer behaviour and, in this same line, adapt to technologies. In this sense, marketing does not usually make distinctions in the type of products or services when selling them, treating them all as goods or services that can be sold and, therefore, applying the strategies of the four variables of the marketing mix.

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Marta Pulido Polo, University of Seville, Spain

Public relations describe strategic processes of relationship management that organizations that seek excellence promote with their stakeholders. The purpose of these processes is to generate and maintain a dialogic communication system through which to generate a climate of reciprocity based on the search for common interests, agreements, and expectations. Under this approach, this chapter analyzes

the figure of the influencer as a new category of emerging stakeholder, an opinion leader 2.0 capable of generating a state of opinion in the digital community that transcends the general traditional public opinion, surpassing the traditional model two-step flow of communication.

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Lux Radio Theatre was a radio program that remained on the air in the United States of America for more than twenty years (1934-1955). It aired radio plays which were adaptations of hit movies. Dozens of Hollywood movie stars were involved in the program, which was created by an advertiser and its agency, at the service of a sole product: Lux toilet soap. This chapter provides a discussion about the complex and costly, in terms of production, mode of advertising that were these radio plays, a unique encounter between Hollywood and advertising.

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<i>Jani Pavlič, University of Maribor, Slovenia</i>	
<i>Tina Tomažič, University of Maribor, Slovenia</i>	

This chapter focuses on 360 ° video in the context of product placement. At the beginning, a description of advertising related to profitability as an important factor for organizations' success is given, and the need is exposed for effective advertising approaches. This is followed by a description of 360° video, including all relevant theoretical concepts. The latter serves for placing the modality of the medium between traditional video and virtual reality. The following section focuses on the essential aspects of product placement characteristics for studying in terms of 360° video. Finally, the topics are linked by examining the correlation between concepts and analyzing existing videos across certain platforms intended for immersive story-telling. 360° video is identified as an immersive medium with potential for the inclusion of product placement. At the end, there is a discussion including theoretical implications, future directions, and limitations are exposed, and a conclusion is reached.

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<i>Blanca Miguélez Juan, University of the Basque Country, Spain</i>	

Branded content is an advertising format that integrates brand equity with content of interest that engages the audience, and it does so in a natural, emotional, and non-intrusive way. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of branded content versus conventional advertising on young audiences by using neuromarketing techniques. A content analysis of 31 branded content case studies selected by the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA) in Spain was carried out, and the electrodermal activity (EDA) of 70 subjects between 18 and 30 years of age was recorded when they were exposed to branded content stimuli in advertisements. The results confirm a greater impact from the stimuli of branded content, even though there was no significant difference.

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Jorge David Fernández Gómez, University of Seville, Spain

This chapter deals with the influence of Motivation Research from its origins to the present, connecting the psychological school of the deep to the Advertising Strategy. Motivation Research is born closely linked to the advertising industry, a relationship that is maintained today, although in a silent way. The Strategic Advertising Mechanisms that under its influence originate within the advertising agencies will be studied. And with it the storytelling techniques, related directly to these mechanisms. This work is intended to demonstrate the strong presence of the MR in the advertising sector despite the fact that many critics took it as dead in the sixties of the last century. Indeed, in the 21st century, advertising agencies continue to use unconscious motives, emotion, symbols, qualitative techniques or storytelling to develop their campaign strategies.

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Communication and the media count among the means political movements employ in order to influence public opinion. This chapter focuses on the use of internet communication by the Tea Party, a radical movement that re-energized the American right-wing. The authors aim to shed light on the ideological discourse of the Tea Party and its strategic use of online media. The analysis of the Tea Party’s discourse is performed in light of the specific ideological tenets and the reactionary narrative that inspire the movement. The study indicates that a consistently “on-message” anti-government libertarianism has found a new outlet on the internet.

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The Social Media Politicians: Personalisation, Authenticity, and Memes 272

Víctor Hernández-Santaolalla, University of Seville, Spain

Social media brings to the forefront two very important factors to today’s politics: the prominent role of the internet and the importance of personalisation which is closely tied to a tendency of political candidates to overexpose their private lives. This does not mean that the candidate becomes more relevant than the political party or the ideological platforms thereof, but the interest tends to fall on the candidate’s lifestyle; on their personal characteristics and their most intimate surroundings, which blurs the line between the public and private spheres. Online profiles are used as a showcase for the public agenda of the politician at the same time as they gather, on a daily basis, the thoughts, tastes and leisure time activities of the candidates. This chapter offers a reflection of the ways in which political leaders develop their digital narratives, and how they use the social media environment to approach citizens.

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The third golden age of television, in consonance with the increase of the phenomenon transmedia, has coincided with disseminating the message on social media. Spectators themselves are linking the fictional discourse on television with events that are happening in the news, especially through humor. This tendency has also been embraced by political leaders, who use memes and other productions to draw parallels and connect them with their ideas. In the Spanish context, the campaign around the last general elections of April 28, 2019 has taken place together with the beginning of the broadcasting of the Game of Thrones' last season. This has provoked the adoption of its fictional discourse by the main political leaders, who have also used other fictional references for their campaign. Hence, the aim of this chapter is studying the connection between the political ideas and the fictional product in the online party communication.

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This chapter analyses the concept of post-truth related to the circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in the formation of public opinion than emotional appeals and personal beliefs, and the subsequent projection of this phenomenon in social media, as various studies have demonstrated that some fake news stories generate more engagement from users than vetted reporting from reliable news sources. This will start from a general introduction and an associated theoretical reflection, and then focus on the case of Venezuela and its recent historical circumstances in order to analyze how fake news circulates in this country stimulated by a context of widespread disinformation.

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The increase of political disaffection in Spain, as is occurring in many western democracies across the world, coincides with a growing vindication of democracy on the part of the citizenry, which translates to a demand for more governmental transparency and access to information. With this in mind, this chapter explores the availability of information in local public administrations on social media. The study analyses the presence of town and city councils throughout Andalusia on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, examining how these media are managed and their effects, by studying the content and resources provided to the citizens for interacting with the institutions. The results revealed that although the selected councils tried to adopt these new information channels, they are still far from taking full advantage of the possibilities the new technologies could provide.

Section 4 Business Models: Netflix as Paradigm

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Antonio Gómez-Aguilar, University of Seville, Spain

Personalisation has extended to our entire user experience in the digital world. In practical terms, almost all the online services promote us to create a user profile and from there, they offer access to personalised content and/or services. This leads us to the generation of Big Data associated with user profiles which the companies harvest through analytic and predictive algorithms, which they later use to recommend, filter, and provide the content we consume. Having more and more detailed data from user profiles allows for the platforms to detect tendencies in a global public and to create the content that has the greatest chance for success. This chapter examines the massive data management that occurs on platforms that distribute visual content on demand and its impact on content creation. We will focus on Netflix as a paradigm example.

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Netflix in Spain, Spain in Netflix 351

Mónica Barrientos-Bueno, University of Seville, Spain

The arrival of Netflix in Spain represents a complete revolution in the distribution and consumption of audiovisual content. The platform has not limited its offer to what is already available in its catalogue, but has boosted the international distribution of some Spanish productions, which were already available on local channels. At the same time the platform has established alliances with relevant production companies in Spain to create new products, providing them with the imprimatur of Netflix. The two-way relationship between Netflix and Spain, to which this chapter applies an ample and up-to-date analysis, offers an interesting glimpse at the penetration and influence of the one of the largest providers of video on-demand in the Spanish audiovisual panorama, which it is essential for understanding not only the sphere of Spanish television but also more broadly the European context.

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Irene Raya Bravo, University of Seville, Spain

María del Mar Rubio-Hernández, University of Seville, Spain

Since entering the Spanish market in October 2015, Netflix has engaged in several advertising campaigns, deployed online, which are designed to appeal to some aspects of Spanish culture. The obvious aim has been to promote Netflix programming and to establish a connection to the Spanish audience. The strategy, which alludes to recognisable elements from the culture of the target audience, has been developed to promote both international productions as well as national ones, in which cultural references are reflected in the context in which they emerge. This chapter analyses the trajectory of Netflix Spain's marketing campaigns over the last three years, focusing on Paquita Salas as a case study, and determining to what extent the advertising exploits current local social and cultural situations in order to gain more engagement on the part of the spectator.

Chapter 25

The Expanded Story From Transmedia as a Business Model: The Case of Stranger Things 382

Virginia Guarinos, University of Seville, Spain

Sergio Cobo Durán, University of Seville, Spain

It is the creation of transmedia stories that drives the business model and not the business model that drives the stories. In other words, the transmedia narrative is the means and not the end; it is the essential step for transmedia marketing. This chapter is centred on the study of the Netflix series Stranger Things (2016-) as an example of the redefinition of a transmedia strategy without a truly transmedia story. The recent Netflix campaigns have managed to make the beginning of the second season of the show into a viral campaign in Spain, thanks to its connection to Spanish pop-culture personalities. The series relies on an obvious aesthetic; themes and narratives from the nineteen-eighties. This makes an intertextual analysis of the story interesting. In this chapter, we propose an analysis of marketing strategies as an expansion of the diegetic universe using various supports.

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Preface

In recent years, one of the issues that has changed the most is the way we communicate and the way the communication is made. This fact affects all aspects of communication, from the media in its expansion through a multitude of access possibilities, platforms and screens to social relations, which have become more digital and virtual through the window provided by social networks on the Internet. This circumstance places the audiovisual and digital systems at the heart of the modern communications structure.

The communications system is undergoing major transformations. As never before in history, changes are taking place very quickly, with no time to think about them. The transformation is characterized by affecting the different media in a transversal way, producing convergence phenomena between them, unifying organizations and technologies that were previously independent. We are facing an important convergence process, driven by digitally based technologies, involving different traditional mass media, new platforms (internet, mobile communication), information production and storage technologies (computers, digital cameras, smartphones, storage clouds). Technological changes do not only affect diffusion, but also languages and forms of expression, content production and cultural practices, and therefore directly affect social organisation.

Nowadays, digital technology has been implemented in almost every aspect affecting communication, from the technological devices we use to the way we engage in narration or storytelling. We are experiencing the aftermath of digitalisation and multi-platform broadcasting, which gives rise to communicative processes that are characterised by specialisation, interactivity, the on-demand selection of content on the part of the user or the spectator and the convergence of many other factors. This has contributed not only to new ways of communicating (on platforms or in microblogs on Twitter threads, for example) but also to improving the interactive possibilities of the communicative process and the impact on both the spectator and the consumer, who has become a prosumer. This hybridization between producer and consumer plays a central role in the way we understand communication. What was once only achievable in interpersonal communication, is now also possible in mass communication. In this model the receiver is no longer just a spectator, consumer or player but also a producer and transmitter of messages. The new model that introduced this presence is based on a horizontal and democratic approach to communication that takes its inspiration from real communicative relationships, where there is a continuous interaction between receivers and senders, who dynamically interchange these roles.

Today's Internet users have increasingly become content producers, in addition to their traditional roles as consumers. The availability of multi-platform content is growing, and these platforms incorporate new developments which offer differentiated content à la carte. New formats and genres intermingle and become hybridised, but this panorama is not foreign to the web 3.0, which is—by nature—disruptive, fragmentary, random and very adaptable to new formats and features for reproducing communications

for purposes of audiovisual entertainment, marketing, propaganda and public relations. Many sectors have adapted to new ways of telling their stories and reaching their target audiences, from the film and television industries to video game producers; from writers, private companies and government institutions to political parties. All have adapted to this new way of telling stories and reaching their target audiences, thereby resulting in a new strategic situation which must be analysed if we are to even begin to understand what is coming next. Ahead lies a future in which consumers will access content mostly through their mobile devices. Adaptations in the image format will be made necessary with productions that are already shot with a vertical screen in mind, transmuting the traditional horizontal screen. Interactivity will also be key, with a decisive participation of the audience through formulas that promote decision-making on the development of events, as is already the case with interactive productions.

With the multiplication of channels, platforms and accesses through the Internet, the digitization of screens demonstrates how series and films are no longer exclusively orientated to the cinema or television. In fact, data shows that content consumption on traditional platforms is decreasing due to new channels on which spectators enjoy them, accessing content on television websites, online video clubs, and video-on-demand platforms such as Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime, and Disney+. These platforms are present in most countries today offering a personalized, on-demand consumer experience to their subscribers.

To this end, this *Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies* is comprised of four sections. The first section is organized around the concept of digital narratives, considering both theoretical and reflective perspectives as well as empirical ones. We are all becoming familiar with hyper-connectivity, vertical displays, dynamic interface, multiple screens, WhatsApp conversations and Instagram filters. As users, everyone is becoming acquainted with resources and visual stimuli as they become part of our daily experience. These phenomena are remarkable examples of how the implantation and increase of new media and communication tools in contemporary society has comprised an important aesthetic transformation in the way content is viewed.

Departing from this idea, Alberto Hermida takes an interesting approach to studying the ways that new technologies have impacted audiovisual production in terms of aesthetics. He writes the first chapter of this handbook, titled “The Aesthetic of New Media and Communication Devices in Film and Television Language.” Through the analysis of films such as *Beautiful Youth* (Jaime Rosales 2014), *La extranjera* (Miguel Angel Blanca, 2015) and *Happy End* (Michael Haneke, 2017), and series like *Black Mirror* (Channel 4, 2011-2014; Netflix, 2016) and *Sherlock* (BBC One, 2010-), fundamental aesthetic keys are identified. The new devices provide communication environments that are not immune to the language of cinema and television. In order to justify their presence in the narrative, a series of visual solutions characteristic of the current times have been developed and are highlighted in the cases he studies. The chapter thus provides an essential narrative purpose of these resources that connect with the aesthetic through proximity, identification and empathy with others on the part of the viewer have been encouraged.

In the current audiovisual ecosystem, traditional screens coexist with other alternative screens for monitoring broadcasts, whether for viewing productions or for accessing additional content that enhances the audiovisual experience. Digital technology and the Internet propose, within the framework of the television of the new millennium, a new context in which to frame the consumer experience. Mobile devices provide second screen apps that allow the user-spectator to achieve the desired interactivity and obtain additional content for following along with the action of the main screen, as well as access to social networks for sharing the viewing with others, which goes into the virtual field and allows for commentary amongst users. The services or applications of the second television screen allow the synchronous use of an application designed for this purpose, on another device different from the first screen, while

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monitoring the broadcast, program or fiction. Sometimes the accompanying viewing experience is added, designed to augment and provide a more complete synchronized viewing experience for the viewer.

Joaquín Marín-Montín explores this idea in his chapter “Televised Sporting Events: Applications of Second Screens.” He examines the distinctive features the second screen provides to televised sporting events, exploring recent developments and considering the effects that are generated in the reception of the content and the alteration to the way the treatment the audiovisual content may receive. An enhanced viewing experience is added to sporting events, especially when they are large and broadcast live. The chapter studies the issue using real cases from Spanish sporting events, such as the cycling race *La Vuelta* 2017 (broadcast on Radio Televisión Española -rtve.es-, the national radio and television public service), the motorcycling event MotoGP World Championship 2016 (with an app developed by the multi-service telecommunications operator Movistar +), the World Cup 2018 (whose second screen service can be accessed through Mediaset App) and the Winter Olympic Games of 2018 (with a second screen service provided by Eurosport Player App).

Inmaculada Gordillo further explores the impact of new digital technologies on narrative in her chapter “The Mirror Effect and the Transparent City in Audio-Visual Non-Dramatic Fiction: Comedic Autofiction on Television,” proposing that the clear delineation between fiction and non-fiction contents has been blurred. She suggests that the characteristics of the new communicative ecosystem, with its hybridisation of genres and other elements of crossover, can be observed in most formats, where reality and fiction and public and private spheres are intermingled. Taking this view, the chapter analyses “self-fiction” in American and Spanish television comedy (In self-fiction the main character recreates his or her life within a narrative discourse). From cases such as *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989-1998), *The Larry Sanders Show* (HBO, 1992-1998), *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (HBO, 2000-) and *Girls* (HBO, 2012-2017) to *Qué vida más triste* (2008-2010), *¿Qué fue de Jorge Sanz?* (Canal +, 2010), *El fin de la comedia* (Comedy Central, 2014, Comedy Central /Movistar +, 2017) and *Mira lo que has hecho* (Movistar +, 2018-), the author argues that a mirror effect is developed. Allied with meta-narration, self-fiction seeks to take the spectator to an ambiguous space where the fictitious occupies a secondary position in relation to the components of truth and reality that are exhibited without concealment.

The current digital television environment made up of a multitude of agents from television channels to video-on-demand platforms with access via the Internet has multiplied the ways to access audiovisual content and has increased the production of such content to the point of generating an almost unmanageable canon. Through video online platforms, series, films, documentaries and programs have achieved international impact. Within this context, the adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s novel to the TV series *The Handmaid’s Tale* (2017) is one of the most remarkable cases. However, this is not the only reason why this series is relevant. “The Handmaid’s Tale (2017) or Hulu’s Major Investment in Great Storytelling,” by Ángeles Martínez-García, provides an interesting narrative framework from which to appreciate the series. The underlying story of *The Handmaid’s Tale* (2017-) manifests the importance of storytelling in the creation of modern myths. This chapter analyses the construction of the dystopian society of the series in its narrative, characters and visual aspects, presenting a society characterised by an absence of rights and freedoms, not unconnected to the current political situation. The chapter examines the focus on the control of women’s fertility, the objectification of women, religious fanaticism, the role of women in the persecution of other women in a patriarchal system, the persecution of homosexuality and hyper-vigilance and provides a revealing reading of the series.

Several chapters of this section analyse successful cases of transmedia storytelling, which take advantage of the characteristics of digital communication and new platforms. Transmedia is a term that

has become indispensable in studies, publications and analyses of narrative in recent years. The concept of transmedia storytelling was introduced into academia by Jenkins in 2001. Transmedia storytelling existed before Jenkins' decisive academic contribution, as shown by the *Star Wars* or *Star Trek* sagas; but Jenkins contributes a clear differentiation between contents that can be transmedia (such as adaptations) and transmedia narratives, which expand the universe of a story. This last case, in other words, means that several stories belonging to the same narrative are told through different channels, where each has independence although they are linked by submitting to the same narrative universe.

This is one of interests covered in the present *Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies*. The audiences, eager to expand their experience with audiovisual products are already accustomed to navigating and consuming content between and on different screens: from the laptop to the smartphone through tablets and other mobile devices. Additionally, the digital universe has changed the way we are in contact with narration, both in terms of quality and quantity, making it inevitable for 21st century storytellers to think about transmedia when planning their projects. The expansion that transmedia storytelling is undergoing is related to the change in the audiovisual model, where the emphasis is on multimedia convergence, hybridization of genres and formats, multiplatform distribution, the multiplication of mobile devices and applications, among other distinctive features, as discussed in previous chapters of this section.

From cinema to television, the cultural industries have adapted to the new business models on the rise, so in view of this panorama it is important to learn about cases of transmedia narratives such as those in the following three chapters.

“Audience Engagement and Transmedia Adaptation: The Case of The Lizzie Bennet Diaries,” by María Heredia-Torres, makes a relevant analysis showing how transmedia can be employed to adapt Jane Austen's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice* for a digital generation and, at the same time, how the audience becomes part of the story itself, which is one of the fundamental elements of transmedia storytelling (the active and participatory role of the consumer). The chapter focuses on the transmedia strategy followed by the creators of the web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-2013). As it stands out, the usage of different platforms encourages fan participation and engages the audience. Along with other strong aspects of the chapter, the author explores the transmedia strategy followed for the construction of this particular expanded narrative universe where Lizzie Bennet and Mr. Darcy capture today's viewers.

“Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Primitive as a Model of an Expanded Narrative,” by Milagros Expósito Barea, introduces us to another case of transmedia narrative, this time from Thailand. The case has as its starting point a multi-screen video installation by the independent filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul. This is a different project from the one discussed in the previous chapter; here the transmedia expansion has a strong cultural and Thai identity component. From the video installation *Primitive*, the transmedia project is spread across two short films, a book of art with photographs, a journal, a draft text and its final product, the *Uncle Boonmee, Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010).

The last transmedia storytelling chapter, “Augmented Reality and Franchising: The Evolution of Media Mix through Invizimals” by Miguel A. Pérez-Gómez, examines hybridisation between transmedia strategies and mixed media through the Spanish Augmented Reality video game *Invizimals* (Novarama and Sony Computer Entertainment, 2009). In 2018 the *Invizimals* universe notably expanded across different platforms, consolidating its own strategic model for developing content.

The last two chapters of the section dedicated to digital storytelling deal with two approaches to the particularities of video game narratives. “The Poetics of Videogames: The Logic of Sense and Meaning in the Videoludic Discourse,” by Luis Navarrete-Cardero, discusses the atypical nature of transtextual

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logic in video games as opposed to other discourses such as literary works, film or television screenplays. The sense of meaning works in a different way by becoming a delimiter of its process of signification, making it impossible for the relationship between two games with identical mechanics to be considered as a trans-textual link. This chapter also adds that in the case of the video game, quotation as a trans-textual element is not possible, thus deriving in self-quoting as nostalgic mechanics, devoid of meaning. The author concludes by leaving the door open to strengthen the trans-textual video game.

Additionally, from the notion of the “Event” and the concept of “ideal game” as proposed by Deleuze in his post-structuralist semiotics, in “An Epistemology of the Event for the Digital Media: from Lewis Carroll to Elsgate,” Juan J. Vargas-Iglesias proposes a careful consideration about video games and digital media. The chapter’s contribution is clear: from Deleuze’s thinking on meaning, a new approach to the media and sociological particularities of the digital media can be made. Some of their characteristics, such as hyperconnectivity and hyperacceleration in the Internet era endow them with a new ontology, entirely non-mechanistic.

The second section is dedicated to digital marketing strategies in social media, analysing digital promotion strategies. We examine formats such as the book trailer as a tool for publishing houses to promote their products and the role the digital environment is playing in the development of marketing policy today. In this line, the first three chapters of the section frame the current scenario of “presumption” in which the users become advisors and opinion leaders. On this matter, Teresa Gordillo-Rodríguez and Paloma Sanz-Marcos address in the chapter “Symbolic Consumption in the Online World. The Construction of Social Identity and Fashion Influencers” the study of fashion influencers in relation to the currently scarcely exploited phenomenon of symbolic consumption. Symbolic consumption refers to the process by which people use symbols, like products and/or brands, in order to construct and communicate ideas about themselves; a configuration of the self-image through consumer behavior that can be inspired by reference groups and opinion leaders, acquiring a new dimension in the online environment with so-called influencers. In particular, the chapter delves into the case study of Chiara Ferragni, as an absolute reference of fashion influencers according to the Forbes list.

The idea of how consumers can transform into opinion leaders also plays a relevant role in the chapter by Gloria Jiménez Marín and Rodrigo Elías Zambrano entitled “The Book Trailer as a Publishing House Promotional Tool: The Current Situation of Publishers in Spain.” As the authors point out, publishing houses must keep up with the times and promote themselves in ways that are appealing to today’s consumer, making use of the readers as micro-influencers. Despite the apparent advertising potential of the book trailer, and the different forms it can take, the format is not developing properly in the Spanish market, affecting both readers, authors and publishers.

Finally, Marta Pulido Polo’s chapter “The Role of Prosumers in the Interactive and Digital Processes of Public Relations: The Organisation of Events and Influencers as the New Emerging Stakeholder” also focuses on prosumers and influencers as opinion leaders who can contribute to generating favourable opinions about companies, as well as products and services, through social networking sites. These figures, understood as emerging stakeholders, provide credibility to the communication of organizations, and serve as excellent public relations tools, fomenting at the same time the development of horizontal communication structures. Particularly, Pulido Polo analyses the organisation of special events and occasions for influencers as a growing trend in the strategic management of public relations, providing several solutions and recommendations in relation to the sources, channels, messages and target audiences of this communication.

The second part of the second section revolves around the encounter between entertainment and advertising. In this sense, although the lines between the two are currently quite blurred, aspects such as product placement or brand content emphasise this relationship. Thus, in a certain way, Juan Carlos Rodríguez-Centeno's chapter entitled "Lux Radio Theatre: Radio, Film and Advertising. A Fortunate Encounter" serves as a link between the first and second parts of the section, as the author analyses the role of celebrities, as opinion leaders and advisors of the Lux soap, which is the absolute product protagonist of Lux Radio Theater. In this way, the chapter is framed in the history of advertising, dissecting this radio program that was broadcast in the United States between 1934 and 1955, and which adapted numerous successful films to the radio counting on the participation of important Hollywood stars.

On the other hand, Jani Pavlič and Tina Tomažič are the authors of the text "360° Video as an Opportunity for the Inclusion of Product Placement." In this chapter, the writers focus on 360° video in connection with product placement, analysing the first as an immersive medium with a relevant potential for the introduction of the placement, contributing to the increase in the credibility of the advertising content and generating a positive response from the recipients. Specifically, the chapter is divided in four main sections focused on advertising and profitability, 360° video, product placement and product placement in 360° videos, respectively. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion in which the authors expose the theoretical and practical implications of this relationship, as well a series of limitations and future directions.

Moreover, the innovative chapter "Branded Content: Analysis of Case Studies and Measurement of its Effectiveness Using Neuromarketing Techniques" by Patricia Núñez Gómez, Luis Mañas-Viniegra, and Blanca Miguélez Juan evaluates the impact of branded content versus conventional advertising by using neuromarketing techniques, responding to the need for an improved measurement of advertising effectiveness. Specifically, a content analysis of 31 case studies of branded content was developed, and the electrodermal activity (EDA) of 70 subjects aged between 18 and 30 was recorded when they were exposed to branded content stimuli in advertisements. Although no significant differences were found, the results point out the strongest impact of branded content over traditional advertising and confirm that hybrid messages are received with greater attention than those exclusively commercial.

The chapter by Jorge David Fernández Gómez entitled "An Approach to Motivation Research from Advertising Strategy: From Freud to the Iconic Brand" ends the second section. Fernández Gómez examines the influence of Motivation Research from its origins, closely associated to the advertising industry, to the present. On this matter, despite some critiques of the presence of Motivation Research in the sector during the 1960s, it remains fundamental in the current strategic advertising mechanisms, which are essential for the development of current storytelling techniques. Thus, the fact that advertising agencies continue to rely on qualitative techniques, as well on emotions, symbols and unconscious motivations, and that media continue to alert about their postulates, confirms the validity of Motivation Research.

The third section focuses on political and institutional communication, an area that, although closely related to what was examined in the previous part, deserves an exclusive section given the particular advances that are being made in the political arena. In this regard, the first chapter, "A Narrative of Impeding Tyranny." Ideological Extremism and Internet Use in the Tea Party Movement," by Antonio Pineda and Bianca Sánchez-Gutiérrez, focuses on the strategic use of Internet communication by the Tea Party. The authors delve into the ideological discourse of this American right-wing movement, providing empirical evidence relative to its online communication strategy, connecting it to the history and ideology of the movement. In this way, Tea Party communication can be considered as a mix between

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radicalism, an approach to ideological principles and Internet orientation, which results in a coherent promotion of right-wing economic libertarianism on the worldwide web.

The chapter “The Social Media Politicians. Personalisation, Authenticity and Memes,” by Víctor Hernández-Santaolalla, addresses the idea of political personalisation, a trend that (although not radically new,) has been increased due to the prominence of social networking sites and mobile devices, which allow a greater exploitation of the privacy of politicians, thus blurring the boundaries between public and private spheres. In this way, political leaders use social media to seem more approachable to the electorate, for which they will not hesitate to use the language and techniques typical of the Internet and the so-called influencers, including, among other techniques, the use of memes.

This fuels the debate about whether this communicational drift is leading to an ever-increasing banalization of politics; an issue which is also related to the chapter “Electoral Propaganda through Televised Fiction: The Online Communication during 2019 Spanish General Elections,” by Elena Bellido-Pérez and Mayte Donstrup. The latter analyses how television fiction, with titles such as *Game of Thrones*, is used as by political parties in electoral campaigns. In this regard, the authors focus on the communication developed in social media during the Spanish General Elections of April 2019. Thereby, these two chapters offer an approach to the concept of “politainment”—a combination of politics and entertainment—and shed light on the attempts of parties and politicians to attract the attention of an increasingly disaffected electorate.

María del Mar Ramírez-Alvarado analyses in “Post-Truths and Fake News in Disinformation Contexts. The Case of Venezuela” the phenomenon of post-truth and fake news in the context of social media, focusing on the events of recent years in Venezuela. The author examines the communication situation of the country during the last years from a historical perspective, the continuous closing of communication channels and the development of strategies of harassment towards the professionals of the media and argues that this has reduced the spaces for public debate and dissent. This phenomenon in combination with an absolutely polarized audience, has made Venezuela vulnerable to the circulation of fake news.

Lastly, Inmaculada Sánchez-Labela Martín develops research on a more local level, studying how the town and city councils of Andalusia (Spain) use Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to manage public information in a political context of discontent and distrust in which citizens demand a more transparent government and greater access to information. In her chapter, “The Use and Management of Public Information in Social Media. A Case Study of Town and City Councils throughout Andalusia on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube,” the author points out that governments should make it a priority for citizens to have easy and correct access to online information from local administrations, paying special attention to social networking sites. In this sense, the purpose of the chapter is to analyse how the main Andalusian local governments provide public information through these online channels which are presented as a communication and interaction tool between administrations and citizens.

Finally, the last section is centred on Netflix as a paradigm business model. From its beginnings as a video provider, Netflix has made great leaps in innovation to become what it is today: the video on demand platform of greatest international expansion and a name that is emblematic of the new times of digital audiovisual content on the Internet and new forms of consumption. The Netflix effect could be said to have invaded everything; not only have many of its strategies been taken up by its most direct competitors, but its exploitation model has crossed the boundaries of the audiovisual sector and reached other cultural industries. Thus, Netflix has become a model, a paradigm that is analysed in four chapters which place special interest on the case of Netflix Spain.

“Content Bubbles: How Platforms Filter What We See,” by Antonio Gómez-Aguilar, introduces the reader to the use of Big Data and how it affects our user experiences on video-on-demand platforms. Our profile, platform navigation behaviour and preferences are analysed to personalize the content and services through analytic and predictive algorithms, which video-on-demand platforms later use to recommend, filter and provide the content we consume. All kinds of data are stored and processed, allowing the production of content based on trends, which in turn presupposes its success. This chapter focuses on Netflix as a paradigm example of this practice.

Spain is not the first European country in which Netflix launched, but in a very short time the country has positioned itself as a strategic stronghold of Netflix’s presence in both Europe and Latin America. “Netflix in Spain: Spain in Netflix,” by Mónica Barrientos-Bueno, clarifies the two-way relationship between Netflix and Spain: how Netflix has revolutionized the distribution and consumption of audiovisual content in Spain with its arrival in October 2015, encouraging the entry of other national and foreign operators into the market. Likewise, it has boosted the international distribution of Spanish productions, now available internationally, as well as Netflix has established alliances to create new products with its imprimatur. This chapter offers an up-to-date analysis of the double relationship between Spain and Netflix and also offers an understanding of the European audiovisual digital context.

Delving further into the presence of Netflix in Spain, “An Analysis of Netflix España Campaigns: *Paquita Salas* Case Study,” by Irene Raya Bravo and María del Mar Rubio-Hernández, analyses the online advertising campaigns in Spain over the last three years, connected with diverse aspects of its culture in order to establish a connection to the Spanish audience. The main focus is a case study of the advertising campaigns for *Paquita Salas* (2016), a series produced by Netflix since 2018. The advertising stands out for its ability to connect with the Spanish reality and at the same time highlights Netflix and its most popular series in Spain. The authors study advertising campaigns and show how the platform strives to strengthen itself as a brand in Spain.

If we started this *Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies* with chapters on transmedia storytelling, we ended up in the same way although now in the specific case of Netflix and its strategic uses. “The Expanded Story from Transmedia as a Business Model: The Case of *Stranger Things*,” by Virginia Guarinos and Sergio Cobo-Durán, points out how the creation of transmedia stories drives the business model. Centred on the study of the Netflix series *Stranger Things* (2016-), this chapter focuses on redefining a transmedia strategy independent of a truly transmedia story through an analysis of marketing strategies as an expansion of the diegetic universe using various supports, where all the cultural references given by the series are an open door. From targeting with nostalgia and memorabilia from the eighties, the connection to Spanish pop-culture personalities has proven to be an undeniable key to success.

The *Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies* will be of special interest to students at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels who wish to expand their knowledge on topics related to digital communications, formulas of interactivity, transmedia and expanded communication. These topics are introduced in various academic programmes, which is why it is also intended for professors and academic researchers in the field of communication studies. However, although the primary potential audience might be academic, there is no reason to exclude a more general public who may be interested in understanding the ways media may be exercising influence over their daily lives.

Preface

In conclusion, there are three key points to take away in understanding why a volume about today's expanded storytelling or narrative strategies in the digital realm, audience engagement, political communication and business strategies would be necessary:

- Because the continuous advances in the field of Communications, collective studies that analyse the phenomenon from different perspectives are important.
- Because the *Handbook of Research on Transmedia Storytelling, Audience Engagement, and Business Strategies* reviews different cases relevant to the media industry in particular and Communication Studies in general.
- Because digital narratives or storytelling and strategies to engage the audience are some of the most interesting topics in communication studies for both a professional and an academic audience today.

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Section 1

Digital Narratives

Chapter 1

The Aesthetic of New Media and Communication Devices in Film and Television Language

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of mobile media and the development of Web 2.0, in parallel to the current omnipresence of user interfaces and the multiscreen landscapes, have led to the consolidation of changes in all spheres of life. Subsequently, and due to the hybridization and remediation processes inherent to the digital environment, the more conventional media have been considerably affected by these transformations in the media ecosystem. Accordingly, this chapter examines the influences and formal loans in film and television language by analyzing the aesthetic transfers occurring in fiction and non-fiction.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction and consolidation of new media and communication tools in contemporary society have given rise to an important transformation not only in the production and distribution of audiovisual content, but also in its consumption and viewing. In a context marked by the omnipresence of mobile devices and dominated by social media and interface, multiscreen and connectivity dynamics, digital users have become accustomed to a series of resources and visual stimuli that have become part and parcel of their daily experiences and surroundings. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that the aesthetic aspects of that reality have permeated the current media ecosystem, percolating into the language of the conventional media.

In light of the foregoing, this chapter focuses on the influences and most noteworthy formal loans assimilated by cinema and television in the midst of the expansion of the aforementioned technological resources, introducing them into their respective codes and narratives. To this end, it is first essential to review the basic concepts established in the context of technology and digital visual representation sys-

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tems, in order to contextualize and address the issues at hand with adequate theoretical rigor. Secondly, the aesthetics of new media and devices will be studied in depth, addressing their unique characteristics and the peculiarities of their transfers from a theoretical-analytical perspective. The analysis of the latter is, in short, the main objective of this chapter, in which case studies shifting between fiction and non-fiction are discussed. To this end, the corpus of selected works includes minor and experimental productions as high-profile examples drawn from the commercial television and film industries.

IN THE DOMAINS OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Over the past decades, many terms and approaches have been used to designate the hybridization capacity of the digital environment on the basis of assimilating and combining heterogeneous languages. This distinguishing trait, driving the convergence between different techniques and aesthetics, is doubtless particularly important for understanding the visual synergies discussed here. In point of fact, Le Grice (2001) already stressed the unique ability of the digital environment to blur technological boundaries using the metaphorical term “hydra-media” (p. 297): the branching of previous technological models into one sole integrating technology.

For Manovich (2013, p. 163), it is the progressive development of computers as metamedia that have allowed for the media hybridization defining their discursive essence. Specifically, through the “softwarization” of the biological meaning of the term “hybrid”, the author stress the way in which “media techniques start acting like species within a common ecology—in this case, a shared software environment. Once ‘released’ into this environment, they start interacting, mutating, and making hybrids” (p. 164). From a visual perspective, the aesthetics of hybridity are coupled with the emergence of a new language, a sort of “polygraphy” in which the discursive particularities of the different languages assimilated by digital technology are shared (Gómez Isla, 2005, pp. 710-711). In the process, moreover, Manovich (2013) underscores its capacity for “deep remixability”, namely, not only for remixing content coming from diverse media, “*but also their fundamental techniques, working methods, and ways of representation and expression*” (p. 268). Beyond mere addition, deep remixability triggers interactions between virtualized techniques, ultimately representing the aesthetics of contemporary audiovisual culture (p. 273).

Besides the juxtaposition of media, multimediality is moving towards the interaction between languages and the emergence of spaces in which remediation (visually) materializes (Scolari, 2009). Following the postulates of Marshall McLuhan, Bolter and Grusin (2000) define this phenomenon as “the representation of one medium in another” (p. 45), a feature that they believe is essential to digital media. For the authors, remediation is based on a double logic: the immediacy and the hypermediacy. If by the logic of transparent immediacy, the purpose of a medium is to disappear, conceal its trail in order to go unnoticed in the representation process, the logic of hypermediacy is due to opposing dynamics. Due to the fascination for the medium, this is shown and exhibited itself, instead of being hidden, evincing the reality of the device and generating a great deal of tension between that which is represented and the mediation itself during the contemplation of the text. As a result, versus the unified visual space deriving from immediacy, hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous and fragmentary space, multiplying the signs of mediation (pp. 33-34). In current digital media, hypermediacy is particularly evident, for instance, in the “heterogeneous ‘windowed style’” of webpages, desktop interfaces and interactive apps (hypermedia) (p. 31).

However, in line with hypermediacy and in the context of “convergence culture” (Jenkins, 2006), Anderson (2006) picks up the baton from theoreticians such as Friedrich Kittler to note the problem arising from the use of the term “convergence” in the study of digital aesthetics. According to this author, its use involves the dangerous “effect of homogenization”, which deprives the resulting work of the particularities of the individual media that have intervened in its creation. Instead, Anderson proposes the term “syncretism”, deriving from the field of cultural anthropology, to designate the stratification of different technological practices within digital culture:

Unlike convergence, a syncretic relationship does not imply the erasure or collapse of distinct practices. Rather, it describes the combination of disjunctive elements into a functional relationship that bears the continued traces of each object’s former existence [...] The concept of technological syncretism, then, permits an understanding of digital media with respect for the material elements of which they are constituted. (p. 10)

For his part, Fagerjord (2010) also highlights the limitations of speaking of mere “convergence”. Thus, he prefers the formula “rhetorical convergence” (2003), with which he also emphasizes the way in which different styles and systems of signs simultaneously combine in complex texts and meanings, resulting in new genres and formats. And he proposes the term “remix” “to characterize how rhetorical convergence is created” (2010, p. 190); a concept that would be subsequently developed by Manovich (2013), as noted at the beginning of this conceptual and terminological review.

Accordingly, and regardless of the diversity of labels and nuances involved, the digital environment expands like a territory susceptible to the hybridization of different media, languages, techniques, formats and content in interaction. And in doing so in the creation of new texts and genres, these can either be constructed as organic units, invisibilized “assemblages”, or to exhibit the multiplicity and fragments that shape them. Specifically, in the audiovisual case studies examined here, hypermediacy takes center stage. Thus, film and television screens accentuate the loans and specificities of hybrid media in a dialogue between their own aesthetics and those that have been assimilated or in the transmutation of the former into the latter.

AESTHETIC LOANS FROM NEW MEDIA AND DEVICES TO FILM AND TELEVISION DISCOURSE

Mobile Devices and Social Networking Sites

What Levinson (2012) defined as “new new media” have now become firmly entrenched in the current media ecosystem. In the framework of the Web 2.0, in which mobile communication has consolidated its position to transform the digital ecology, not only media processes, but above all the role assumed by the receiver/user, have been reformulated. The citizenry, increasingly more involved in such processes, are now also equipped with devices that have become extensions of their bodies and which facilitate their media production (Renó, 2015, p. 252). In this new ecosystem, new communication and expressive possibilities, new aesthetics and ways of generating content, with an important impact on the audiovisual industry, have emerged.

As documented by Logan and Scolari (2014), it is the convergence between technical aspects and consumer practices that has resulted in the hybridization of mobile devices and the Web 2.0, leading in turn to the creation of a new space: the mobile Web 2.0. As these authors contend, this “is defined as the use and production of content with mobile devices on social networking sites and on the Internet with content generated by digital users themselves” (p. 75). In the culture of sharing, social networking sites have become one of the fundamental pillars of communication and creative processes. With respect to the visual formulation of social networking sites, in relation to instant messaging apps and constantly updated chat spaces, digital users are immersed in a plethora of emerging forms that have inundated their daily lives. In turn, the portability and hyperconnectivity of devices such as smartphones mean that these visual resources are always at hand. Notifications, text frames, profile images, emoticons, etc., appear at any time and in any place, accompanying digital users while on the move.

Unlike extreme cases of the visual representation of interfaces, as will be seen further on, these mobile communication dynamics are transferred in simpler versions to film and television discourses. As a reflection of reality per se, the number of productions depicting people messaging each other and other interactions that are dynamically inserted into the story have multiplied. What is involved here is not the registry of a mobile device, even when this is shown in close-up, but the superimposing on screen of its forms of communication and characteristic design elements. In a visually striking way, the space of the representation is “invaded” by a series of graphic resources simultaneously coexisting in space that encourage a dialogue between both “visual surfaces”, thus interfering in the transparency of the visual composition. Good examples of this are fictional TV series like *Black Mirror* (Channel 4, Netflix, 2011-), especially the episode “Nosedive” (S03E01, 2016), and *You* (Lifetime, Netflix, 2018-), both cases in which these formulas also reinforce the topics addressed.

However, it should be recalled that the constant evolution of smartphone specifications has ended up converting them into multifunctional tools, whose possibilities go way beyond interpersonal communication. Thanks to the integration of high-resolution cameras, the proliferation of mobile apps and the development of peripherals, the creative potential of these devices has been greatly enhanced. As already observed, it is not without reason that the mobile Web 2.0 is based on user-generated content.

From this angle, there are a number of studies that have inquired into the creative alternatives and the aesthetics of mobile media, primarily from an audiovisual approach and clearly linked to their cinematographic potential. Thus, for example, as Botella Lorenzo (2012) has observed, Roger Odin distinguishes between two different types of cinema, according to their reception and consumption characteristics and contexts. Versus conventional cinema, or *cinema uno*, Odin places the accent on *cinema due*, or digital cinema, consumed in a wide range of devices frequently belonging more to the realm of multimedia communication and gaming than to that of narrative (pp. 75-76). On the other hand, as stressed by Baker et al. (2009), the aesthetics of mobile media are grounded in fundamental factors, including immediacy and intimacy (p. 101), associated with personal and daily experiences in which their discourse is framed.

As Renó (2015) has remarked, in tune with Levinson, with mobile communication “a new media ecology” has emerged “in which images of everyday life occupy collective and open communication spaces such as social networking sites” (p. 253). Such audiovisual production, which Renó calls “of ‘myself’”, “serves to record personal moments with an almost documentary character” (p. 253). Additionally, the portable and individual nature of these devices results in a sort of “haptic aesthetic, rooted in an embodied affectivity, manifested through gesture and movement of the device while documenting or ‘videoing’ innate performativity or movement, which is afforded by the phones themselves” (Baker et al., 2009, p. 119).

According to Berry and Schleser (2014), “mobile media remixes and remediates old and new media [...] and also shapes storytelling to generate new forms” (p. 2). They enable new ways of contemplating and approaching reality; different ways of recording and framing it. And it is precisely in relation to this last purely compositional and formal sense that studies focusing on the features of mobile media/ smartphone aesthetics all single out the vertical format as one of the most recognizable ones. As will be seen in the following section, this does not only imply a break with a historically established aesthetic paradigm (Ryan, 2018), but also a fresh opportunity to establish formal and narrative synergies between different media.

Multiplicity of Content, Formats and Other Variables

As already emphasized, in the hybridization dynamics characterizing the digital environment, techniques, content and aesthetics combine and interact, resulting in new texts and genres. Old, new and new new media, together with their respective languages, coalesce in evidently heterogeneous common spaces in which the diversity of solutions can result in a kaleidoscope of visual forms and resources. In this regard, films like *Beautiful Youth* (*Hermosa juventud*, Jaime Rosales, 2014) and *La extranjera* (Miguel Ángel Blanca, 2015) are two interesting proposals that, from clearly different angles, explore these interactions. Both films, characterized by formal experimentation and the aesthetics of mobile media and the Web 2.0 environment, give more visibility to the interface in their narratives, whose direct representation is integrated into their visual content.

In the dramatic picture that Rosales paints of youth in *Beautiful Youth*, the smartphone and mobile communication do not only play an important role in the daily life of Natalia, the main character, but also in the film’s formal and narrative construction. Although the film’s approach is by and large conventional, film aesthetics alternate with those of mobile devices in interludes of sorts inserted into the evolution of the story. In these interludes, in a clear example of remediation, the main character’s “smartphone life” is developed full screen. Thus, text messages, WhatsApp conversations, videogames, photo viewing, camera uses, online searches and the use of diverse apps follow one another. These resources not only help Rosales to flesh out the main character and to reinforce the depiction of current youth, but also to delve deeper into the story and to move forward, reviewing episodes of the character’s life experiences through the multimedia gallery of her mobile device. Here, the smartphone certainly serves the aforementioned functions as a tool for recording personal moments, experiences shared on social networking sites.

For his part, in *La extranjera* Blanca offers an experimental critique of mass tourism in Barcelona, which has converted the city into a sort of theme park. Halfway between documentary and fiction, the film is an amalgam in which the footage per se has been combined with plenty of appropriated material. It is a pastiche of (re)significations in which the plural perspective and the ode to the fragment prevail. In this audiovisual experiment, in which there is room for any type of content, there is no lack of platform and app interfaces, including YouTube, Street View and even the film’s own editing software. And all this in combination with the recordings made with multiple devices in a continual seesawing between formats and resolutions, including refilming through the television and film screens.

What in *Beautiful Youth* are sporadic aesthetic “excisions”, in *La extranjera* become the very essence of the film, in constant flow. In the former, Natalia’s dependence on her smartphone offers Rosales a creative excuse to explore this aspect without abandoning her point of view or the film’s narrative universe. In *La extranjera*, in contrast, the aesthetics of mobile media and the Web 2.0 environment are a clear hallmark of authorship and style; impressions that actually underscore the very process of

constructing the story in an even more pronounced example of metadiscursivity and hypermediacy. At any rate, emphasizing yet again the particularities of both films and their differences, the confluence of materials with different aspect ratios reveals the active presence of the smartphone and its aesthetics in the format's verticality.

As already noted, the contributions of the smartphone in relation to the vertical format of filming/visualizing do not only imply a break with an aesthetic paradigm, but also the possibility to establish, through its coexistence on the film or television screen, new dialogues with previous formats and media. In particular, the implications of that verticality in filmic and videographic terms have been studied over the past decade (Ross, 2014; Ross and Glenn, 2014; Napoli, 2016; Ryan, 2018). Beyond the Web, the repercussions of this format have even led to the advent of specific festivals, including the Vertical Film Festival (Australia), Slim Cinema (United States), Vertical Movie (Italy) and VertiFilms (Czech Republic), among others, as well as the design of televisions that pivot between horizontal and vertical orientations, such as the Sero model launched by Samsung in 2019. All these developments have led to alternatives that transcend the online video and mobile screen environment towards other audiovisual manifestations and environments. And these do not only affect the exploration of themes, narratives and motives that benefit from the characteristics of the framing of the format, but also perceptively modify the conditions of reception of the audience.

By that as it may, and regardless of the creation of works in vertical format destined to be viewed in similar conditions, horizontal formats are also influenced by this current trend, without having to be experimental films. Thus, "vertical landscapes" are incorporated in their narratives, introducing a marked contrast with the dominant visual layout, mainly in cinema screenings. Frequently, in an exercise of focalization, these landscapes often involve the point of view of a character, through the camera of his or her mobile device, the formal aspects intersecting with the rigorous representation of the "staged" reality. For instance, from the initial sequence of *Happy End* (Michael Haneke, 2017) it is the smartphone recordings of the young Eve that allow the audience to approach the character's perverse mind. While her voice reveals her Machiavellian intentions, a proportionally reduced vertical strip, in which the icons of the interface of the device's camera appear, occupies the center of the screen.

If in *Happy End* a mobile telephone is yet again used to record personal experiences and domestic situations occurring in the character's daily life, in *At War (En guerre)*, Stéphane Brizé, (2018) the aesthetic and narrative proposal is different. The film, a kind of fictional documentary, describes the struggle of a group of workers laid off after the closure of a German factory in France. Camera in hand and immersed in the constant monitoring of the workers, Brizé combines the vision of the conflict from within with its external media coverage. With this idea in mind, the protests, demonstrations and tense meetings between those involved are "documented" as the conflict advances and the tension mounts. The film displays the same aesthetics from beginning to end, through the most stirring moments of the story. This is when, for the first time in the film, Brizé chooses to portray the final action of the main character through a smartphone recording in vertical format that captures the dramatic denouement. Independently of the visual contrast produced on screen, this expedient gives rise to an intense feeling of truth, thus allowing it to have a greater impact on the audience. Far from being a mere formal ploy, the meaning of Brizé's solution is rooted in the *cinéma vérité* style predominating in the work, intensifying the feeling of crossing the frontier of fiction even more. The device's camera records the events through a window, from an anonymous standpoint, the act being identified with the documentary uses of smartphone journalism (Newell, 2014) emerging with the expansion of new media and mobile communication. Indeed, in addition to the aforesaid affinity to the documentary genre noted by Renó (2015)

when referring to the recording of personal and daily experiences in the new media ecology, the author puts the accent on audiovisual content deriving from citizen participation and activism (pp. 256-258).

Towards the Omnipresence of the Interface: From “Windows Aesthetics” to “Desktop Aesthetics”

The cases analyzed above exemplify, to a greater or lesser extent, specific loans from the aesthetics of mobile media and the Web 2.0 environment to the film and television discourses, especially in relation to the on-screen representation of the interface. From messaging between characters and isolated cases of vertical filming, to interludes involving the full-screen depiction of smartphone uses and productions that are immersed in the magma of a cinema belonging to the YouTube era, any type of audiovisual material finds its place. In this section, however, the representation of the interface goes to an extreme in which its presence, beyond alternating or occurring simultaneously with the film or videographic discourse, merges with it when it does not replace it completely. For as Rombes (2017) has noted, “in the digital era, the interface threatens to supplant content as the primary narrative” (p. 52). Besides its transparency, the desktop interface and its multiple apps steal the limelight, becoming the visual code integrating the story. As Martín Prada (2018) has remarked,

Given its importance as an element shaping our culture, there have been many attempts at making software visible, an aspect that was experimented with in some of the first net art works and, later on, in connection with the so-called “New aesthetics” (p. 146).

The interface is currently present in all media, in general, and in the day-to-day activities of citizens, in particular, thanks to the digital mobile devices that accompany them and now form part of their lives. From a theoretical perspective, Claudia Giannetti (2001) indicated that it was direct evidence of the shift towards “the visual, sensorial, retroactive, non-linear and virtual” produced by digital culture (p. 155). Lev Manovich (2001) also conferred it the status of “key semiotic code of the information society”, as well as its “metatool” (p. 66), and resorted to the term “cultural interface” “to describe a human-computer-culture interface” (p. 70). In its evolution, the interface has quite literally acquired an increasingly more palpable presence, establishing itself in the fields of information, communication and culture. From being a work tool it has now become a central space of constant interaction, with its countless forms and functions, in our daily lives. In its current semi-transparency, the interface “returns to the surface as proof” (Cuadrado Alvarado, 2014, p. 143), confirming the materiality of the screen. The interface form is understood by Català Domènech (2010) as a new system of audiovisual representation, whose phenomenology is linked to contemporary hybridization processes. In fact, the hybridization of media and cultural content defended by Manovich (2013) also manifests itself in the software used to create it, affecting the remix and, therefore, tools and interfaces as well (p. 282). As its defining trait, Català Domènech (2010) highlights the “play of spaces of any type”, which interrelate through specific routines or following the will of the user (p. 241). In these spaces, windows are established as architecture or the dominant structural composition.

With respect to the influences and loans assimilated by cinema and television, Vered (2002) analyzed the televisual aesthetics at the beginning of the century using the term “windows aesthetics”, as a way of designating the new look of television at the time, which “strongly resembles the graphical user interface of the now domesticated personal computer, suggesting an interface instead of a surface” (p. 40). For

the authoress, based on the illusion of the interface and interactivity, this new aesthetics predicted future domestic interactive media forms combining information technologies and entertainment (p. 40). In turn, in her words, with these initiatives, “style is clearly preceding any technical ability to deliver new content forms or services but the presence of this new aesthetic helps to acclimatise the audience to a look, feel, and hoped-for function(s) of an interactive television interface” (p. 51).

Likewise, the postulates of Vered were taken up by Scolari (2008) in his study of post-hypertextual aesthetics. Specifically, Scolari spoke of hyper-television as a new form of the medium (p. 320). Among other aspects, what stood out at the time was the fragmentation of the screen as a distinctive feature when analyzing how the television interface was adapting to compete with interactive digital media in the new millennium: the multiscreen system, the modularization of information and even a visual fragmentation that also affected mainstream fictional television productions, as in the case of the series *24* (FOX, 2001-2010). Thus, the television interface simulated what it was incapable of offering audiences: interaction. Unsurprisingly, practically all of the characteristics of hyper-television noted by Scolari “come from interactive screens and hypertextual consumer experiences (surfing on the Internet, videogames, multitasking with different apps at the same time, etc.)” (p. 326).

In the same vein, stress should be placed on the interface/multiscreen pairing, particularly in the current context of “the planetary dominance of the *screen-sphere*” (Lipovetsky, & Serroy, 2009, p. 22, original italics). The development of mobile devices has logically multiplied the number of screens available to users and subsequently led to the evident expansion of graphic interfaces designed for interacting with devices. As Lipovetsky and Serroy contend, we are living in an environment marked by the presence of screens at all times and in all places, “screens for doing and seeing everything. Video screens, miniature screens, graphic screens, nomad screens, touchscreens: the new century is that of the omnipresent and multiform, planetary and multimedia screen” (2009, p. 10).

That said, just as Vered (2002) referred to the “windows aesthetics” of television at the beginning of the new millennium, so too is there an interesting connection with the so-called “desktop aesthetics”, multilayered and containing frames within frames, to which Holly Willis (2005) alluded in her approach to new digital cinema (p. 4). Specifically, the authoress was referring to filmmakers like Peter Greenaway and Mike Figgis, in her intention to

pushing the composited image world one step further in seminal projects that emphasise the role of image frame, even referencing the frame as the site for the collision, layering, interpenetration and general orchestration of disparate elements. The result is what might be dubbed a desktop aesthetic, as it cannot help but point to the visual syntax of the computer screen and its cacophony of frames and layers. (pp. 38-39)

In view of these considerations, it is not hard to see that the impact of these aesthetic trends on cinema and television is an ongoing process, regardless of the direct migrations to other environments, as in the case of web cinema and interactive documentaries, among others. Therefore, their subsequent development has led to the shaping of windows and desktop aesthetics, the simulation of interactivity, fragmentation and the multiscreen environment, with the aesthetics of mobile media and the Web 2.0 environment. This, in turn, has given rise to productions that have found their best ally in social networking sites and webcams in order to explore alternative narrative forms ... to the point of giving center stage to the graphic interfaces of computers, constraining the narrative development to their visual structure and functioning.

Going to this extreme, the film or television screen “becomes” a computer desktop, monitoring its activity and constructing the story on the basis of the register of the user’s interactions with its interface. Whether this be a character (or characters) belonging to the narrative universe or the very author/“architect” of the work, it is his or her use of the device that rolls out and structures the story. This is modelled on the simultaneity of content and the accumulation of information on screens in continuous transition; like a space in which the emerging windows of all types of apps and user operations proliferate. Far from being a momentary action, most or all of the discourse is developed in those conditions in which the cinematic *mise-en-scène* becomes a “computational *mise-en-interface*” (Cha, & Lee, 2018, p. 75). Accordingly, the audience are plunged into an immersive narrative adapted to their own daily existence; a family setting that they encounter on a daily basis, which is, more often than not, one of their main ways of experiencing reality. From non-fiction to fiction, from an exploratory approach to the documentary genre and the film essay to experimental shorts, box-office hits and episodes of cult TV series, this literal interpretation of desktop aesthetics transforms its standards of expression into a new format, a paradigmatic result of hybridization and remediation. In the context of post-Internet, post-digital aesthetics, “desktop cinema” and, more specifically, the “desktop documentary” have found their niche (Baptista, 2016; Cha & Lee, 2018).

Specifically, the so-called “desktop documentary” has grown in popularity in the realm of documentaries and film essays, thus allowing for the construction of discourses principally on the basis of content available online. As Kevin B. Lee (2014)—one of the precursors of the formats—maintains: “If the documentary genre is meant to capture life’s reality, then desktop recording acknowledges that computer screens and the internet are now a primary experience of our daily lives, as well as a primary repository of information”.

So, for the author, the aim of the desktop documentary is not only to describe the ways in which computers are used to explore the world, but also to question them. It is precisely this reflective character through images in movement that, for Català Domènech (2010), establishes the film essay as one of the most representative manifestations for visualizing the phenomenological characteristics of the interface (p. 283). In turn, its tendency towards metadiscursivity has discovered in this desktop aesthetics an opportune way of exploring the very nature of the discourse by displaying and challenging its construction process.

In their paper on desktop documentaries and narrative databases, Cha and Lee (2018) have underlined the format’s potential to transcend “the boundaries between creation and criticism through creative mechanism as curation through stream of consciousness” (p. 75). It is actually this “stream” that gives shape to the *mise-en-interface* to which the authors are referring, giving free rein to linked content searches, the sequential reproduction of online videos, the overlapping of windows, zoom movements to highlight information and, in short, the future of on-screen organization. Thus, following initial works including *A Short Film About War* (Alison Craighead and Jon Thomson, 2010) and *Fragments d’une révolution* (Anonymous, 2011), those such as *Transformers: The Premake* (Kevin B. Lee, 2014) and *My Crush was a Superstar* (Chloé Galibert-Laîné, 2017) are interesting examples of the discursive versatility of the desktop documentary genre, which has even allowed it to be recognized as a valuable pedagogical tool.

For their part, films such as *Noah* (Patrick Cederberg and Walter Woodman, 2013), *Open Windows* (Nacho Vigalondo, 2014), *Unfriended* (Levan Gabriadze, 2014) and its sequel *Unfriended: Dark Web* (Stephen Susco, 2018), *Searching* (Aneesh Chaganty, 2018) or *Profile* (Timur Bekmambetov, 2018) are clear examples of this “interfacing process” that has also burst onto the scene in the fictional film genre. These productions, halfway between the cyber horror and thriller genres, usually combine social

networking sites, the Web environment, multiple videoconferences and large doses of cyberbullying, among other unsettling aspects. Their success lies in the extent to which the audience identify with the characters, plus a certain feeling of voyeurism that they experience while watching these films. In fact, the repercussions of the formula, called “screenlife” by the director and producer Timur Bekmambetov, has led him to develop an apps package, available online, for making these types of audiovisual pieces. In any event, not all the fictional manifestations of these practices have the same scope. Furthermore, television fiction has also followed this trend in aesthetics and format, as can be seen, for example, in series like *Web Therapy* (Showtime, 2011-2015), and especially in the episode “Connection Lost” broadcast during the sixth season of *Modern Family* (ABC, 2009-), in which its narrative potential is also explored (S06E16, 2015).

AN ONGOING HALLMARK IN CONTINUITY

After exploring the transfer of the key features of the aesthetics of new media and communication devices to the film and television realms, the strengthening of certain trends emerging in digital audiovisual language has been detected. Thus, emphasis is clearly placed on media hybridization and rhetorical convergence (Fagerjord, 2003); on the deep remixability of content, techniques and forms of representation and expression in interaction (Manovich, 2013), the recent advances in mobile communication and the Web 2.0 environment being assimilated in those processes. The digital “funnel” insists on integration and remediation (Bolter, & Grusin, 2000), making hypermediacy the prevailing logic and its exhibition of mediation, an ongoing hallmark. Therefore, the “look” anticipated by Vered (2002) in her conception of windows aesthetics, in addition to the post-hypertextual characteristics noted by Scolari (2008), has expanded and become more pronounced, until arriving at the most literal meaning of the desktop aesthetic (Willis, 2005), a reflection of the hegemony of software and its metalanguage in the multiscreen context of devices and interfaces in constant feedback.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Due to space constraints and the approach employed here, certain issues that should be regarded as relevant aspects for future research have not been addressed or explored in this chapter. First and foremost, the importance that the different manifestations of desktop cinema have begun to gain requires a comprehensive study of its dynamics, from both a formal and narrative perspective, addressing in depth the particularities of its language as a format with a long history. Secondly, and in line with the in-depth representation of the interface, other experimental approaches should be borne in mind. Specifically, works like those by Keiichi Matsuada broaden the audiovisual mise-en-interface to include augmented/mixed reality in projects that inquire into visuality in the near future from a critical perspective, such as *Hyper-reality* (2016). Lastly, in this connection, another line of research should examine gamification processes and real interactivity in cinema and television. For example, beyond the aforementioned simulation as a visual resource, the smart TV boom is pushing back the frontiers of the television device, which is now also being developed in vertical format. By integrating interactivity and connectivity, its interface is now open to new narrative-entertainment approaches that have begun to be explored in proposals like *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* (Netflix, 2018).

CONCLUSION

As discussed above, cinema and television are not impervious to the aesthetic characteristics introduced by new media and communication devices. Consequently, aspects inherent to mobile communication and the Web 2.0 environment have made their way into the language and visual resources of the big and the (formerly) small screen. Occasionally, this transfer occurs in an isolated fashion, as a one-off graphic device; sometimes, in contrast, it involves a decisive transformation of the ways and forms of constructing and articulating the narrative. In this itinerary, in which the representation of the interface acquires an overt presence, befitting its status in current society, the desktop aesthetic ends up blurring the line between the computer screen and cinema or television. Thus, in the realm of hybridization and remediation, the limits and the identity of media and formats are becoming gradually more vague in an ecology prone to make convergence the motor behind the advent of new creative forms in continuous reformulation.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Deep Remixability: The capacity to remix media, content, techniques and forms of representation and expression in interaction inherent to the hybrid language representative of the digital age.

Desktop Cinema: A cinematographic practice that, in its formulation, assimilates the dynamics and appearance of a desktop computer, transferring the device's interface to the screen.

Hypermediacy: One of the two logics on which remediation is based, through which the medium itself is shown and displayed, its reality thus becoming apparent, in tension with the object of representation.

Mise-en-interface: A term employed, in relation to desktop cinema, to designate the construction and visual deployment of content on screen.

Remediation: The representation of a medium in another, a phenomenon characteristic of the digital environment.

Vertical Video: A representative filming/reproduction format of mobile devices, above all smartphones.

Chapter 2

Televised Sporting Events: Applications of Second Screens

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ABSTRACT

The second screen has become a new resource for accessing information in addition to what you can see on television. This allows for an enhanced viewing experience through the generation of new services, apps, and changes in the production of content. Sporting events, especially large ones that are broadcast live, have especially developed this innovation. This chapter examines the distinctive features that the second screen contributes to televised sporting events, considering the type of production as well as the effects that are generated in the reception of the content and the alteration to the way the treatment the audiovisual content may receive. To achieve this, real cases from the Spanish context are studied, such as two major cycling events: La Vuelta 2017 (rtve.es) and the Tour de France 2019 (rtve.es and Eurosport Player App).

INTRODUCTION

With their digitization, the media have incorporated new technologies that have modified the habits of traditional TV audiences. The use of laptop computers, tablets and smartphones, among other devices, has allowed for broadening the dissemination of TV content and for making the role of viewers more participatory and interactive (Blake, 2017). The resulting media convergence represents a decisive cultural change, insofar as it enables consumers to search for new information and to establish links between the content of different media (Jenkins, 2006). New resources have emerged from this convergence between the traditional and digital media, including the second screen that permits users to access additional components and content not offered on television. This involves a second electronic device that the audience uses while simultaneously watching a TV program (Cunningham & Eastin, 2017), an innovation that has led to the launching of new apps for producing content, which in recent years TV operators have gradually incorporated into their range of services. This should come as no surprise inasmuch as it is a

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resource that offers creators new opportunities for establishing a more significant connection between audiences and content.

In this context, if there is a TV genre that has been especially innovative in the second screen environment, then that would be sports programs, above all the live broadcasts of major events like the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. These major events, which are largely designed on the basis of their TV coverage, are ideal showcases for the innovative use of digital technologies (Miah, 2017). Given the growing mediatization of sports, the live broadcasting of many disciplines generates such a huge amount of information that this cannot be adequately transmitted via the traditional TV format. In this sense, second screens supplement events broadcast on television by offering greater doses of spectacle and interactive content. In some cases, viewers emulate the role of directors by selecting camera angles, modifying the frame speed or selecting the audio track. In other cases, the experience of viewers transcends the first screen when they use the official social media profiles of TV operators to express their opinions in real time during the broadcasting of an event (Owens, 2016).

The foregoing considerations beg the following question: as to sports content, does the second screen offer more relevant information than that which can be obtained via traditional TV media outlets or channels? The aim of this chapter is to analyze how the second screen has contributed to TV sports broadcasts. To this end, the focus is placed here on both the type of audiovisual production and the narrative effects that such content generates, employing an applied methodology that combines two procedures: a case study and a qualitative content analysis. The purpose of the former is to employ specific cases of second screen use as points of reference in the Spanish context: the 2017 Vuelta a España (Rtve.es) and the 2019 Tour de France (Rtve.es and Eurosport player), both major cycling events. As to the latter, data processing was performed on the basis of the different ways in which second screens are used (Owens, 2016).

THEORETICAL APPROACH

At present, the abundance of information generated by the new forms of digital communication has modified the behavior of users who are now encouraged to select their own sources (Vivar & García, 2009) from among a broader range of services. Similarly, with the advent of different screens – smartphones, laptops, tablets, video game consoles and smart televisions – the consumption of audiovisual content has become increasingly more varied. This new communication environment is characterized preferentially by individual use (Fernández Peña, 2016). For Castells (2009), “mass self-communication” is the result of the interactive capacity of the new system, which multiplies and diversifies the communication process. On the other hand, following Dimmick (2003), the so-called “niche theory” suggests that a new medium competes with its older counterparts to satisfy the needs of users by offering them the opportunity to access content other than that which is available at a given moment. So, according to niche theory, the introduction of a new medium may or may not lead to competition with its older counterparts. In this chapter, the new medium is the second screen device and the older one, television. Rather than a competition between both media, second screen media consumption has emerged as a way of reinforcing the attention of users (Cunningham & Eastin, 2017).

The term “second screen” derives from the media convergence between television and mobile devices. It refers “to some type of computer device (computer, tablet, or smartphone) being used to access additional information about what is being seen on television. It is sometimes referred to as enhancing the viewing experience” (Owens, 2016, p. 31). This relationship has been marked by an unprecedented

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technological revolution in the recent digital landscape. However, beyond the technical complexity, the key to media convergence lies in the minds of individual users, who through their interactions construct new discourses (Jenkins, 2006), with the expansion of the Internet and wireless communication favoring new user practices (Castells, 2009). Moreover, these new forms of communication have given rise to more autonomous, restless and participatory audiences (Delima-Ruiz & Gutierrez-Coba, 2018).

The “second screen” notion predates the appearance of smartphones and other devices. Over a decade ago, in a study performed on a representative group of users in the United Kingdom Cruickshank, Tseklevs, Whitham, Hill and Kondo (2007) observed that the development of a mobile second screen could improve TV interaction and browsing mechanisms. According to Aguado (2013), on the other hand, the simultaneous use of two screens implies two types of uses: superimposed and coordinated. In the first case, superimposed use involves intertwined, non-complementary actions – such as answering emails while watching television – while coordinated use involves complementary actions that reinforce each other – like viewing a program from a camera angle differing from the one available on traditional television. Whereby the “second screen” should not only be understood as a simple multimedia device, but rather as the experience of a viewer who simultaneously interacts with content in two different environments (Blake, 2017). Just as the number of mobile device users has grown, so too has simultaneous second screen media consumption. In this connection, Izquierdo (2017) focuses on the consolidation of simultaneous TV consumption on second screens, noting how it is primarily the social media effect produced by audiences that promotes, in turn, linear consumption. In this respect, a study published by IAB Spain (2019), in relation to the uses of mobile devices as second screens, indicated that 92.3 per cent of Spaniards watch television while using their smartphones.

Furthermore, the media conceives the use of second screens as a strategic component for strengthening the commitment of their audiences. It is what has become to be known as engagement, a concept applied in various contexts, including advertising, narrative and the media (Cunningham & Eastin, 2017). In the field of advertising, engagement is a way of building consumer loyalty. In this sense, the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) considers that “media engagement is turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context” (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel, 2009). For their part, Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) contend that engagement has to do with the way in which we become involved or immersed in a narrative or how we transmit it:

Audience members construct mental models of meaning to represent a story. These models, represent settings, characters, and situations, and are created by combining information from the text with knowledge the reader or viewer already possesses about life in general as well as about the specific topic and genre of the narrative (p. 322).

As to the media, the need to involve audiences and to develop attractive technologies has become a strategic objective when developing interactive systems such as second screens. The concept of “direct engagement” underscores the interaction between humans and machines, for which reason the cognitive intentions of users could, in theory, be realized by manipulating the interface. Lalmas, O’Brien, and Yom-Tov (2015) define it using three dimensions: “user engagement is the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experience of a user with a technological resource that exists, at any point in time and over time” (p. 3). This factor has a bearing when a member of the audience becomes involved, connected and identified with a program, searching for a sense of participation. Behaviors of this type are especially evident in sports programs, in which fans become more emotionally involved, frequently shifting from

the first to the second screen. By and large, during TV programs presenters and commentators request the audience to participate on social media with their opinions or reactions, some of which are then read out during the live broadcast. This circumstance encourages viewers to use a second screen device, thus increasing their engagement (Cunningham & Eastin, 2017). And if they also derive some sort of satisfaction from participating, they will see the second screen in a positive light.

INTERACTIVITY IN SPORTS PROGRAMS

The advent of digital television not only substantially improved image and sound quality, but also opened up a range of new services including, among others, interactive content and data transmission (Cruickshank et al., 2007). This technological breakthrough has resulted in a deeper level of audience engagement. In the specific case of the sports genre, it happens that fans tend to become more emotionally involved with live TV programs in which their favorite teams or sports personalities participate. The broadcasting of sports events is an ideal framework for integrating interactivity into TV consumption, fundamentally in the North American and European markets, in which live sports events are one of the key strategic components of their programming (Vivar & García, 2009). At the end of the twentieth century, the sports broadcasts of some TV companies came with digital services that offered viewers the possibility of mixing the stream of live footage with other shots and selecting replays (Marín-Montín, 2006). The advent of interactivity in live sports programs has led to the differentiation between two audience types: those who let themselves be carried away by elaborate content; and those who want something more and prefer to have a certain amount of control over their TV reception of sports events (Benitez, 2013).

The constant evolution of technology has enabled TV operators to make the experience of viewers more interactive by offering them additional services that give them greater control over the selection of visual and audio elements. On television, these elements, such as the electronic program guide (EPG), occupy the same screen space as the main image. In the case of live sports programs, digitization has served to increase the number of alternatives in the reception of broadcasts, the most significant of which are discussed below.

At a visual level, the selection of camera angles is one of the most common tools. Thanks to multi-camera options, using the live program's signal as a basis, viewers can combine it with additional footage of the same event, playing, in a sense, the role of directors. This tool has generally been employed by subscription channels as an extra component in the live broadcasting of different sports events, including soccer, ice hockey and motorsports (Prado, Franquet, Soto, Ribes & Fernández, 2008). On television, another prevalent tool allows viewers to interrupt programs. In live sports broadcasts, this usually takes the shape of replays. And, lastly, another of the interactive elements that many TV channels have included in their live sports programs from the start is a multiscreen tool that allows viewers to mix more than one signal in different combinations: like watching two soccer matches at the same time, selecting different video streams from a mosaic menu or obtaining supplementary statistical data. In 2001, the BBC included interactive elements of this type in a sports broadcast for the first time when covering Wimbledon:

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Digital TV users could press their red buttons to watch a choice of up to five live matches via an 'interactive multiscreen' application. They could select a specific match to watch or view all five by remaining in multiscreen. Each screen had its own 'dynamic scoreboard' which automatically updated during the game (Blake, 2017, p. 17).

In the case of motorsports, like MotoGP, thanks to this multiscreen system, audiences can receive up to six live signals at the same time. In this case, it is an additional subscription TV service for Movistar TV subscribers, which was launched in Spain in 2014. However, this component has not subsequently evolved towards the diversification of exclusive second screen content.

Together with the image-related services, digital television has permitted the development of an exclusive tool that provides further soundtrack options. Thus, many TV operators have begun to offer, as an additional service, the possibility of choosing between different audio tracks, in addition to that of the program in question. In the case of soccer TV subscriptions in Spain, the different audio tracks correspond to that of the broadcast signal of the TV channel itself and to other locutions broadcast by different radio stations. In other cases, if an event is broadcast under a license in several countries, operators allow viewers to select another language to watch the program, which is normally in English. Lastly, to these supplementary audio services should be added the possibility of silencing the audio commentary of a program and watching it just with ambient sound.

It is no coincidence that the aforementioned elements introduced by TV operators to enhance the participatory experience of viewers are associated with the videoludic universe, particularly sports video games (Marín-Montín, 2014). On the other hand, the remediation of television in sports video games is a phenomenon that highlights the media convergence and, in turn, has spurred the development of integrated sports experiences (Stein, 2013). To illustrate these synergies, a number of elements will now be described in further detail below.

First and foremost, the multi-camera tool that digital television offers in some sports broadcasts is related to the experience of gamers accustomed to modifying their perspective with the game controls depending on the narrative moment. In motorsports video games, the choice of subjective camera angles enhances the immersive experience. This element would subsequently be employed in TV broadcasts of motorsports, like Formula 1 and MotoGP, including on-board technology making it possible to view the action from the vehicles of the drivers. Secondly, the replay tool of many video games is related to one of the most important TV resources in the narrative of live sports broadcasts. For instance, games like the popular FIFA (Electronic Arts Sports), in its different versions, allow players to activate replays from different angles and to modify the frame speed during play. For the first time ever, FIFA 18 offered 360° replays, thus emulating the spectacular nature of TV soccer broadcasts. Thirdly, mention should go to the split-screen tool of video games, which first appeared on television. In sports video games, this tool is commonly used to display their different aspects in a fragmented manner, from simultaneous camera angles to graphic data relating to the action. The race simulation section of the video game Pro Cycling Manager (Cyanide) – developed under a license by the Tour de France – has multiscreen settings that offer comparisons during the game, ranging from the choice of perspective to viewing the multiplayer option. Lastly, as regards sound it is important to note the influence of major sports broadcasts on the development of sports video games.

All these synergies are a result of business partnerships between major sports events and video game developers. Accordingly, these video games usually feature popular sports commentators with an eye to enhancing the interactive experience of players. All of these examples underscore the evident dialogic

relationship between sports video games and TV sports broadcasts. By the same token, the links between sports fans and gaming should also be highlighted, one of which is the experience offered by televised sports, which is at the point of convergence with sports video games (Stein, 2013).

In recent years, the cost of producing sports events and that of their broadcasting rights has risen due to increased competition between TV operators and platforms. This is why those costs are applied more and more to users by putting up subscription and access fees. Be that as it may, the economic, cultural and technological relationship of TV sports broadcasts is one of the greatest assets of the media in the twenty-first century (Schultz & Wei, 2013). The owners of the broadcasting rights of major sports events are resorting to digital platforms and developing complementary apps to obtain the highest return on investment (Blake, 2017). The consolidation of the Internet and the growth of digital platforms, mobile devices and social media have offered sports fans a wider range of opportunities for “live” interaction with content. Hence, “Broadcast television is now supplemented by an array of other platforms, including Internet-enabled television sets, mobile (also known as cell) phones, tablets, game consoles, desktop, laptop and notebook computers” (Rowe & Hutchins, 2014, p. 9). Notwithstanding the digital and social media era, television continues to be a key component of this “new media” ecology. But it should also be noted that television is no longer conceived in isolation from these new media. Thus, the sports programs of the major channels – which include a large variety of live events – are offered simultaneously employing multimedia via different platforms that enable viewers to watch television on computers or mobile devices (Haynes & Boyle, 2017).

THE SECOND SCREEN, SPORTS AND TELEVISION

A priori, the second screen provides an interactive environment in which sports fans can control, enrich, share and transfer content (Benigni, Porter & Wood, 2014). With another screen, this new form of interaction goes beyond the services that can be activated with a digital TV remote control unit. The growing use of second screens to consume standard TV content has given rise to other technologies for involving viewers in new forms of participation. For those audiovisual operators that own the live broadcasting rights of sports events, incorporating the second screen in their live broadcasts is a highly valuable resource. It is yet another way of engaging larger audiences and offering them new experiences (Miah, 2014). This begs the following three questions: What contribution does the second screen make? How do sports fans use second screen devices when watching television? And what type of content do they consume? Depending on the event and the audiovisual operator, the second screen is put to many uses in televised sports. All of these practices fulfil a number of functions, the most representative of which will be considered below.

Modes of Use

Traditionally, sports fans have attempted to enhance their experiences of live events – both in the grandstand and on television – resorting to resources that increase their enjoyment. For example, for many years it was common to see many sports fans listening to (transistor) radios, despite the fact that they were watching the event in situ or on television. Nowadays, sports fans use second screens as complementary devices to broaden their knowledge or to interact with other fans while watching television. For Owens

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(2016), there are a number of requirements that are key to determining the effectiveness of the second screen, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Having a user-friendly browser with an intuitive interface.
2. Offering much more information than can be obtained from watching television.
3. Supplementing the event.
4. Offering live and on-demand content.
5. Having a social media chat app is essential.
6. Encouraging gaming and rewarding viewers for their loyalty.
7. Conducting polls to discover viewers' opinions on a variety of topics that allow them to feel that they are contributing to the TV narrative.
8. Providing viewers with the wherewithal to customize the second screen with the elements of their choice.
9. Including text alerts.
10. Incorporating tools that improve the experience of the event: camera angles and replays.

All these requirements are supplementary and can be integrated so to make the second screen more efficient.

The use of social networking sites is one of the defining elements of the second screen that have become most widespread in TV consumption. At present, if an organization does not have a social media presence, it will engage audiences for less time, since the Internet is where the online experience takes place (Miah, 2017). In this connection, TV sports broadcasts tend to be programs that have an important impact on social media and, consequently, encourage viewers to use second screens (Delima-Ruiz & Gutierrez-Coba, 2018). The fact that viewers are familiar with this communication tool – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, among others – means that it is the most leveraged resource for coproducing content parallel to the live TV broadcasting of a sports program. This is owing to the fact that, with the advent of social media, the concept of audience has diversified. What makes this new medium stand out is that neither is there a generic way of using these platforms, nor a sole channel viewed by all. Social media not only allow companies to fine tune their marketing strategies for engaging users, but also offer them a channel through which they can voice their social concerns more effectively (Miah, 2017).

On the other hand, the aim of this type of business partnership is to generate synergies between television and social media – in the current multitask culture – in order to encourage the public to participate (Fernández, Ramajo, & Arauz, 2014). This leads to collaboration between TV channels and social networking sites. For some time now, the company NBC has had agreements in place with social networking sites to distribute sports content up until 2032. For instance, during the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games NBC Universal will broadcast for the first time a special live program exclusively via Twitter (Draper, 2019).

In point of fact, Twitter is currently one of the most frequently used social networking sites in TV sports programs, which use hashtags to foster second screen participation. Many live TV sports programs display a specific hashtag in the upper left-hand corner of the screen to engage viewers. In some cases, when programs invite viewers to participate on social media, there can even be feedback with them if the comments that they have posted are mentioned. In other cases, the chat thread proposed by the program opens up another channel parallel to the televised event, through which users ask questions, express their views or provide information and curiosities. Since it has a relevant impact on the audience, however, a

chat is a tool that needs to be integrated. Hence, in sports programs it is essential that commentators or expert guests be able to answer the questions posed by social media users in real time (Owens, 2016).

Another of the contributions of second screens to sports programs are apps that supplement the reception options offered by television. Some second screen tools were developed even before the advent of digital television. The novelty now lies in making them available to viewers at the same time as the TV program signal. They are apps that TV operators make available to users on different devices (smartphones, tablets, desktop and laptop computers, consoles, etc.). One of these tools is related to cameras and allows users to choose angles different from those provided by the program signal. Depending on the sports event and the type of TV channel covering it, there are different variants. In the United States, the TV coverage of the 2012 Super Bowl enabled viewers to select additional camera angles differing from those provided by NBC's main signal. Thanks to this extra content, viewers could select different visualization options and combinations, including second screens, available through NFL Mobile, NBC-Sports.com and NFL.com (Brodin, 2012). In Europe, many public and free-to-air private TV channels have begun to offer viewers this additional service, allowing them to choose different camera angles in major sports events. A number of examples will now be discussed below.

In 2013, the operator France Télévisions – responsible for producing the Tour de France – launched a novel digital device for watching the multiple stage bicycle race on screens other than television. For the first time, viewers could choose between four cameras located in different parts of the course. Thus, the camera motorbikes offered viewers the experience of watching the race from different angles of their choice. Called “le multcam”, this transmedia tool, designed to be used as a second screen and which also features a split screen showing all of the camera signals simultaneously, is available on the portal francetvsport.fr. (Bette, 2013). Many other TV operators offer a generic option, called “mosaic”, which allows viewers to do much the same. This is now a matter of course in the interactive TV coverage of motorsports, like the aforementioned example of Movistar TV. Another example of this practice was the TV coverage of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. Mediaset – the owner of the broadcasting rights of this major sports event in Spain – provided viewers with a tool that allowed them to choose between six additional signals during the matches broadcast live on television and the Internet. Additional content could be watched on the TV channel telecinco.es and with the Mediaset Sport's app. Together with the program signal, viewers had the following options: a tactical camera, two cameras covering the benches and two further cameras following the star players of each team. As to marketing, the TV company coined the following slogan: “Become your own director and watch each match from the perspective of your choice” (Telecinco, 2014).

Second Screen Analysis - The 2017 Vuelta a España and the 2019 Tour de France

With the aim of answering the research questions posed above, the specific case of cycling will now be analyzed by focusing on the sport's most outstanding events. Specifically, an analysis is performed here on the second screen apps launched by the Spanish public broadcasting company RTVE and the pan-European TV channel Eurosport.¹ For decades now, professional road bicycle racing would have been inconceivable without TV coverage, for its live broadcasting underpins a spectacular sport that depends on advertising revenues from the brands sponsoring the teams (Marín-Montín, 2012). Furthermore, it is a multistage sport covering considerable distances, all of which calls for a complex technical task force to produce and transmit the TV signal (Fandiño, 2002). As in other professional sports, the organizing

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bodies of both events – Unipublic and Amaury Sport Organization, respectively – are responsible for regulating and marketing La Vuelta and the Tour de France, with exclusive TV broadcasting rights.

In 1983, La Vuelta began to be broadcast live by TVE, the public broadcaster in Spain. Since then, the coverage of the event has evolved constantly, an evolution characterized chiefly by the technological advances that have influenced its narrative development. Since starting to develop online communication, the Spanish operator has introduced new services and apps that reinforce its TV content. During the 2012 edition of La Vuelta, viewers could watch each stage live or on a deferred basis by accessing archives hosted on the portal rtve.es. On the other hand, to encourage viewers to use second screens during the live broadcasts, TVE offered them the possibility of posting their queries on Teledeportes' blog (En Ruta) and on social media (Facebook and Twitter). Specifically, viewers sent their questions to Carlos de Andrés (presenter) and Pedro Delgado (commentator), who then answered them during the program. But due to the deluge of questions, they had to be filtered. In addition, to reinforce audience engagement, the program would reward some of the viewers for their questions with cycling equipment (Marín-Montín, 2012).

In the 2017 edition of La Vuelta, the use of second screens was bolstered by a novel multi-camera tool designed for other devices. Based on France Télévisions' "le multicam" service for the Tour de France, viewers accessed "La Vuelta, live" with rtve.es' app. This enabled them to watch the race, while choosing between different program signals from three camera motorbikes and the helicopter camera. As to sound, when viewers selected any one of these four cameras, they heard ambient sound coming from both the vehicles and the race. The viewer has additional content differing from those provided by TVE's main signal incorporating tools that improve the experience of the event (Owens, 2016). One of the Rtve.es' app options provided viewers customize the content for full screen mode. On the other hand, when the user chose one of the camera options, the second screen introduced additional graphic information (e.g. "Follow La Vuelta on Motorbike 3"). Furthermore, this specific use of second screen allowed viewers to share additional content on social networks (Facebook, Twitter and google +). In the 2018 edition of La Vuelta, viewers could yet again avail themselves of the multi-camera option, something that is now well-established in the broadcasting of other major sports events, such as the Sanfermines bull runs, and the Goya awards ceremony for Spanish cinema.

The Tour de France is the most important international road cycling race in the world. In its 2019 edition, the international signal transmitted by France Télévisions was distributed in 190 countries, with 100 channels broadcasting the event live (Ciclismo a fondo, 2019). In Spain, RTVE and Eurosport were the operators responsible for broadcasting the race, with a special program available on their TV channels and specific online portals. In the case of the public broadcasting company RTVE, the race could be watched live on the channels Teledeporte and La 1, which alternated depending on the stage to engage larger audiences. Moreover, the same program was distributed via the portal rtve.es, with additional components. To favor interactivity with viewers on social media, a hashtag (for instance, #TourRTVE21J) was displayed each day in the top left-hand corner of the screen. And it was during the live broadcasting of the race that the audience participated most. The presenter Carlos de Andrés, the commentator Pedro Delgado and the special guest invited to the program each day would respond directly to the questions asked by followers on Twitter. In this sense, the duration of the stages – which normally last over three hours – made it possible to read out the answers or comments of viewers, thus providing additional program content particularly when nothing interesting was happening in the race. A good example of this is the comment made by Pedro Delgado during the last stage: "Here's another question from Magnus Pym: while INEOS is still about, you, the organizers, can design the best stages

that you're capable of coming up with, since they'll take it upon themselves to say how the stage should be raced." Besides the use of social media, the portal *rtve.es* offered viewers an additional service with the multi-camera broadcasting of up to eight signals: two program signals (*La 1* and *Teledeporte*), five from the camera motorbikes and one from the finish line. Depending on the device, viewers were provided with a lateral menu on screen with the different signals, plus a box with the selected option featuring prominently on the other side.

As regards Eurosport's coverage of the 2019 edition of the Tour de France, this differed from RTVE's. Eurosport is a private media outlet that is available on pay-to-view platforms. The special program designed for broadcasting the Tour de France was distributed via the channel Eurosport 1 and on its online portal with the pay-to-view app Eurosport Player. Despite the fact that Eurosport was one of the first channels to include audience forums and social networking sites in its broadcasts of road cycling races, unlike RTVE it did not use this tool for its coverage of the 2019 edition of the Tour de France. Instead, a strategy for engaging the audience was implemented on Eurosport Player. Specifically, it is an on-demand tool that allows viewers, among other options, to access the live broadcasts of major sports events, like the Tour de France. The app offers subscribers a multi-camera menu with extra content, which is not broadcast on Eurosport 1, which in combination with television becomes a second screen. Unlike RTVE, the Eurosport Player app did not offer options for sharing the extra content on social networks. As on RTVE, viewers can choose between five camera motorbike signals and that of the camera covering the finish line. However, Eurosport Player allowed higher levels of customization than RTVE app, as it also offers the option of watching the program with ambient sound and the possibility of rewinding 30 seconds at any point. Lastly, as to its functioning, Eurosport's app has a larger interface and it is more intuitive and fluid than RTVE's, above all when interacting to select the multi-camera tool.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing, the current use of the second screen in live TV sports broadcasts is conditioned by the following factors:

1. The broadcasting of each sport creates a type of individual discourse, for which reason it is necessary to adapt its TV narrative to the second screen.
2. The use of social media in programs of this type should be adequately managed by TV operators during broadcasts. Channels sometimes leverage social media without discretion, using them as content fillers that have nothing to do with the event in question.
3. The technical time delay currently characterizing digital television, due to the compression and decompression of the signal, is compounded in the case of online broadcasting. This gives rise to synchronization issues when simultaneously watching a live sports event on two screens.
4. The additional content provided by second screens enables viewers to customize the reception of sports events with new tools. Nevertheless, these elements should logically enhance the experience of viewers without saturating them with information.
5. In order to reinforce emotional trust in and engagement with sports programs, there is a need for updated resources that cater to specific audience segments consuming this type of content. TV operators should perform market research adapted to the new media in order to improve the quality of their services.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The progressive evolution of consumer habits, which are shifting from traditional TV content to that available on mobile devices, is transforming the viewing experience offered by sports programs. On the one hand, the digital TV model is incorporating new tools that offer the viewers of live sports programs the possibility of customizing their viewing experience. During the next few years, it will be primarily the pay-for-view digital platforms that will continue to incorporate the largest number of developments in these new uses. On the other, those TV channels that own the broadcasting rights for sports events have opted for developing specific apps for their exclusive webcasting. Since August 2019, Mediaset – one of the main Spanish TV operators – has been the first to offer the main soccer competitions via a paid app.

In parallel, specific streaming services for sports webcasts are beginning to appear. The international pay-for-view platform DAZN² offers subscribers in different countries the main soccer and motorsports competitions. In Spain, the free-to-air streaming platform LaLigaSportsTV³ is dedicated to sports with less media coverage and includes live broadcasts of different competitions in its programming. This diversification in the distribution of sports content will allow for exploring new research opportunities so as to determine whether the second screen phenomenon is transitory or will continue to coexist with the first screen. Likewise, the study of the reception of sports content during broadcasts will make it possible to identify user behavior more precisely.

CONCLUSION

The advent of second screens for consuming sports content has modified the role of audiences. TV operators seek to reinforce the interactive experience of viewers with different resources that foster engagement. In addition to being the most used channel to encourage audiences to participate, social media also achieve the greatest relevance during live sports broadcasts. The development of apps has adapted the interactive options for second screens so that they can be visualized on different devices. In many cases, they are elements already existing on digital television and in video games, such as the multi-camera tool. Nevertheless, due to the rising cost of broadcasting rights for major sports events, only large audience numbers or the subscription to pay-for-view channels will make it possible to capitalize on this type of additional content. Barring competitions like La Vuelta and the Tour de France broadcast by public TV corporations, the development of new apps that enhance the experience of sports fans will require further spending on their part.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Ambient Sound: Real background sound elements. During a sports broadcast, it is supplemented by the narration and comments in the foreground.

Broadcasting Rights: Business contracts between media outlets – especially TV channels – for the live broadcasting of major events.

Interactive Television: The evolution of the TV medium towards a more participatory environment for viewers. Driven by digitization, it has different levels and services.

Live Broadcasting: The transmission of an event without a significant delay.

Multi-camera: A tool that allows viewers to select different cameras during the live broadcasting of a program.

Multiscreen: A viewing mode that simultaneously offers several live content signals.

Program Signal: The final transmission of images and sound by the producer for its TV broadcasting.

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Replays: Recourse to audiovisual language that serves to clarify actions that have gone unnoticed during a live broadcast.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ A private European TV network offering sports content. Created in 1989, with headquarters in France, it is operated by the Discovery Group Inc. and the channel TF1.
- ² Streaming platform offering live and on-demand sports content, established in 2015 with headquarters in the United Kingdom. It belongs to the Perform Group.
- ³ Over-the-top (OTT) service belonging to LaLiga, which since 2019 has been offering live, free-to-air broadcasts of Spanish sports competitions via multiple devices.

Chapter 3

The Mirror Effect and the Transparent City in Audio-Visual Non-Dramatic Fiction: Comedic Autofiction on Television

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ABSTRACT

In the past, there was always a clear delineation between fiction and the news or fiction and documentary film. Today, however, elements of crossover and hybridization it can be observed in most formats: reality and fiction, public and private, are intermingled. Life itself seeps into fictional accounts, approaching the eternal comedy. Digital formats permit the multiplication of stories and the democratisation of productions. They create a true amalgam of new and old hybrid products, such that comedy also infuses the non-fiction content. Social change is convincingly reflected in the stories that each collective elaborates and consumes. Today, without question, audiovisual stories offer a clear, in-depth analysis of all the social transformations in which we currently find ourselves immersed, therefore this chapter offers an exploration of the novel formats that are extended into the stories that are told on television and on the internet.

INTRODUCTION

Ray Loriga, in his novel *Surrender* (Alfaguara Novel Prize 2017), describes a transparent city where the walls of the houses and flats are made of glass, so there are no secrets in daily acts and no intimacy in private ones. We can perceive “the glass city in which Ray Loriga exhibits us as an allegory of our societies, exposed to the eyes of others and the judgement of all” (Poniatowska, 2017), a city-metaphor of the omnipresence of social networks, of the exhibitionism of privacy to the point that it becomes public domain as an antecedent/indicator of a possible rigid social control and lack of individual freedom.

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The Mirror Effect and the Transparent City in Audio-Visual Non-Dramatic Fiction

This allegory presented by Loriga in his novel informs us in a resounding and visionary way of the most palpable social trends in the contemporary world: the propensity to show off, to exhibit oneself to the public through social networks such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, among many others, with different goals (to share experiences or ideas, to express opinions, to look for work, to find friends or partners, etc.). But the need to show one's private life and personal opinion to the public—and the enjoyment of doing so—is not limited to social networks; there are other stories that show this tendency clearly in cinema, television or the Internet.

In the era of fake news and post-truth, in which journalism is in crisis and the truthfulness of news is constantly being questioned, new genres and numerous formats are emerging and trying to feed off reality. If, for decades, the audiovisual industry clearly differentiated between fictional and news and documentary genres, today a continuous transfer and mixing of ingredients and hybridisation is becoming the main feature in most formats. Reality continually seeps into fiction and fiction is often dressed as or nourished by real content, while public and private merge their borders in an endless number of hybrid formulas. In this territory, we must place genres and sub-genres as widespread as the false documentary or mockumentary, infotainment, infoshow, advertainment, docudrama and all the enormous varieties of realities, docushows and many others.

It is true that, from its inception as a genre, docudrama has been nourished by elements of reality combined with formulas from fiction; and this mode of hybridisation also defines infotainment and mockumentaries. However, fiction developed in films, series, comics, novels and other narrative media has traditionally been situated in very different areas, creating parallel, imaginary or invented universes. Their usual approaches to real outlines are related to historical events or characters, as well as some inspiration taken from informative events or tragic cases (let's remember the common "based on real events" featured in many TV movies). And most of this type of fictional products are framed within spaces of a dramatic or epic nature. However, nowadays the seriousness and gravity of historical, epic or dramatic elements is not necessary. Life itself continuously seeps into fictional audiovisual works that are close to comedy. Digital formats allow stories to multiply and facilitates the democratisation of productions, creating a true fusion of new and old hybrid products.

Among this confusion of genres, it can be said that comic or humorous fiction also receives real content and the artists' tendency towards exhibitionist narcissism.

BACKGROUND

In fiction, and not exempt from a sense of criticism that still allowed for comedy, Miguel de Cervantes already included in both the first and second part of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* some specific references to the literary reality of his time that affected him personally: the critical review of chivalric novels and other literary works in the first part; and, in the second part, allusions and diatribes to the appearance of an apocryphal *Quixote* as a sequel to the original, which made Cervantes very angry. That is, if we dive into the history of non-dramatic narrative fiction where the author's reality becomes palpable, we must go back to the origins of stories. Without wishing to take a diachronic or exhaustive look at this trend, it is necessary to highlight how, in recent years, many television programmes and different internet platforms (from blogs to YouTube) and social networks show a tendency towards the construction of glass walls or mirrors of the daily lives of many people of all ages.

The concept of autofiction goes back to literary studies and is attributed to the French writer Serge Doubrovsky. In 1977, he published his novel *Fils*, defining it as an autofiction or story of real events where the author, the narrator and the character have the same identity and bear the same name. And although it soon extended to the novel, it can be considered that “at first, autofiction was born very attached to autobiography, as a post-modern expression of it” (Casas, 2014, p. 7). In any case, autofiction in literature is very much linked to dramatic writing, even as a channel for especially hard or difficult personal and social events. The various expressions of literary autofiction—or writings of the self—include sub-genres that are far from humorous, such as autobiographies, diaries, memoirs or epistolary literature.

Where comedy and autofiction do go hand in hand is in the territory of the comic strip and the graphic novel, which is split into the iconic element that literature lacks (it is both a story about the main character and his or her graphic self-portrait). As indicated by Guzmán Tinajero (2018), autofiction in comics emerged in the 1970s in the United States (and in other countries such as France and Spain) as part of the Underground comic books, with authors such as Bill Griffith, Rory Hayes and Trina Robbins. To cite one of the many examples of this type of fiction, we have Manu Larcenet’s *Le Combat ordinaire* (four volumes published between 2003 and 2008 by the publishing house Dargaud), where humorous situations are mixed with dramatic moments of high emotional intensity (father’s suicide, couple’s crisis, mother’s loneliness, etc.). It can be considered that “the reproduction of humorous situations acts as an element that provides a greater dose of verisimilitude, while serving as a counterweight to a pain that crystallised in the rhythms of routine” (Trabado Cabado, 2015, p. 298-300).

In spite of what has been said previously about the presence of the iconic element in the autofiction comic, it is necessary to point out that this act of graphic self-representation cannot be considered only as the sign that places us within the genre, but also as the semantic content (themes and character’s actions) reworked from fiction and humour: “self-fabrication in comics is a playful act of self-representation that does not go through graphic representation alone, but occurs mainly in the construction of anecdotes and an individual’s actions, where bearing witness ceases to be the important element and the resources of fiction are used” (Guzmán Tinajero, 2018).

It can be considered that, despite the presence of dramatic content, autofiction and humour go hand in hand in comics and graphic novels. Examples of this combination can be found from the beginning of the 20th century, as in the works of Americans Sheldon Mayer or Ernie Bushmiller, French Caran D’Ache or Spanish Mecachis or Cilla (Guzmán Tinajero, 2018). At present, we can highlight the case of Paco Roca, who continually mixes autobiography with elements of fiction in *Arrugas* (2007), *Memorias de un hombre en pijama* (2010) or *Los surcos del azar* (2013).

This type of semantic contours is also clearly present in cinema: for Lombardo (2019), “autobiographical cinema, film-ego or autofiction are some of the terms used to designate the type of cinema that places subjectivity as the epicentre of its discursive strategies”. To cite some examples, we have Federico Fellini’s *Eight and a Half* and *Amarcord*, Jean Claude Lauzon’s *Leolo*, Jaime Chávarri’s *El desencanto*, Nanni Moretti’s *Caro diario* and *Aprile*, or Pedro Almodóvar’s recent *Dolor y gloria*, without forgetting the recurrent self-portrait that Woody Allen paints in many films of his broad filmography. For Sánchez Vidal, “a true author does not need to tell his life to express it: it is enough for him to assume and subjectively re-elaborate any story—his own or someone else’s—so that his personality is captured in this process of recreation” (2012, p. 29).

In the book by Gregorio Martín Gutiérrez, *Cineastas frente al espejo* (2008), he delves into cases in which cinema has approached this sub-genre; and by reviewing the many cases studied, one can draw the conclusion that it is very unusual for the intimate writings of the self in the cinema to venture into the

comedy genre. Drama and melodrama are the usual keys to this type of work in which autobiography, self-portrait, filmed diary and confessions often mix, and where they are always merged with fictional elements.

There is an area that cinema has explored thoroughly and borders on the concept of autofiction, which diverts one's semantic content into a personal context (present or past). It is no longer so much a question of focusing the nucleus of the story on the author themselves, but on people from their real family environment or other types of settings. Many examples could be cited here, but we will focus only on two recent award-winning cases that dig into the well of family memories: the film *Roma* (Mexico, 2018) by Alfonso Cuarón and *Cold War* (Poland, 2018) by Pawel Pawlikowski. Both films are shot in black and white and draw on memory (in the case of Cuarón's childhood, with the focus on the figure of the indigenous maid in the film; and on the life of Pawlikowski's parents in the Polish film). Both films have a strong dramatic content and the humour is totally removed from them.

In Spain, it could be said that the creator who is closest to making cinema of a comic nature about family memory is Paco León with his two films about the matriarch of the León family: *Carmina o revienta* (2012) and *Carmina y amén* (2014), which—according to León himself, who was the screenwriter and director—although they mix reality and fiction, the structure of the two films is based on real stories in which the greatest weight falls on the portentous figure of Carmina Barrios, his own mother.

Still in the audiovisual field, it is necessary to talk about the autobiographical documentary, a type of documentary where the creator's starting point is his or her own self, a private and intimate space to develop different themes. There are many authors who have cultivated the genre, from *Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929) or Man Ray's filmed self-portraits *Autoportrait*, 1930; *Courses landaises* (1935) y *La Garoupe* (1937) to later ones like Jim McBride, Jonas Mekas, Jerome Hill, Chantal Akerman, David Perlov, Alan Berliner, Raymond Depardon, Naomi Kawase, or Ross McElwee, whose films start with an autobiographical situation to create a narrative and a reflection of universal nature. In Spain, creators such as Joaquin Jordá, Carla Subirana, José Luis Guerin, and Gustavo Salmerón, with his recent and award-winning *Muchos hijos, un mono y un castillo* (2017), can be highlighted.

And to finish briefly exploring the history of comedic autofiction on television, in addition to literature, comics or fiction and documentary film, we should talk about theatre and television formats other than series. In this area of intersection, we find live comedy or stand-up comedy monologues, a genre—which was initially theatrical—that later triumphed on television. Although this case is not always based on autofiction, it is common for the comedian to plan the script of his or her monologue according to real events (every day or extraordinary ones) that he or she has experienced at some point. Even though stand-up comedy is a genre that comes from theatre and later, from the radio, television would become a medium where it could develop and reach massive audiences. Mockery, parody, ridicule, caricature, satire and irony in the description of the comedians themselves and their experiences (more or less near or far in time) serve as the basis for many successful monologues.¹ This genre is clearly linked to the television autofiction that concerns this work, as it is clearly and firmly situated in the genre of comedy.

COMIC AUTOFICTION ON TELEVISION

Autofiction on American television

The concept of autofiction, of recreating the author's own life within a narrative discourse, reaches a powerful development on television, since it is a more immediate medium than cinema, and having less complex production systems. This trend will be even stronger in the field of mobile phone production and internet platforms (such as YouTube), although here the formats are quite different.

Autofiction in international comedy TV series was preceded by the series *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989-1998), a sitcom that takes place during nine seasons and with plots that revolve around the adventures of comedian Jerry Seinfeld and his friends. The series recreates—mixing reality and fiction—the comedian's everyday life in relation to three characters (his ex-girlfriend Elaine, his childhood friend George and his neighbour Kramer). Ordinary events (many of them inspired by the comedian's real life or by his friend and screenwriter Larry David) are highlighted as the basis of its ironic humour.

A couple of years after *Seinfeld's* premiere, *The Larry Sanders Show* (HBO, 1992-1998) begins, which was a comedy series that depicted a television late-show hosted by Larry Sanders (played by Garry Shandling) and whose guests are real characters offering authentic (though exaggerated or parodied) versions of themselves.

Over the next decade, Larry David (*Seinfeld's* writer and producer) himself continued to explore the possibilities of autofiction through the show *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (HBO, 2000), a parody sitcom about the life of a semi-retired writer and producer following the economic success of *Seinfeld*. The show stars Larry David himself and consists of nine seasons shot as home video footage with lots of improvised dialogue.

Delving into the genre of non-dramatic self-fiction, *Louie* (FX, 2010) is a comedy series outside the sitcom format that portrays moments from the personal and professional life of New York comedian Louis C.K., a divorced father of two daughters. The recurring characters in the series, besides his two daughters, are his brother Robbie (Robert Kelly) and his friend Pamela (Pamela Adlon). It also has the participation of special guests, many of them comedians playing themselves (such as Jerry Seinfeld, Sarah Silverman, Todd Barry or Chris Rock). Originally the first seasons had a fragmented structure, with documentary touches to showcase various experiences (sometimes unconnected) and some performances of the protagonist presented as monologues. The series evolves towards a hybridisation of genres (it includes dramatic, tragic and surrealist touches) and a deep narrative of the character, without ever losing its comedic character and the trail of Louis C.K.'s real life.

Subsequently, other American series have made autofiction their key genre. These include productions such as *Girls* (HBO, 2012-2017), centred on the life of Hanna (Lena Dunham)—an aspiring writer—and her three friends, which reflects many of Lena's life experiences as well as those of the other actresses; the failed *Mulaney* (Fox, 2014-2015), about the adventures of comedian and writer John Mulaney; *Master of None* (Netflix, 2015), which shows the adventures of Dev (Aziz Ansari), an Indian-born actor with little luck; the sitcom *Maron* (IFC, 2013-2016), created and starring comedic actor Marc Maron, and based on the real-life experiences of the lead actor, who is repeatedly accompanied by comedic actors and actresses who play themselves (such as Steve Agee, Louis C.K., Maria Bamford, Bruce Bruce, Nate Bargatze, etc.); the sitcom *Better Things* (FX, 2016-), created by and starring Pamela Adlon, about the problems of a single mother of three daughters who tries to fit her job as an actress around her tasks as a mother and housewife. And finally, in an extreme case of autofiction, there is also the sitcom *Real Rob*

(Netflix 2015-2017), created, directed and scripted by comedian Rob Schneider and starring himself alongside his real wife (Patricia Schneider) and their daughter in real life (Miranda Schneider).

TV Autofiction in Spain

In Spain, autofiction products are relatively recent. As a tangential precedent, we can name the online series *Qué vida más triste* (2008-2010), which started to be broadcasted on TV, on the La Sexta channel, after its third season. In fact, *Qué vida más triste* played at being autofiction without being so. The main character was Borja Pérez (Borja Pérez) and, from his room, he narrated stories about his daily life as a crane driver in Basauri (Biscay): it was a videoblog where the main character, looking at the camera, told the misfortunes and anecdotes that happened to him during the week. He also interacted with his friend Joseba (Joseba Caballero) and his girlfriend Nuria (Nuria Herrera). The series was created by Natxo del Agua and Rubén Ontiveros, who also wrote the scripts and directed it, although some scriptwriters such as Nacho Vigalondo, Borja Cobeaga, Diego San José and Borja Crespo also collaborated during the seven seasons in which it was broadcast.

In Spanish television autofiction, it is necessary to highlight a novel series that reached cult status. It premiered in 2010 as an isolated product without any previous reference in our country. We are talking about the show *¿Qué fue de Jorge Sanz?*, directed by David Trueba (Canal +, 2010), which consists of a single season plus two special long episodes, one of which premiered in 2016 and is titled *¿Qué fue de Jorge Sanz? (cinco años después)* (87 minutes long), and another one in 2017 (*¿Qué fue de Jorge Sanz? III*, 107 minutes long). Both were from the television platform Movistar +. The series narrates—with realistic staging, natural light, camera on stride, some improvised dialogues and hardly any music—several episodes of the daily life of Jorge Sanz, a somewhat famous actor. Sanz begins working as a child with highly successful film roles, becomes a young man who portrays strong characters, lady-killers and attractive leads, and then is forgotten when his name is the last one when credits roll and hardly ever appears in films. His rise and fall was very noticeable: from the age of 9, he worked with great actors, such as José Luis López Vázquez, Fernando Guillén, Agustín González or Fernando Fernán Gómez; at 20, during the 90s, he was a true idol with thousands of fans—even needing security to be able to get to his shooting—and numerous awards.

In *¿Qué fue de Jorge Sanz?*, the first series produced by Canal +, reality and fiction go hand in hand as Sanz himself plays himself, embodying a loser who borders on being pathetic, an actor who accepts the services of a former cheese seller as his representative (Eduardo Antuña) and lives off small jobs, humiliations and many tricks. The unstable personal situation, professional decline and his poor economic position due to the lack of projects roughly matches the plot of a series in which Sanz portrays a parodied caricature, while accompanied by many Spanish actors and actresses who play themselves (Antonio Resines, Santiago Segura, Juan Diego Botto, Carlos Larrañaga, Juan Luis Galiardo, Willy Toledo, etc.). David Trueba himself confesses that “we play with things made of truth and lies. It exposes the negative side of them you could make up, it even plays with what people can imagine to be their reality” (Marcos, 2015). And Jorge Sanz, answering the question of how to work with a character based on himself, considers that it is something “very easy and complicated at the same time. Nobody has to explain anything to you, you know perfectly well who you’re playing. But on the other hand, you have to undress and overcome your modesty. Everything is based on things that happen to me, have happened to me or could happen to me. And all the characters (including the ex-cheese seller-turned-agent played by Eduardo Antuña) are based on real people” (Montoya, 2010).

Four years after the premiere of Trueba's series, another related product appeared: *El fin de la comedia* (Comedy Central in the first season, in 2014, and Comedy Central/Movistar + in the second, in 2017), a comedy series created by and starring the comedian José Ignacio Farray, better known as Ignatius Farray. We return to autofiction, as the series deals with the daily life of this Canarian comic actor, who does monologues and takes part in television programmes such as *La hora chanante*, or radio programmes such as *La vida moderna* (alongside Quequé and David Broncano, two well-known Spanish comedians). All of this is recognisable, real and verifiable. In addition, on a personal level, Ignatius is also a divorced man who has a daughter. In the first season, he faces his mid-life crisis, the task of educating his 4-year-old daughter, and a heart disease that forces him to change his life habits. The story of Ignatius' daily life and small daily adventures, with the participation of his ex-wife, his daughter or his friends, is interspersed with monologues from his various performances in bars, television sets or theatres—just as they were in the American show *Louie*. The kind of provocative, scandalous and irreverent humour of his monologues contrasts sharply with the search for comedy in ordinary and even vulgar and ridiculous situations of everyday life.

For Adarve Martínez, *El fin de la Comedia* uses self-parody as an audiovisual mechanism to generate humour. Linda Hutcheon is her starting point when stating that parody as an ironic inversion of the established and canonical is one of “the best tools for the formal and thematic treatment of stories to undress and deconstruct stories themselves”. She also considers that if in literature one can allude to other characters known to the reader (to emphasise the real component), “in audiovisual autofiction those characters can be incarnated, appear physically”, as occurs in the series with Andreu Buenafuente and his programme *Late Motiv*, David Broncano, Joaquín Reyes, Natalia de Molina, Iñaki Gabilondo, Verónica Forqué... “This special characteristic gives these guest characters the opportunity to create a self-parody as well” (Adarve Martínez, 2017, p. 102).

In *El fin de la comedia*, we could talk about post-humour, a term coined by Jordi Costa in 2010 to define a type of comedy “where laughter is no longer the first priority. It is a humour that can put discomfort and uneasiness above other things” (Costa, 2010, p. 10). What provokes post-humour is a type of reflective and somewhat painful laughter that happens when opening the door to the pathetic and ridiculous component of many situations that we experience.

Following in the footsteps of Jorge Sanz's and Ignatius Farray's series, in 2018, another Movistar + series will be released, co-written and starring Berto Romero, and produced by El Terrat. It is directed by Carlos Therón (first season) and Javier Ruiz Caldera (second season, 2019). It tells the story of Alberto (Berto) Romero, a Catalan comic married to Sandra (Eva Ugarte), an anaesthetist, when the couple face a personal and family upheaval over the birth of their first child (Lucas, the same name as Berto's son). The first season, which has seven episodes, was described on the production company's website as a series that “reflects in a funny, close and irreverent way the roller coaster of emotions that Berto experiences when he becomes a father”. The creator and protagonist himself acknowledges in his numerous statements to promote the series that autofiction on television owes a great deal to *Seinfeld*, *Louie*, *Fleabag* or *El fin de la comedia*, but he calls them counter-references and confesses that he used them to do something very different within the sub-genre.

In *Mira lo que has hecho*, irony and cynicism coexist with caricature and hyperbole, creating a reflection on the absurdity of many conventions and the situation presented in the plot (that of first-time parents), but also on the fact of being represented within the fiction. In one of the scenes, the main character tells his family: “How can you be so self-centred to think that I'm talking about you when I'm only talking about myself?” And this game of self-reflection multiplies in the second season, in which Berto and his

wife go through a pregnancy again—this time it's twins—and also experience some family loss. They must also combine their child's education with the development of their private and professional lives.

Berto Romero's series also has elements that reinforce its real basis, not only in the figure and profession of the main character, but also in the appearance of some actors playing themselves, such as Antonio Resines, Andreu Buenafuente or Belén Cuesta (a feature that it has in common with earlier Spanish shows). These elements encourage reflection on the limits between real and fictional narrative material and reinforce the element of comedy.

The Reflection in the Mirror

Film fiction has organised its dominant narrative strategies around the concept of primary narrative identification. By concealing the artifice involved in the mechanism of recording, editing and other manipulations, and by means of resources already established from the Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR), the viewer, when watching a film, is immersed in a simulation of the real experience, with a similar emotional activation (it is common to feel fear, calmness, anxiety, desire, intrigue, etc.). Although, paradoxically, this activation of truthfulness mechanisms is related to fiction (that is, with a non-real component); the viewer associates the formal perfection of cinema with the fictional, as opposed to the imperfection and improvisation of the informative story, with reality.

Autofiction seeks to take the spectator into a territory of ambiguity where the fictional occupies a secondary position in relation to the components of truth and reality that are ostentatiously exhibited. One way of subverting the fictional effect associated with the primary narrative identification is the use of two related narrative resources: metafiction and *mise en abyme*. Metafiction or meta-narration is shown to the viewer by including elements of the construction of one's own fiction from an extradiegetic but intradiscursive angle (making films within films or television within television). *Mise en abyme* is the inclusion of a reflection of that same fiction, or self-references of the audiovisual work itself: for the literary theorist Jean Ricardou, if the *mise en abyme* "can be defined as a narcissism, the micro-history that it produces is a mirror" (p. 120, 1967). Thus, *mise en abyme* would be a type of concrete metafiction.

The most interesting aspect of this narrative resource is its twofold orientation: on the one hand, it endows what is being recorded with an entity of truth (the gadget of the camera that captures what is happening in reality becomes apparent), and on the other, it multiplies the diegetic universes, which are sometimes confused.

Within the plots of *El fin de la comedia* and *Mira qué hemos hecho*, we witnessed the shooting of television series starring Ignatius Farray and Berto Romero respectively, where both actors play themselves. In the case of *El fin de la comedia*, it appears in the second season and we see some scenes with a plot and dialogues that mimic, play-by-play, moments of the first season. But, except for Farray, the actors are different, giving the original ones an appearance of reality. For Adarve Martínez, it is clear that the autofictional discursiveness works as a parody of meta-narrative and meta-textual elements, a characteristic of post-modernist art. (2017, p. 100). In the case of *Mira qué hemos hecho*, it is also in the second season when metafiction appears. Berto shoots a series about his life (about facts shown in the first season) and, except for him, different actors appear, although they bear strong similarities to those whose roles they play. There are moments of confusion between both universes, entangling apparent reality with the fiction being recorded. For Ruiz Caldera, director of this second season, the confusion is not only in this case, but "it happens every day when you see people's Instagram and you realise that they are showing a life that is not the real one. Or when you watch the news and don't know what is

propaganda and what is reality ... I really like this game of mirrors that is created by Berto Romero and how one can eventually confuse his work, what he is creating, with his real life” (Onieva, 2018).

This inclusion of mirrors within the two fictions is not something isolated: it is surprising that it happens in Almodóvar’s film, *Dolor y Gloria* [Pain and Glory], also in the field of autofiction and released the same year. In this film, we end up categorising all the footage as metafiction when we discover that the lead, who is a director, was making a film based on his own life. The inclusion of a *mise en abyme* in all three cases gives a hint of truthfulness to the initial diegesis, as opposed to the self-fictionalisation of the facts in the shooting of the series within the plots.

Thus, we can consider that metafiction as a *mise en abyme*, coupled with an autofictional discourse, reinforces the sensations of realism and closeness to the effective life of the protagonist, providing important answers to the reflection on the veracity and truth of the lives reflected in media and social networks.

CONCLUSION

It should be borne in mind that every society has its own reflection in narrative expressions (both those it produces and those it consumes), so audiovisual stories, from any platform or medium, offer an infallible x-ray of social reality. In an individualistic, narcissistic and hedonistic society, the narratives of the self (from literature to cinema, through the whole boom of social networks, blogs, videoblogs, etc) find their greatest development and expansion. If the selfie and the tweet are undeniable symbols of contemporary self-expression, it is interesting to look for other more complex forms of expression of individuality. It is in this area that audiovisual autofiction appears, allowing us to delve not only into the subject of self-referentiality, but also into its relationship with the liquid times that surround us. Thus, audiovisual autofiction becomes “another attempt, together with autofiction in other arts, autobiography or even the exhibitionism of the self in social networks, to apprehend a self that postmodernity presents to us as multiple, rhizomatic and changing. We could interpret this individualistic force as a way of grasping something that seemed solid—Modernity presented us with the self as unitary, master of its own destiny, capable of creating its own life trajectory...—but which now slips through our fingers” (Adarve Martínez, 2017, p. 100). Therefore, possible lines of research that deepen and reflect on comedic autofiction and the narratives of the self that are developed in fields other than cinema, comic or television, such as the music videos or modern technologies—from YouTubers to Twitter stories and other social networks—are very interesting.

In the same way, audiovisual autofiction and autofictional television comedy in particular allow us to reflect on other essential themes. Since the end of the 20th century, hybrids and confusions between reality and fiction in fictional and/or informative narrative discourses have given rise to theories about the crisis of journalism, the era of disinformation, post-truth, and other related concepts. The search for truth or authenticity makes the field on which autofiction moves slippery and insecure. This is why the voices of detractors such as Iban Zaldúa (2018) are heard:

autofiction does not respect the autobiographical pact. And that, in a sense, is cheating. The autobiographical pact does not mean that the author has committed himself to telling the truth and nothing but the truth about his life—the reader, at this point in the twenty-first century, is no longer so naive—, but that he commits himself to do so as if he believed he was telling the truth. In autofiction, however, this rule is broken, because the writer takes on the right to plant lies and fantasies where he wants and

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when he wants, and therefore the reader can never be sure which parts of the work he wants to convey as “truth” and which he does not...

However, the boom of the self in recent decades, the taste for public displays of what is private or the desire to highlight everyday life as important and noteworthy acts for others, acquires an interesting aspect in comedic autofiction. On the one hand, it is not a question of whether a selfie is retouched to achieve aesthetic perfection or manipulated to simulate a situation much more attractive than what is being experienced, but quite the opposite. In autofiction, this idealisation is parodied by fighting it with doses of extreme reality (the misery, ridiculous situations and pathos of the characters are expanded). The beauty filter is replaced by caricatured magnifiers that amplify defects and focus on imperfections:

the protagonists of these series build a comic universe based on exposing their own personal miseries: their big and small mistakes, their insecurities, their fears, their contradictions, their personal failures despite professional success ... Far from using Groucho Marx's way of using irony to protect their image, these comics use it to attack [the image]. This creates a kind of negative or, if you prefer, painful comedy; based above all on honesty, which is the moral principle that allows these human weaknesses to be shown in all their splendour (Adarve Martínez, 2017, p. 106).

As was the case in comic book autofiction, the expression of comedic and pathetic situations provides greater verisimilitude and balances out the discomfort and pain of many unpleasant daily situations. Pathos and laughter are sometimes associated with tenderness and strengthen identification, which allows for reflection: “this dose of pathos is always controlled so that tenderness and laughter can be present. But it is precisely this pathetic or painful element that invites reflection and makes us go from talking about comedy to talking about humour... It is through this reflection that the viewer reconstructs the reality that television autofiction creates” (Adarve Martínez, 2017, 106). Therefore, the parody and ridiculous tone from a concrete and recognisable real character, and from everyday and identifiable situations, allows us to extrapolate conclusions about important social issues. Just as *Seinfeld* “tried to reflect on the fragile human condition, becoming a paradigmatic example of the collective feeling of a whole decade”, *Master of None* reviewed **millennials'** concerns and their pending conflicts regarding social relations, work objectives or their relations with the family, or *Curb Your Enthusiasm* “is a dark comedy about the decadent lifestyle in Los Angeles, which uses exaggeration—going between the absurd and situations that cause second-hand embarrassment—to offer us a critique of American society, countering the story in *Seinfeld*” (Gil, 2017), Spanish autofiction shows lead us to think about themes related to fame, family, health or friends, from critical and unpleasant angles.

As in Ray Loriga's transparent city, the gaze on what is alien allows to form a game of mirrors where the viewer and his or her own behaviour are subjected to identification and criticism in relation to everyday acts and events.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Autofiction: Narrative work characterised by the overlap between author and protagonist which mixes real and fictitious elements.

Metafiction: Fiction that includes, within itself, references to the fictional device created.

Mise en abyme: Appearance of a reflection of the narrative work within the narrative work itself. In graphic arts circles, it is also known as the Droste Effect.

Narratives of the Self: Stories where the plot revolves around the author's autobiographical elements, and the author is portrayed as a character in the story. There are numerous genres and formats:

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Autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, self-portraits, correspondence, blogs, chats, selfies, photologs, videoblogs, autofiction, etc.

Post-humour: Humour that provokes displeasure, uneasiness and discomfort (even second-hand embarrassment).

Self-parody: Narrative work of autofiction ascribed to the comedy genre and with a type of humour based on parody.

Sitcom (Situation Comedy): TV format within the comedy genre characterised by its episodic structure, fixed characters, canned laughter and an approximate duration of 25 minutes per episode.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ As an example, we have Amy Schumer and her monologues, with explicit references to her private life and her obvious pregnancy. Her monologues can be found on Netflix.

Chapter 4

The Handmaid's Tale (2017) or Hulu's Major Investment in Great Storytelling

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ABSTRACT

*Hulu knew what they were doing when they bet on the underlying story of *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017-), which manifests the importance of storytelling in the creation of modern myths. The series directly appeals to the human need for identity, belonging, and redemption. Based on Margaret Atwood's novel of the same name, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a depiction of a dystopian society, characterised by an absence of rights and freedoms. It has become a chilling political commentary focusing attention on the control of women's fertility, the objectification of women, religious fanaticism, women's roles in the persecution of other women in a patriarchal system, the persecution of homosexuality, and hyper-vigilance.*

INTRODUCTION

The Handmaid's Tale (2017-) was the surprise hit of the 2017 Emmys; it won four prizes, including the award for best dramatic series. The series enjoyed equal success at the Golden Globes, where it was awarded two prizes, one for best series of the year. Hulu thus became the first streaming platform to obtain this type of recognition, putting it ahead of other streaming giants such as Netflix and HBO, which began as favourites in the industry. *The Handmaid's Tale* is a series consisting of sixty-minute episodes, and it is an adaptation of the homonymous novel written by Canadian author Margaret Atwood in 1985, which depicts a dystopian future. The story is feminist in its view and spells out the possible consequences of a future theocratic state, where women are portrayed as the primary victims of religious extremism.

The Handmaid's Tale was Hulu's biggest gamble in 2017. The platform, which competes for a hyper-personalized user experience model, was founded in 2007 by NBC and Fox. Later Disney and Warner joined as major shareholders, thereby making Hulu the property of four giants in the entertainment indus-

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try. The premiere of the series has caused the perception of the Hulu brand to change; it is seen as a kind of subversive platform, which by today's standards in the recent past had a certain traditional television outlook with no intentions of global expansion. It was therefore never perceived as a threat, until now.

The main objective of this chapter is to reflect on how Hulu was able to take a chance on the story at the heart of the series, which highlights the importance of storytelling in the recovery of long-distance mythemes through the subgenus of dystopia. *The Handmaid's Tale* directly appeals to the human need for identity, belonging and redemption.

BACKGROUND

The genre of dystopia updates mythical themes by placing them in the field of an alternative future. The dictionary defines dystopia as a "An imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic". Inevitably, the genre depicts a situation of human alienation. To understand dystopia, it's necessary to examine its origin, which is the concept of utopia, a term coined by Sir Thomas More in his work by the same name in 1516. In this work, the author imagines a fictional society whose foundations are the political and philosophical ideals of the classical world and Christianity. It is an idealized society based on the common good and characterized by peaceful coexistence. Its opposite, the word dystopia, was coined in 1747, although it was not used prolifically until well into the twentieth century (Sargent, 2013). The use of the term grew over time, as people began to understand that all technological, political and social progress also has a dark side.

However, as time passed progress began to show its downside, feeding the sinister sceneries of technological and scientific transgression: dystopias, negative or corrupted utopias. If longings and hopes are the matters of utopia, dystopia represents fears and worries. If the former promised a kingdom of freedom and self-fulfilment through the use of reason, in the latter the dreams of reason will give birth to the monsters of oppression and alienation (Marzábal, 2009, p. 123).

It is precisely the twentieth century, that period of time in which rationality and barbarism go hand in hand, shining a light on a moment of uncertainty in which the possibility of a disastrous end is just around the corner. As Sargent, one of the most prominent authors in the study of dystopia, points out, the 20th century has been aptly named the "dystopian century" (2013, p. 10) and the 21st century is not much more encouraging.

The dystopian story begins in the here and now, meaning that no precise explanation is given as to how things became the way they are. It is presented as something that has happened as the result of some human actions, while not necessarily spelling it out in detail. Sargent (2013) speaks of an increase in dystopian stories that have a grounding in Christianity, *The Handmaid's Tale* is a clear example of one, and refers to these kinds of dystopian stories as "jeremiads", in reference to the prophet Jeremiah of the Old Testament who accuses people of losing confidence in God.

Dystopia usually has a protagonist who questions the society he or she are living in. Thus, "two opposing narratives, that of the hegemonic regime and that of the resistance to it" (Moreno Trujillo, 2016, p. 188) are constructed. Dystopia has a clear message: the world does not have to be this way; it can be changed for the better. It includes, in fact, a warning to its audience about their responsibility to make

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sure things do not end up becoming what the dystopia represents (Schmeink, 2016). It is, in short, a critique of the social and political conditions at the time.

The dystopian imagination has served as a prophetic vehicle, the canary in a cage, for writers with and ethical and political concern for warning us of terrible sociopolitical tendencies that could, if continued, turn our contemporary world into the iron cages portrayed in the realm of utopia's underside (Baccolini y Moylan, 2003, p. 2)

Literature includes major works of the dystopian genre, such as the famous *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley, 1932), *1984* (George Orwell, 1949), *Fahrenheit 451* (Ray Bradbury, 1953) and *A Clockwork Orange* (Anthony Burgess, 1962). Later, in the 21st century there has been an explosion of dystopian literature such as the acclaimed *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy, 2006) as well as an incessant batch of dystopian young adult novels, which do not address the dystopic issues with the rawness of the classics, due to the audience to which they are addressed, yet in spite of this young adult fiction still communicates deeper stories meant to make young people reflect, although they may be couched within adventure and romance stories within a science fiction setting. Highlights from this sector include *The Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins, 2008), *The Maze Runner* (James Dashner, 2013) and the *Divergent* trilogy (Verónica Roth, 2011-2013), among many others.

Within the genre of dystopia there is also “critical dystopia”, which departs from the same reflexive philosophy. The concept of critical dystopia was introduced by Thomas Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (2003; Baccolini, 2006) and the main feature differentiating it from the former is that it “suggests that the possibility of eutopia exists within some dystopias, but the problem is how to actualize the eutopia and get rid of the dystopia” (Sargent, 2013, p. 11). However, there is a great critical variety, both in utopia and dystopia, which, in the words of Levitas (1990) is a symptom of a lack of confidence because “The presentation of alternative futures, multiple possibilities and fragmented images of time reflects a lack of confidence about whether and how a better world can be reached” (p. 196). It is precisely that fragmented variety that we experience in our liquid modernity (Schmeink, 2016) and this is reflected in the various models of critical dystopia.

Particularly critical aspects tend to flourish in critical dystopia when it is written by women (as is the case examined in this chapter). The condition of being a woman puts the writer/creator at a different starting point in relation to the utopian tradition. In most cases, the utopias devised by men are very different places for women; they often represent rather nightmarish scenes for them, based on gender discrimination with three basic characteristics (Moreno Trujillo, 2016):

- Criticism of the reigning patriarch.
- Self-awareness to recognize utopian realities.
- Critical mass that allows the reaction to start a resistance.

As Baccolini (2006) points out, “Women’s dystopian visions exacerbated precisely these critical issues - for example, women’s reproduction and the control of their sexualities and bodies - that lie at the basis of gender inequality” (p. 3). Many Western female writers use this narrative to explore what could happen if advances in gender equality are neglected (Alter, 2018). There are many novels that deal with the subject of reproduction, i.e., *Red Clocks* (Leni Zumas, 2018) or *Future home of the Living God* (Louise Erdrich, 2017). Recently novels about gender inequality, misogyny and violence against

women are being published i.e., Sophie Mackintosh's first work, *The Water Cure* (2018); *The Power* (2018), written by Naomi Alderman; *Hazards of Time Travel* (2018), written by Joyce Carol Oates; and Christine Dalcher's first novel, *Vox* (2017). It is clear through these creations that gender identity is not something innate, but rather a construct based on a traditionally androcentric discourse. These feminist products become a form of resistance to a present that is still far from being utopian. Feminist critical dystopia is, therefore, a form of intervention in social reality, something easy to understand taking into account Atwood's dystopia which, thirty years after being written, is being considered as a source of inspiration for political activism (Alter, 2018), as many female demonstrators from EEUU have chosen similar outfits as the Handmaids from the novel – red gown and white cap – to fight for their right to abortion and medical assistance. As Maher (2018) says, “the new Hulu series is beyond prescient, demanding a reckoning with our current political landscape even more obviously than it might have done in 1985”. In fact, this TV series has been acclaimed for its “uncanny resemblance to the ideologies and policies of the Trump administration” (Himberg, 2018).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Hulu in the Context of Digital Platforms

Media convergence has brought a new panorama in the distribution of audiovisual content, consolidating a business model to line it up with the nature of the consumer - now prosumer - of content. The structure of the audiovisual system itself has been modified, especially with regard to the production and distribution of audiovisual products, and this means that new forms of monetization are sought which allow the industry to be profitable. Izquierdo-Castillo (2012) talks about three different models in the online distribution of audiovisual content, mainly cinema and television, which in turn correspond to three forms of financing: micropayment, monthly payment and the advertising dependent model. Hulu falls into the last category. This is a model that proposes free access formulas supported by advertising. It is precisely this gratuity that attracts viewers, who find in the online model something similar to what existed in the traditional, offline model. However, this model is unattractive to operators because of its unfeasibility.

Because of its success, Hulu represents a paradigmatic example of this model. A year after its launch, in 2008, it became the second iVOD website (Nielsen, 2009) over other portals such as Yahoo, Fox or Nickelodeon. It offered streaming content from the most prominent television operators, with a video portal offering audiovisual products from the most important networks. At the end of 2009 Hulu had 40 million viewers and 500 million monthly streams yet, paradoxically, it generated significant monetary losses. It was very difficult to maintain a free access model and therefore, a mixed model emerged (Huertas and Domínguez and Sanz, 2011), through which users could access free streaming services but a much broader catalogue was available to subscribers. In 2010, Hulu adopted the subscription model, but decided to maintain advertising (Neira, 2017). Three years later, in 2013, Hulu experienced a turning point in terms of content, as it decided to stop relying exclusively on content offered by other producers and launched the production of its own original content. Titles include *Difficult People*, *Casual*, *The Path* and the adaptation of Stephen King's famous novel *11.22.63*. In 2017 Hulu took a large gamble, in terms of original content, with *The Handmaid's Tale* - and it was a hit.

Since its inception, Hulu never had an international expansion strategy. Its market was entirely the United States and Japan. As of 2016, the company has adhered exclusively to a model based on subscrip-

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tions or payment for content, the same as Netflix or Amazon, and its original content is distributed by other platforms internationally. It is oriented mainly to series (Del Pino and Aguado, 2012) and entertainment programs such as reality TV, talk shows or contests, but the programming also includes films and documentaries. The fact that its major shareholders are various media companies makes it possible for it to offer content from more than two hundred chains and studios.

The Handmaid's Tale

The series *The Handmaid's Tale* was released in 2017. The third season opens in June 2019, as a result of its critical and public acclaim. The original novel, published in 1985, describes a hypothetical society called Gilead where a totalitarian and deeply hierarchical regime has toppled the government of the United States and absolutely subjugates women. Atwood calls it a “theocratic dictatorship” (Atwood, 2017, p. 12), that is, an extreme hetero-patriarchy in which women have been relegated to the domestic sphere and reproductive tasks, leaving men in control of the public sphere and, therefore, any important decision making.

Atwood's novel has already been adapted for the big screen in 1990 by the German director Volker Schlöndorff, with a much smaller impact than the TV series. Moreover, in September 2019 Margaret Atwood has published *The Testaments*, in which Gilead universe is reloaded through this sequel. Three stories can be found, told by Nicole and Agnes – Defred's daughters – and Aunt Lydia, a law enforcement officer in *The Handmaid's Tale*. The action takes place fifteen years later than the previous novel.

The television series faithfully reproduces the approach to Atwood's novel, especially the first season, which is the most faithful to the original. Atwood's inspiration for *The Handmaid's Tale* came from the dystopian classic *1984* (George Orwell, 1949), especially his idea of hypervigilance, but also incorporates experiences from her own life, including the period she lived as a child after World War II and the threats of technological hyperdevelopment, which causes an overwhelming sense of alert.

Both in the novel and in the series, the story is the first-person account of one of the Handmaids who is pressed into the service of the Waterfords. From that hypothetical future, she reveals the keys to the authoritarian regime as resulting from radical measures imposed by rising conservative ideologies, in the former United States, which has been overthrown by the Sons of Jacob. One of the most heartbreaking features of this regime is the Ceremony, a biblical-based rite that forces the Handmaids to engage in ritualized copulation (rape) with the commanders on their fertile days in order to conceive children for high-ranking families.

The rest of the panorama is anything but hopeful: there is suppression of rights and freedoms for citizens (i.e., there is no freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion or right to a fair trial); a system of classes and extreme hierarchies is put into place in which women are stripped of all their rights and property and are subjugated to men; religious fundamentalism based on a literal interpretation of the Christian Bible is imposed; there are public executions and amputations as punishment for violating the laws of the regime; there is extreme censorship of any media.

Gilead or the Actualization of Horror

The Handmaid's Tale contains all the elements of a feminist critical dystopia. As Ketterer states (1989):

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Many of the features of Gilead are familiar to the reader of dystopian fiction: the lack of freedom, the constant surveillance, the routine, the failed escape attempt (in this case by Offred's friend, identified by her real name, Moira), and an underground movement (in this case called Mayday) (p. 211)

The social and political hierarchy in Gilead is manifested as follows:

- **Men:** divided into several groups.
 - **Commanders:** The men who hold the power in Gilead, in other words, they are the ruling political class. They wear black.
 - **Eyes:** They are the surveillance force of Gilead and act as the police.
 - **Angels:** They are soldiers who can rise in rank if their actions deserve it.
 - **Wards:** These are the men too young or too old to be angels. They serve as bodyguards, security officers and personal drivers of the commanders.
- **Women:** Divided into two groups, legitimate and illegitimate, although they all share a status of inferiority and submission vis-a-vis men.
 - Legitimate:
 - **Handmaids:** Fertile women forced to put their bodies at the service of the state of Gilead, to breed children for high-ranking families. They wear red, which represents blood and fertility.
 - **Wives:** These are the upper-class women who are married to commanders. Although they have power in their own homes, they are always subject to their husbands. They wear blue.
 - **Aunts:** These are the women responsible for caring for and instructing the Handmaids. Their centre of operations is the Red Centre and they use torture to indoctrinate the Handmaids. They wear brown.
 - **Marthas:** They are infertile women, and lower class. They are the servants in the high-ranking homes. They wear green or heather grey.
 - **Daughters:** They are biological children or adopted (abducted) children by the upper class. They wear pink and white.
 - **Econowives:** These are lower status women and the wives of lower status men. They are educated to be wives and placed in arranged marriages. They can have a family life with their husbands and have their own children.
 - Illegitimate women:
 - **Unwomen:** These are sterile women who are not married or are classified as widows, lesbians or dissidents who, by such condition, are banished to the Colonies.
 - **Jezebels:** These are women forced into prostitution. They are prisoners.

The fundamental mythemes activated by *The Handmaid's Tale* are identity, belonging and redemption and, thus, “from certain references to specific historical situations and myths of long tradition in Western culture, we understand that the series brings to light current problems related to contemporary oppressive orders” (Núñez, 2017, p. 92). In fact, this story, more than thirty-five years later, is recovered in this moment but not in a casual way: the launching of the series matches with the resurgence of the feminist movement. Besides, “*The Handmaid's Tale* obviously resonates strongly with many viewers as an allegorical, science-fictional response to the Trump administration” (Hendershot, 2018).

Identity

The issue of the loss of identity is key to the story and not exclusively because the protagonist loses her real name in the context of Gilead. In fact, almost everyone loses their true identity in the new republic. Although the most influential people, the commanders, have greater privileges than everyone else, all the inhabitants of Gilead have been renamed and relocated in the new system. The most flagrant loss of identity occurs with the women; divided as Wives, Marthas, Handmaids, Econowives, etc., they lose their individuality and become bodies reduced to a very specific functionality, especially in the case of fertile women: their role is reproduction. This function is more important than personality, education or personal desire and manifests itself in that no female character responds to her real name. The case of the Handmaids is the most extreme, as they are given names that refer to the commanders they serve: Offred, Ofglen, Ofwarren, Ofcharles and so on. All follow the same pattern: the preposition "Of" and the first name of the man in question. Nothing is revealed about the Handmaids as people, to the contrary, this highlights the absence of their own identities and personalities.

Similarly, although the Aunts have female and individual names, they are not their real names; they have been renamed by the regime's administration. Sara, Elizabeth and Lydia are references to Aunts, which can be found in the Bible and Ancient Rome.

The loss of identity is much more pronounced in the novel than in the series. In the book, there is a notable absence of names. The name of the protagonist, although revealed in the first chapter, is never assigned to her definitively, and it is the reader who must complete the puzzle. In the case of the television series, the protagonist reveals her name herself at the end of the first chapter, as well as her daughter's name.

However, there is always doubt on the part of the reader whether or not the names that appear are real as there is the suggestion that perhaps the protagonist attempts to protect her family, friends and herself. This is implied by the conference speaker at the end of the novel. (In the series, there is no doubt.) If so, the pseudonyms are not arbitrary, and all have biblical connotations: Lucas, for Saint Luke; Moira is an Irish version of Mary, in reference to the Virgin Mary or Mary Magdalene. The name of the protagonist's daughter never appears in the book, while in the series it does: Hannah. Hannah, coincidentally, is the mother of the prophet Samuel in the Old Testament, a woman who became a mother after praying for a long time and offering her child to God. The rest of the Handmaids - Janine, Alma, Dolores - have names that refer to kindness or maternal care.

Something that is also related to identity, apart from the names of the characters, is the way they dress. In Western society, clothing defines a person's individuality and style. The lack of freedom of expression under the regime, is manifested in part in that each person dresses in a very specific way, according to the social echelon to which they belong; i.e., clothing reveals status and repels individuality. In fact, the protagonist sees some Japanese tourists on the street (1x05) and remembers having dressed like them once. At this moment, she too associates dressing the way she wants with freedom, since she thinks that the tourists are indeed expressing themselves through the clothing they wear.

The Handmaids are all required to wear the same clothing, which is supposed to make them all the same, both for themselves and for others; that is, their clothes serve both to make them invisible to the world and allow them to hide from it. They are dressed in red, with a kind of tunic that covers their bodies and a white headdress that sets them apart making it difficult for them to see their surroundings, while also protecting them from it. Red has a very deep symbolism: in this case it can refer to Mary

Magdalene and her repentance - in contrast to the blue-green colour the Wives wear, closer to the purity of the Virgin Mary - and also brings them closer to fertility, life ... although it may even refer to violence.

Similarly, the Marthas are clothed in a dull green, in a kind of bland and formless nightgown, and a large apron. In contrast to the Handmaids, they do not wear headdresses. In this way, when they go out, they are easily identified, but nobody would be interested in considering them as individuals because their clothing singles them out as servants. The clothes define them: helpful, although not attractive, useful and invisible to the world.

So, it is clear that women are divided into social and uniformed categories according to the group to which they belong: Handmaids wear red, Marthas wear greyish green, Wives wear blue. In this way, their individuality is lost, and they become interchangeable elements within the system.

Membership

Belonging refers not only to fitting in with the rest of the group, but rather it has more to do with feeling that one is in the right place and circumstances. In this sense, Offred/June is aware that she is being forced to act against her beliefs, therefore instead of trying to adapt to her new surroundings, she tries to fight for her ideals. She does not accept the regime of Gilead (which Margaret Atwood modelled on totalitarian regimes of the 20th century). She does not accept the system of harsh restrictions placed on her and others as women, who are deprived of the right to make a living, prohibited from having personal belongings, kept from reading, etc. Essentially, as women, they must always be under the supervision of men. The women of Gilead have no political rights and are defined as a group. They are forced to work for what is deemed the collective good of the society of Gilead and are a means to achieving utopia. But utopia for some is easily a dystopia for others.

June clings to life with an essential idea: to recoup what is most fundamental to her sense of belonging and self, that is, her husband and daughter. Holding on to this idea is what makes the protagonist able to resist succumbing completely to alienation and maintaining her hope no matter how oppressive her personal situation may be.

June, like Athena, the Greek goddess who is the benchmark of sorority for the feminist movement, fights for her voice to be heard and uses it so that her life is publicly known (Fernández Guerrero, 2012). It is this fact that pushes her to a process of empowerment and leads her to take charge of her own destiny. According to the author Fernández Guerrero, the Athenian myth

contains a vindication for women to value their own femininity and sexual difference, in such a way that contributes to strengthening women's confidence in themselves and reinforcing their demands for access to visible, public and institutional power (Fernández Guerrero, 2012, p. 116).

One of the features of life in Gilead that most alienates June/Offred is the lack of solidarity among women and the negative consequences this entails. June realizes that she cannot even find support from women who belong to her same group. Her assigned walking partner, Ofglen, is called her "friend" by the Martha who serves in the Waterford house with her (1x01) however, the voiceover reveals that she and Ofglen have not exchanged more than fifty words in the two months since she arrived and that her opinion of her is far from positive. An even harder and more significant example for the viewer occurs at a time when Janine, a Handmaid whose eye was put out by the regime in retribution for her rebellious

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behaviour, is accused of being responsible for her own gang rape when she confessed her past to the group; the rest of the Handmaids are forced to publicly blame her (1x01).

There is even less solidarity when June interacts with women from other groups: Serena Joy, Commander Waterford's wife, will make her feel despised from the moment she arrives; the Martha who lives in the house will also treat her poorly, refusing to even engage in conversation with her; and the Aunts are not much better, especially Aunt Lydia, the Aunt with whom viewers will be most familiar, as she is directly involved with training the Handmaids. The Aunts are responsible for indoctrinating the Handmaids in the prevailing religious fundamentalism of the regime and forcing them into compliance under threat of violence that may involve amputation, death by stoning, undue accusations and a long list of continued mistreatments.

However, as the series progresses, June's sense of solidarity and belonging grows. By the end of the second season she is willing to temporarily renounce the care of her daughter Nichole/Holly and her own freedom, to remain in Gilead to fight for Handmaids and other women. Likewise, women from other social groups begin to see that solidarity is the only path to the destruction of the authoritarian regime of Gilead. There is the very striking scene where Serena Joy leads an initiative with other Wives to petition the all-male governing council to consider allowing their daughters to learn to read (2x13). Serena performs the subversive act of reading some lines from the New Testament (John Chapter 1, Verse 1) for which she receives the punishment of amputation. After this incident, there is a moment of rapprochement between Serena and June - they even shake hands in a sign of understanding - which marks a turning point in June's determination to change the system and help the growing sisterhood. Likewise, one of the Handmaids (Emily) attacks Aunt Lydia, by stabbing her, which represents a watershed in the relationship between the Handmaids and the Aunts in the final episode (2x13).

Finally, the Marthas emerge at the end of the second season as crucial figures, who secretly champion a subversive network that enables Emily to escape and take June's daughter, Nichole/Holly, with her. It is precisely the sense of belonging to a group (that of women in general and not the group of the Handmaids in particular) that encourages June to stay in Gilead and renounce a future outside its borders. She has managed to find empathy with Serena through the "daughter" they have in common - finally it is June who decides that the baby should be called Nichole, as Serena wished - and with all the women and girls that live under the oppression of the regime.

Redemption

One of the central themes of Christianity is redemption, centered around the figure of Jesus Christ, as he redeemed humanity from sin through his sacrifice of dying on the Cross. Beyond the Christian meaning, redemption refers to release from adverse circumstances, such as enslavement or incarceration. Two figures will stand out in this regard, June and Serena, but perhaps it is the latter that experiences a more radical transformation. Serena undergoes a surprising redemption in the eyes of the spectators, considering her initial status as that of a villain. The second season (2x01) opens with a scene in which Serena's figure is bathed in sunlight, coming through the window of an airplane. The scene is very similar to the opening of the first season, where June appears leaning on a windowsill (1x01). These two opening scenes suggest a parallel between the two characters, who were formerly antagonists. Serena's single motivation is her desire to be a mother. She is able to act as a submissive wife in order to have a child. Of course, she completely ignores the fact that whoever is pregnant is also a woman, subjecting this other person to all kinds of torment. Perhaps one of the most shocking moments in this regard is when Commander

Waterford rapes June (2x10), while Serena acts as an accomplice and direct instigator, completely blinded by her desire to have a child. Beatings and mistreatment of June are interspersed with moments that tip the scales to her favour, such as when she helps save Janine's baby and when Serena suffers a brutal beating from her husband (2x08). Beyond how ruthless Serena has been before, the viewer only sees a battered woman in this scene. After the beating, June offers her help from the other side of the door and, although Serena rejects her, an indivisible bond has already formed between the two.

The turning point in Serena's conversion is the execution of Eden, Nick's wife, for adultery (2x12). When Serena discovers that it was Eden's own father who turned his daughter into the authorities, she understands that her baby -Nichole- can never truly be safe in a world like Gilead. From then on, there are moments of transformation in the character: a very important scene is when Serena lets June breastfeed the baby, unthinkable before, and of course, the aforementioned moment in which Serena loses a finger for reading the Bible in front of the governing council of the regime. The moment of definitive redemption for Serena is when she is willing to let Nichole go, because motherhood has transformed her. Now she understands what it means to truly love a child and the sacrifice that this entails.

Emily is another character who is inexplicably redeemed. In the world of Gilead she has no reason to hope; she is a former university professor and also a lesbian, who is therefore deemed a "gender traitor". The regime mutilates her genitals when it is discovered that she has had an affair with a Martha. Her status as a fertile woman is the only thing that saves her from execution. Emily is a member of the Mayday resistance when the series begins. She is condemned to the Colonies after she steals a car and runs over a guard. However, she later returns to the city and is assigned to the home of Commander Lawrence, a somewhat peculiar high-ranking individual, who refuses to participate in the Ceremony and gives Emily special treatment. After she stabs Aunt Lydia in one of the most subversive acts of the series (2x13), he helps her escape from Gilead with June's daughter Nichole/Holly in tow.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As Downing (1999) comments, it is necessary to rethink - to unravel is the term used concretely - the stories that have already been told in order to be able to weave new ones. In this way, stereotyped discourses that include the feminine must be reviewed from a critical point of view to build the story from a different perspective.

It is necessary to rethink the "liquid modernity" in which we are immersed according to Bauman in such a way that society can see alternatives for the not too distant future. It is advisable to understand that critical dystopia, especially of a feminist nature, provides a different twist (exaggerates a situation to make it more obvious) on current torturous and unnatural attitudes, offering a precautionary tale. It warns us to be careful, the near future can become a nightmare. It is necessary to approach these narratives from an active perspective, deciphering them as a possible outcome if the appropriate measures are not taken now.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The theme presented in this chapter is easily applicable to a multitude of contemporary audiovisual products, from the perspective of dystopia as an actualization of topics that touch on the very ontology

The Handmaid's Tale (2017) or Hulu's Major Investment in Great Storytelling

of being. In other words, through studying dystopia, alongside other foundational mythical stories, it is possible to extrapolate this perspective to other productions. These may tell different stories, but they commonly propose alternative futures from a critical perspective.

CONCLUSION

Although the scenario in stories such as *The Handmaid's Tale* are, at least, terrifying, we must not lose sight of the fact that at the heart of the story there is hope. The Handmaids fight to recover their identities and manifest this desire in the symbolic act of telling each other their names (2x07). As the plot progresses, they recover the sense of belonging to a group, as women and as human beings, which leads the main character to renounce flight and to allow herself to be separated from her own daughter in order to fight for a better world. Finally, there is room for redemption. Despite her atrocities, terror and most ineffable sins, even Serena Joy, instigator of the regime and subsequently a victim of it, manages to save her soul.

The viewer cannot consume stories like these passively. Currently, ultra-conservative groups proliferate and promote the return to the values of an imaginary past as a way to achieve “utopia” and this series represents exactly what could happen if that were to be established. Starting from concrete historical references - Atwood herself has commented that her history is based on horrors committed in the twentieth century, such as the internment of Jews in concentration camps and other atrocities that resulted from World War II, the series uses myths that have to do with the ontology of the human being to touch the sensitive fibre of the viewers and warn them, from a discourse that looks like a story - *The Handmaid's Tale* - that if we are not vigilant and remedies are not taken, serious consequences can occur.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Dystopia: Non-real representation of a possible future society which is negative and results in human alienation.

Feminism: Current of thought that is based on the recognition of rights for women that have traditionally been reserved for men, trying to suppress gender inequality.

Hypervigilance: A state in which the priority is to detect possible threats, which results in greater irritability of the subjects.

Hulu: American platform of audiovisual content on demand belonging to Hulu LLC, Walt Disney Company, NBC Universal and Warner Media.

Identity: Set of features and defining characteristics of a person or thing that allows it/them to be distinguished from the rest.

Redemption: Being freed from painful or aggravating circumstances through an action.

Storytelling: The action of recounting a story to connect with an audience through the message that is being transmitted.

Chapter 5

Audience Engagement and Transmedia Adaptation: The Case of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

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ABSTRACT

*This chapter analyses the transmedia strategy followed by the creators of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-13). This web series uses different platforms to recreate the plot of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, the usage of these platforms encourages fan participation and engages the audience. In order to explore the employment of transmedia, different approaches are applied to understand the construction of the series and the role of the audience. Furthermore, different transmedia strategies to plan the story are also considered. This analysis is particularly relevant because it shows how transmedia can be employed to adapt a classic novel for a digital generation, and how the audience becomes part of the story itself.*

INTRODUCTION

It is a truth universally acknowledged that every Jane Austen fan wants to become the heroine of a Jane Austen novel. These fans, better known as Janeites, have always dreamt about the possibility of living in Regency England and meeting their own Mr. Darcy, and transmedia storytelling can be used to finally make their dreams come true.

In this chapter, the author will analyse how transmedia storytelling can be used to engage the audience — both a digital new audience and viewers that are already familiar with a story. In order to do this, a review of transmedia theories will be included. There are many authors (Jenkins, Pratten, or Scolari, among others) that have studied different aspects of this phenomenon so their theories should be addressed. Moreover, the role of the audience will also be considered due to the fact that viewers can simply be consumers or actively participate and create more content related to the fictional world

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(Hernández & Grandío, Guerrero, Lastra). Finally, the relation between transmedia and adaptation will also be mentioned to introduce transmedia web series.

In the second section of this paper, the object of study will be presented. In order to do this, the author will firstly take into consideration Austenmania as well as previous books, films and TV series that deal with fan phenomenon and manage to go beyond traditional stories and representations of Jane Austen. These productions succeed in introducing modern characters into Austen's universe both figuratively through problems and dilemmas that must be solved (*The Jane Austen Book Club*) and literally by creating themed resorts or including fictional elements (*Austenland*, *Midnight in Austenland*, *Lost in Austen*) so that readers could identify with their conflicts and even believe that becoming a Jane Austen heroine was possible. Then, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* will be presented. This transmedia web series adapts *Pride and Prejudice*, one of Jane Austen's most famous novels, and is the object of study of the chapter. Its plot and the different strategies followed by the creators in order to build the narration will be explored. This series uses different platforms to recreate the original novel in a completely new context, which should be analysed.

Finally, the plan followed by the producers of the web series will be explored. First, the use of several platforms to narrate the story will be analysed. The personal accounts that the characters have on social networks and the secondary channels on YouTube are key in order to disseminate and construct the story so they should be analysed. Furthermore, the producers fixed permanent dates to upload the different videos; thus, viewers always knew when to expect them. Then, interaction will also be studied. The employment of social media platforms allows communication between the audience and the characters themselves. In fact, people can send messages to them and even ask questions that will be answered by the main characters in special videos. Finally, Darcymania will also be addressed to understand how fan phenomenon can also have an influence on audience engagement. Mr. Darcy is one of the most beloved characters in Jane Austen's novels; therefore, he could attract and engage a specific part of the audience who is already familiar with the original story.

Consequently, this chapter aims to explore the use of transmedia to engage the audience. The author will focus on a specific web series, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, to show how this new format could be implemented to engage the audience and how new media platforms can be used to attract a new digital generation and blur the thin line between fiction and reality. Moreover, this web series is an adaptation of a previous famous novel; therefore, the possibility of exploiting an already existing fan phenomenon to captivate those viewers who are already familiar to the story should also be analysed.

BACKGROUND

Henry Jenkins defined transmedia as “stories that unfold across multiple media platforms, with each medium making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the world” (2006a, p. 293) and also said that “transmedia refers to a set of choices made about the best approach to tell a particular story to a particular audience in a particular context depending on the particular resources available to particular producers” (2011). Nowadays, a single medium is not enough to tell a story and producers design strategies to take advantage of the different platforms that are available. However, this phenomenon is nothing new: Marsha Kinder had already used this term in 1991 to make reference to children literature that employ other media to unfold a story (Martínez Uribe, 2015, p. 346). Children stories have, in fact, used transmedia elements and strategies for a long time and have even become franchises due to their

dissemination through books, the internet and video-games (Martin, 2009, pp. 85-95). Several examples of this can be found. For example, Scolari, Jiménez and Guerrero analyse the example of *Las tres mellizas* (*The Triplets* in English), a Spanish series for children that used different media to develop the story: a TV series, books, a webpage and even a theatrical performance (2012, p. 142). Harry Potter could also be considered a transmedia franchise because books about the magical world have been released as well as platforms that expand the reader's experience (Martínez Uribe, 2015, p. 346), new films and a theatrical performance that is currently running in London, New York and Melbourne, although productions in San Francisco, Hamburg and Toronto have already been announced for 2019 and 2020. Nevertheless, nowadays transmedia is not limited to children's products, but actually applied to different productions. In fact, there are authors (Jenkins, Hills, Grandío) who affirm that transmedia is especially used in science fiction series and films such as *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who* or *Star Wars* (Hernández and Grandío, 2011, p. 4).

Many series use transmedia in a different way nowadays; therefore, it is important to analyse certain intrinsic aspects of this phenomenon in order to understand it. Jenkins, for example, compiles his seven principles of transmedia storytelling (2009a, 2009b): spreadability vs. drillability, or "the capacity of the public to engage actively in the circulation of media content through social networks" vs. what Jason Mittel defines as "a mode of forensic fandom that encourages viewers to dig deeper, probing beneath the surface to understand the complexity of a story and its telling" (2009b, par. 14); continuity vs. multiplicity, or the "sense of 'continuity' which contributes to our appreciation of the 'coherence' and 'plausibility' of their fictional worlds" (2009b) vs. "the possibility of alternative versions of the characters or parallel universe versions of the stories" (2009b, par. 18); immersion vs. extractability, or the ability to enter "into the world of the story" vs. the capacity of fans to take "aspects of the story away with them as resources they deploy in the spaces of their everyday life" (2009a); worldbuilding, which "is closely link to what Jane Murray has called the 'encyclopaedic' impulse behind contemporary interactive fictions — the desire of audiences to map and master as much as they can know about such universes" (2009a, par. 7); seriality, which "creates meaningful and compelling story chunks and then disperses the full story across multiple instalments" (2009a); subjectivity, or "comparing and contrasting multiple subjective experiences of the same fictional events" (2009a); and, finally, performance, which may refer to the performance of fans, but also of producers that perform "their relationship to both the text and the audience through their presence online or through director's commentary" (2009a). These principles show which devices can be used in order to build these stories and how viewers connect in a different way with the transmedia production.

In fact, viewers and consumers have an essential role in this type of narrative. Jenkins affirms that the different transmedia elements invite fan participation, which could be considered in certain situations "a minimal condition for comprehending the narrative" (2006b, p. 120). Moreover, Pratten even questions the traditional definition of transmedia because it focuses "on the *how* of transmedia storytelling and not the *why* — it describes the production and not the consumption" (2015, p. 2). He insists on the importance of participation, which "needs to be encouraged and supported" (2015, p. 62), and suggests participation mechanics such as the availability of information or the use of perspectives (2015, p. 22). There are different activities that can be applied to encourage fan participation: observing ("what information or questions might the audience be given to make them *think* about and reflect on the premise?"), exploring ("what additional information (in world and out of world) can the audience explore?"), gaming ("what (moral) choices might the audience be given to make them *feel* the premise?"), and role-playing ("how will you enable the audience to role-play and create their own entertainment?") (2015, p. 67).

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Therefore, the audience is considered basic in these types of narratives and its role should be encouraged by creators.

The role of viewers has been studied and analysed by several authors, who have created classifications based on it. Hayes, for example, suggests a classification based on 5 different figures: the consumers (who passively consume the content), the sharers (who consume the content, but also share and post about it), the critics (who rate and comment the content), the editors (who submit content created by others and edit it) and the creators (who create new original content) (2007). Hernández and Grandío also distinguish between those fans who disseminate the product, those who interpret the contents and participate in forums or write in wikis, and those who create more content (2014, pp. 15-16). Guerrero differentiates between *modelo observativo* or observational model (the “lurker”, a viewer who does not interact), *modelo discursivo/argumentativo* or discursive/argumentative model (participants who share their opinion), *modelo creativo/divulgativo* or creative/sharer model (fans who create content such as fan fiction, fan art or fan vid), and *modelo lúdico* or ludic model (viewers who play games related to the production) (2014, pp. 261-262). On the other hand, Lastra suggests a classification that divides viewers into *consumidor* or consumer (who simply consumes the content), *distribuidor* or sharer (who shares the content), and *productor* or producer, which can be divided in *productor de contenido original* (who creates original content related to the original production) and *productor de contenido subyacente* (who adapts the original content or creates versions of it) (2016, pp. 79-80). Finally, Scolari even distinguishes between single text consumers (those followers who only consume isolated content “without taking into account the total geography of this world”), single media consumers (those consumers who enter the narrative through one media) and transmedia consumers (those fans who “move from one media to another, applying a different set of skills to interpret each media text while reconstructing the entire fictional world”) (2009, p. 597). Moreover, the importance of these roles and fan participation have been emphasised by using the term “prosumer”, which was introduced by Alvin Toffler in 1980 to make reference to those consumers that produce content (Scolari et al., 2012b, p. 84).

Furthermore, there are different strategies that can be followed in order to plan a transmedia product. Scolari et al. differentiate between two procedures: *estratégica* (strategic) and *táctica* (tactic). Strategic means that the transmedia expansion has been planned in advance, while tactic is used when there is no previous strategy (2012a, p. 146). Scolari also suggests four different strategies that can be used for expanding the narrative world: the “creation of interstitial microstories” that “enrich the diegetic world by expanding the period between the seasons”, the “creation of parallel stories” that “unfolds at the same time as the macrostory”, the “creation of peripheral stories” that “have a weak relationship to the macrostory”, and the “creation of user-generated content platforms like blogs, wikis, etc.” (2009, p. 598). On the other hand, Scolari et al. (2012b, p. 84) and Guerrero (2014, p. 241) also use a classification based on the origin of the different transmedia expansions, which can be bottom-up, when fans generate the content, or top-down, when producers generate it. Therefore, it can be said that the audience has the power to shape a transmedia production.

On the other hand, transmedia can also be related to adaptation. Adaptation studies have evolved significantly during the 20th and 21st centuries and have managed to go beyond traditional fidelity discourses. New theories have been suggested and even the Association of Literature on Screen has changed its name to Association of Adaptation Studies to “move us beyond the novel/film nexus” and “focus on the process of exchange first and the concern with narrative form second” (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2010, p. 1). Therefore, adaptation is nowadays considered an open process that “will profit immensely from taking into account vernacular productions of, and responses to, adaptation” (Voigts & Nicklas, 2013, p.

141). However, a distinction between adaptation and transmedia should be pointed out. Jenkins “makes a sharp distinction” between these two concepts because the representation of a story can be considered transmedia due to the change of medium, but not storytelling because it does not expand the fictional world (Ryan, 2018, pp. 529-530). Thus, traditional novel to film adaptation may not be considered transmedia because “if transmedia is a new form of storytelling, then, it should be more than adaptation” (2018, p. 530). However, there are adaptations that use different media to adapt a story. Therefore, transmedia storytelling may offer an interesting approach to adaptation studies because these strategies, especially the immersive ones, can blur the fiction/reality border (Bourdaa, 2013, p. 209). Transmedia allows producers to go a step beyond so that viewers may finally become part of the stories they love.

JANE AUSTEN AND TRANSMEDIA NARRATIVES

Jane Austen is one of the most important authors in the world. Her figure and works have been studied by several authors, her novels are still read by millions of people every year and they have been adapted in different moments and places. The first adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was released in 1940 in Hollywood. Aldous Huxley, the author of *Brave New World*, and the screenwriter Jane Murfin wrote the script of this adaptation, which became a success in box office and had a good critical reception (Rodríguez Martín, 2003, p. 341). During the 20th and the 21st centuries, dozens of adaptations were made in different countries such as the USA, the UK, India or Spain. These versions adapted the stories taking into consideration different extra-cinematic factors such as trends, historical events, values or commercial considerations (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2007, p. 4). Thus, in Bollywood adaptations such as *Bride & Prejudice* (2004) dance scenes are performed, while in the Spanish adaptations that were recorded during the dictatorship certain traditional values were encouraged. Nevertheless, the most famous adaptation is probably the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation starring Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet and Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. In fact, “the final episode was watched in Britain by 10 million viewers” and the video, which was released before the final episode was broadcast, sold 12,000 copies (Carretero González & Rodríguez Martín, 2007, p.2). This series and Colin Firth’s performance were so popular that people even started talking about “Darcymania” and “Firthmania” and, in fact, many viewers are “still enthusiastic twenty years after its first broadcast” (Cano, 2017, p. 157).

These adaptations — and especially those released during the 1990s — unleashed an unprecedented fan phenomenon known as “Austenmania”, which was even compared to the “Beatlemania”. Hummel said that

We’ve all observed or joined the flocks of faddists rushing to see the films adapted from Jane Austen’s novels in a heady wave of Hollywood-meets-England glitz. Or perhaps we’ve safely avoided the riots by snuggling up in front of the telly and watching the charming screen version of Pride and Prejudice on the ABC (Rodríguez Martín, 2003, p. 332).

Austen’s stories became a real success because of something simple: the love stories. As Harman affirms “the Mills-and-Boon formula of girl meets boy, both meet obstacles but come together triumphantly in the end owes it neatness and directness to Austen and her streamlining of the romance plot she inherited” (2009, p. 246). Furthermore, these stories are considered by many people a shelter where they can escape to forget the real world and cope with difficult situations, and some fans can even imagine

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themselves “in her world even as we are insurmountably distant from it” (Camden & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 2). Reading Austen’s novels, and also adaptations, retellings or fan fiction, “can be a (mostly) harmless way of resolving the personal dissatisfactions of modern life” (Cano, 2017, p. 163). In fact, some readers affirm that these new versions reassure them that they “too might have her happily ever after”; furthermore, this may also confirm “the reader’s desire for the Austen hero and her identification with the heroine, the woman who gets him” (Cano, 2017, p. 171). However, and even though Janeites have enjoyed all these productions, they do not want to settle anymore: they have already read and watched the stories, they have enjoyed modernizations and loose adaptations such as *Clueless* (1995) or *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (2001), and now they want to become the heroines of their own stories and find their own Mr. Darcy.

This desire of becoming a character in a Jane Austen novel has led to a series of books and audiovisual productions that immerse the main characters in the author’s world and/or stories. *The Jane Austen Book Club*, for example, is a novel written by Karen Joy Fowler and published in 2004. It is set in the USA and narrates the story of five women and a man who meet to discuss Austen’s novels. However, they do not only read them, but learn from them because, while reading, they experience similar situations to those narrated in the books. All characters grow, fall in love and overcome difficult situations in their lives, and they manage to face them thanks to these stories and what they learn from Austen heroines. In fact, at the end of the story, one of the characters customizes a magic ball so that it shows quotes that appear in Jane Austen’s novels; thus, they can ask their beloved author for advice whenever they have a problem. Furthermore, this book was adapted to film (Calley, Lynn, & Swicord, 2007). Even though certain storylines are altered (for example, most information about their past is omitted, some situations such as Prudie’s affair are magnified, and the reading order changes), the characters also learn from Austen and her novels. This is even clearer at the end of the movie, when one of the characters must make an important decision and sees everywhere the quote “What would Jane do?”.

Nevertheless, there are stories that go a step beyond this. *Austenland* is a novel written by Shanon Hale and published in 2007 that immerses the main character, Jane Hayes, in Austen’s world. Jane is a woman in her thirties who lives in New York and is secretly obsessed with Jane Austen and, especially, Colin Firth’s portrayal of Mr. Darcy. When her great-aunt dies, she discovers that she has arranged for her a holiday to Austenland, a themed resort in the United Kingdom where visitors can live as people did in Regency England, and she decides to go to get over her obsession. As Camden and Faber Oestreich affirm “she [Jane] went to Pembroke Park not only ‘to find out if she could let her fantasy of Mr. Darcy die at last’, but also because [as Jane explained] ‘I’ve only been half myself lately, and I thought coming here would let me work this part out of me so I could be me again’” (2018, p. 19). However, the experience is not what she has imagined: women could only do certain activities at that time and she feels ridiculous in Regency clothes. Furthermore, she is considered a second-class guest because she is not rich as the other visitors, so she takes solace in Martin, one of the gardeners. Nevertheless, she tries to enjoy the experience and, in an attempt to leave her Darcy fantasies behind, starts flirting with Mr. Nobley, who proposes to her at the ball. Jane manages to reject him and plans to meet Martin in London, but then discovers that everything was a lie: in Austenland there is nothing real and even the gardeners are actors who are supposed to make clients live a romance — although Mr. Nobley has actually fallen in love with her so, in the end, they have their own happy ending. Additionally, there is a second book, *Midnight in Austenland* (Hale, 2012). This novel follows Charlotte Kinder, a divorced woman who finds solace in Austen’s novels and decides to book a holiday in Austenland to break the routine and forget about her problems. She is also a fan of Agatha Christie’s novels and soon gets involved in a

mystery that surrounds the house. Charlotte tries to focus, behave as a 19th century woman and live her own Austen romance, but her curiosity pushes her to resolve the mystery and she finally discovers that one of the cast members has actually killed the owner's husband.

Moreover, the first novel has been adapted to film (Hibbett, Meyer, Mingacci, & Hess, 2013). However, the main character in the adaptation is less cynical than the original one. This Jane Hayes is, in fact, openly obsessed with Mr. Darcy and Jane Austen, and spends all her savings to go to Austenland — although she can only afford the cheapest package and, therefore, can only attend certain activities, has simple plain clothes, and sleeps in a tiny bedroom in the servants' quarters. Jane is really excited — she even wears her Regency clothes in the airport —, but she soon gets disappointed. Nevertheless, she still tries to enjoy the experience and, in the end, manages to get over her obsession and is rewarded with Mr. Nobley's love. Furthermore, and even though the second book is not adapted, there are some references to it in this film. In the novel *Austenland* there are different houses and cottages and the owner, Mrs. Wattlesbrook, lives in a different house so that she can control all the guests, but in *Midnight in Austenland* and the adaptation of the first novel there is only one house and the owner is the hostess. Additionally, it seems obvious that Austenland has economic problems in the second novel and in the end one of the regular rich customers, Miss Charming, partners with Mrs. Wattlesbrook so that they can keep the resort, while in the adaptation this woman buys the whole resort and creates an amusement park, which “proffers a male stripper” instead of “carefully scripted romance” (Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 26). Finally, it can be said that these books and movie “suggest that the Austen fantasy is dangerous: at best, it provides a space for women to express desire, but, at worst, it costs women ‘real’ happiness and a lot of money” (Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 26). Women want to have their own Austen romance and enjoy Regency England, although the experience may not be what they expected.

On the other hand, there are stories that go even beyond this. *Lost in Austen* (McKerrell & Zeff) is an ITV four episode series that was broadcast in 2008. In this series, Amanda, the main character, is a young woman obsessed with *Pride and Prejudice* that manages to enter the book through a hidden door in her bathroom. She swaps places with Elizabeth Bennet, who wants to explore the modern world, and moves to Longbourn, the Bennet's house. However, and even though she “claims to long for Georgian courtesy, she is unable to successfully practice it” and “her continuous slips in decorum wreak havoc with the plot of *P&P* [*Pride and Prejudice*] as she knows it” (Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 28). For example, in this series Mr. Bingley falls in love with Amanda and not with Jane, who, in fact, marries Mr. Collins, and Lydia never runs away with Mr. Wickham. Furthermore, Mr. Darcy proposes to Amanda, but then rejects her because she is not a maid (a virgin in this context) and that was unacceptable at that time. Janeites always dream about living in Jane Austen's novels and become heroines, but Amanda soon discovers that Regency England was not as idyllic as she thought. Nevertheless, the situation is finally solved: Elizabeth stays in the 21st century — where she has discovered the Internet and macrobiotic food —; and Amanda and Mr. Darcy get engaged. Henceforth, Amanda's fantasies are fulfilled even though this new England where she stays “no longer conforms to Austen's novel” (Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 30) because of all the problems that she has provoked.

These stories show how fans crave for something more: they do not want to be merely readers and viewers, but want to become part of the story itself. Thus, new adaptations have to deal with this phenomenon as well as the needs of a new digital generation.

Transmedia Web Series: *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

Web series are, in general, series that are released directly on the Internet. However, there are different types of web series and some of them use more than one platform in order to build the story. Producers can design a transmedia strategy and use, for example, film, television, books, videogames and the Internet to create a narrative. There are several examples of fictional productions, such as *The Matrix* or *Star Wars*, that use two or more of these elements to narrate the whole story. For example, a narration can be introduced by a film and then the producers may also create videogames or comics to expand the universe and add new information. Spectators can choose how to access the story and which paths to follow. Furthermore, social networks are a new tool that can also be used to tell stories in a new innovative way. Most young people have accounts in different social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, for example) so their use may appeal younger generations. In fact, there is a special type of web series that uses different social networks to narrate the story. The episodes of these series are usually short — they last between 3 and 10 minutes — and are recorded as video blogs; thus, the main character is also the narrator of the story and talks about their life. Moreover, characters have their own accounts on Internet platforms and can interact with each other and also with viewers. This is the case of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries (TLBD from now on) is a transmedia web series that adapts and modernises Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This novel was published in 1813 and narrates the story of the Bennet family. It begins with the arrival of Mr. Bingley, a rich single man who attracts the attention of Mrs. Bennet, who is desperate to marry her five daughters. The property where they live can only be inherited by men so they will be left penniless and homeless after the death of their father. Consequently, they need to find good husbands soon. However, Mr. Bingley arrives to Netherfield with his two sisters, his brother-in-law and Mr. Darcy, another rich single man. Mr. Darcy has £10,000 per year and owns many lands, but he is also proud and offends Elizabeth, one of the eldest Bennet sisters and a really stubborn young woman. On the other hand, Mr. Bingley soon falls in love with Jane, the eldest Bennet sister. Nevertheless, his sisters and Mr. Darcy prevent him from marrying her because she is not rich. At the same time, some soldiers arrive to the neighbouring town of Meryton and the Bennet sisters meet Mr. Wickham, a handsome soldier with a tragic past who hates Mr. Darcy. Furthermore, Mr. Collins, Mr. Bennet's cousin who is going to inherit the property after his death, arrives at Longbourn to find a wife. He proposes to Elizabeth, who rejects him because she is determined to marry for love. Furthermore, Mr. Bingley, his family and Mr. Darcy depart from Netherfield without notice. However, Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's paths cross again while she is visiting her friend Charlotte and, even though he thinks that it is not wise, Darcy confesses his feelings and proposes to her, who rejects him. Elizabeth decides then to go back home and join her aunt and uncle in their trip to Derbyshire. There they visit Pemberley, which is Mr. Darcy's house, and they meet again. Elizabeth soon realises that he has changed and has become a nicer person; thus, she changes her mind about him. However, a letter from Jane arrives and they discover that Lydia, who was in Brighton with the colonel's wife, has run away with Mr. Wickham. Elizabeth returns home to be with her family and Mr. Darcy intervenes so that Mr. Wickham marries Lydia. Moreover, he brings Mr. Bingley back to Longbourn and he and Jane get engaged. Finally, Mr. Darcy asks Elizabeth again to marry him and she accepts. *Pride and Prejudice* is, in conclusion, a novel about rural societies, social conventions, first impressions, and marriage that deals with important issues that may still be relevant nowadays.

On the other hand, TLBD is a modernisation of the aforementioned novel set in the 21st century in California. It was created by Bernie Su and Hank Green and released on YouTube between 2012 and 2013. This story follows the life of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Bennet: a 24-year-old young woman who is a grad student and still lives with her parents. Lizzie starts recording a video blog as part of a project for university and talks about her life and her family. In the first episode she explains that a new neighbour has just arrived in town: Bing Lee, a rich med student from Los Angeles. Bing Lee moves with his sister and his friend Darcy, who owns a quite successful media company. They soon meet and Darcy offends Lizzie, who starts hating him. However, they all become friends and go out together, and Bing and Jane, Lizzie's older sister, fall in love, but his sister and Darcy think that she is not good enough for him. On the other hand, a swimming competition is held in the city and the Bennet sisters meet George Wickham, a handsome swimmer who affirms that Darcy has ruined his life. Furthermore, Ricky Collins, their former neighbour and classmate in school, arrives to town to help his mother and they discover that he is looking for a partner for his enterprise. He asks Lizzie to work with him, but she rejects him because she does not want to have a job that she does not like. Consequently, he offers Charlotte, Lizzie's best friend and the editor of her video blog, the job and she accepts it. Therefore, she leaves town and stops helping Lizzie with her videos. Furthermore, Bing Lee, his sister and Darcy go back to Los Angeles without telling Jane, who is devastated. Lizzie then decides to visit Charlotte and stay with her for some weeks. However, while she is visiting the enterprise, she meets Darcy. Surprisingly, he confesses Lizzie that he has fallen in love with her against his own judgement, but she rejects him. Lizzie returns home and has a quarrel with Lydia, her youngest sister; thus, Lydia stops talking to her. Then, Lizzie decides to go to another digital enterprise to shadow it as part of a project for university. Nevertheless, when she arrives there she discovers that it is Darcy's business and they meet again. Lizzie soon realises that he is nicer than he used to be and they fall in love. However, Lydia is threatened by Wickham, who has sold a sex tape to a webpage, and Lizzie has to return home to be with her sister. In the end, Darcy intervenes and manages to shut down the webpage, Bing returns and asks Jane for a second opportunity, and Darcy and Lizzie start dating. Therefore, the creators of this series manage to apply a set of filters to the story to adapt the plot to the 21st century: the main characters and the events are kept, but they are transferred to a new different context. For example, Darcy's proposal changes to a simple declaration of love, but Lizzie still rejects him as she does in the original novel. Moreover, "this modernization forces us to reconsider the simplistic narrative that twenty-first century women have transcended or escaped every trap that was laid for nineteenth-century women" (Camden & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 56). The modern Bennet sisters do not need to get married to survive, but they still have economic problems and are pressured by their mother to find good husbands. Society has evolved, but there are problems and social situations that are nearly universal. On the other hand, and even though society has changed considerably, this series shows some social criticism as the original novel does, because it focuses on how people share their lives on social media and forget about reality and consequences. For example, Lizzy reveals other people's secret and uploads it to YouTube, but is worried when people she knows find out about her vlog. Besides, she is able to talk in front of an unknown audience, but is unable to help her sister when she needs her.

Furthermore, different platforms and media are used in order to build the story. According to Scolari, et al's classification, the plan followed in order to create this web series could be considered strategic (2012a, p. 146) because the different transmedia actions were planned beforehand. Moreover, the transmedia strategy is top-down (Scolari et al., 2012b, p. 84; Guerrero, 2014, p. 241) because producers have created it and added all the expansions. TLBD is mainly told through the videos that Lizzie herself

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uploads to YouTube; however, there are certain parts of the story that are added through other media: all characters have their own accounts in different social media platforms (Twitter or Facebook, for example) so that they can reveal information, show pictures and even interact with viewers. Furthermore, some of them even have their own YouTube channels. These are especially relevant due to the fact that they add new perspectives to the story that viewers would not be able to discover if they only follow the main video diary. Thus, it could be said that the producers of this web series created parallel stories that “unfolds at the same time as the macrostory” (Scolari, 2009, p. 598). Finally, there also two books that expand the narrative: the first one, *The Secret Diary of Lizzie Bennet*, is meant to be Lizzie’s diary so we can read what happened between episodes; the second one, *The Epic Adventures of Lydia Bennet*, is a sequel about Lydia’s life after the events of TLBD.

Moreover, interaction is also a key factor in this type of adaptations. Producers take advantage of real social networks and allow viewers to have their own role in the story. Therefore, they can “talk” to the characters through the different platforms: they can leave comments on the videos, answer and like their tweets on Twitter, and even leave questions that they answer in special questions and answers videos (Lizzie recorded 10 for her channel while Lydia uploaded two more to hers and Ricky Collins filmed another one). Taking into consideration the Koster and Vogel’s “storytelling cube”, it could be said that producers give the audience a certain freedom so that they can shape their own experience, even though they control these interactions and its impact on the story, which is limited (in Pratten, 2015, p. 18). Thus, fans have an important role in these new adaptations and they can finally interact with the story itself. The dream has come true: Janeites can finally enter Jane Austen’s world and become part of it. And this is extremely important to understand audience engagement.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transmedia Strategies, Audience Engagement and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

According to the information provided in the previous section, TLBD is a transmedia adaptation due to the use of different media to recreate the story. Therefore, viewers can access the story through the different YouTube channels, the books or even social networks. However, how did producers manage to engage people? Which strategies were followed by the creators of this web series in order to attract and keep the audience?

First of all, the producers decided to create a series of accounts on different websites: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr, as well as other platforms related to specific characters that will be detailed later. Lizzie Bennet, the main character and narrator of the series, has five different accounts where she posts things related to her life and her video blog. Firstly, she has a YouTube channel called “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries” where she uploads her videos which are, in fact, the ones that constitute the main story. More than 270,000 people have subscribed to it since its creation in 2012. Furthermore, her Twitter account (@TheLizzieBennet) gathers approximately 28,800 followers, and her Facebook page (Lizzie Bennet/@TheLizzieBennet) has more than 29,500 likes and 29,100 followers. Finally, she also has a Tumblr account and used to have another one in Google+ — although this platform shut down in 2019 and, therefore, that data cannot be accessed anymore. The remaining characters also have Twitter accounts — in fact, all of them have their own personal account on this platform — as well as other accounts related to their interests. For example, Jane Bennet, who works in the fashion industry

in the series, has accounts on Pinterest, a social network where you can share images, and Lookbook, a platform where people can upload photographs and show their looks; Ricky Collins, who is a “successful” businessman, has a profile in LinkedIn, the famous professional social network; and flirty George Wickham uses okCupid, a website to meet and date new people. These accounts erase the line between reality and fiction and viewers can feel that they are actually watching real people. As Candem and Faber Oestreich affirm “by adopting this ‘DIY look’, [T]LBD blurs fact and fiction for the spectators, especially when combined with the Internet’s promise of immediacy” (2018, p. 43). Characters post about their life and what they are doing every moment so that the audience can connect with them as they do with their real friends. As Buschman says “one of the reasons why ‘Lizzie Bennet Diaries’ connects so well with people is because we literally are with them all day, every day (...) They could be waiting in line somewhere and they could just... glance at their phone and Lizzie’s there, Darcy’s there, and they can check in whenever they have a chance to” (in Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, pp. 57-58).

These accounts were active from April 8, 2012 to March 29, 2013 and the information that was posted filled the gaps between episodes. Consequently, characters stopped posting when the series finished. However, some of these accounts were reactivated during March 2014 because, as Lydia and Lizzie explained, their parents had sold the house, so they had to pack everything. Therefore, they took pictures together and showed different elements that appeared in TLBD episodes. Furthermore, different characters also wished Lizzie and Charlotte a happy birthday and two bonus episodes were uploaded May 22 and June 10, 2014. In these videos, Lizzie answers questions about her career for students who are studying her degree (*Dr. Gardiner’s Seminar — Bonus 1*) and also about her personal life (*Dr. Gardiner’s Seminar — Bonus 2*). These interactions, and especially the videos, aroused the audience’s interest before the publication of the first related novel: *The Secret Diary of Lizzie Bennet*, which was released June 24, 2014 and showed unpublished material such as the famous letter that Darcy wrote Lizzie and information about what was happening between episodes — including things that were not even mentioned during the series.

On the other hand, the number of followers of each account is particularly significant. Lizzie is the narrator of the story and has the most-followed accounts. Other characters such as Jane (approximately 16,200 followers on Twitter; 9,242 likes and 9,099 followers on Facebook), Lydia (approximately 16,200 Twitter followers; 9,664 likes and 9,537 Facebook followers) or Darcy (18,200 followers on Twitter) also gather a considerable number of fans. However, there are others who are less popular. George Wickham only gathers 7,134 Twitter followers, Ricky Collins has 7,644 followers on Twitter, and Mary Bennet (Lizzie’s cousin) and Maria Lu (Charlotte’s sister) are only followed by 7,618 and 4,670 people on Twitter respectively. Therefore, it can be said that those characters who either have an important role — Jane and Darcy are relevant characters even though they did not tweet frequently — or share information through their social networks — Lizzie, for example, tweeted 661 times and Lydia 410 times — have more followers than those who are secondary and share little information — such as Mary Bennet, Maria Lu or Ricky Collins. Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that this web series is an adaptation of a universally famous novel that has previously been adapted several times, thus, many viewers already had their preferences. For example, Darcy appears in a small number of episodes and tweeted only 98 times, but is the second most-followed character due to his popularity among *Pride and Prejudice* fans, while George Wickham has little followers because he is one of the most hated characters in the novel even though he has a relatively important role in the story. In the end, viewers, as they do in real life, follow those people whom they like or who offer interesting information and content.

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The use of secondary channels to add information is also valuable in order to attract the audience due to the fact that these videos give the audience a different point of view. Four characters decided to create their own YouTube accounts and uploaded videos that fill certain gaps. Lydia Bennet, the youngest Bennet sister, starts recording videos when Lizzie spends some weeks in Bing Lee's house, and posts 34 videos (29 regular episodes and five special ones). However, she does not post them regularly, but in different periods: the first one while Lizzie is in Netherfield (episodes 1 to 7), the second one while her sister is visiting Charlotte (episodes 8 to 19, "questions and answers" — Q&A from now on — episodes and two special episodes: *Halloween* and *Thanksgiving*) and the last one when she has an argument with Lizzie and stops talking to her (episodes 20 to 29 and special episode *Dear Lizzie*). These videos allow viewers to discover a part of Lydia that is sometimes hidden in her sister's video blog. Moreover, the audience can also witness her relationship with George Wickham. On the other hand, Maria Lu also has her own seven episode video blog: *Maria of the Lu*. Maria is Charlotte's younger sister and starts uploading videos when she is working as an intern with her. These episodes are uploaded when Charlotte starts working at Collins and Collins and has just left her home town and stopped helping Lizzie with her vlog. Both girls are mad at each other and do not talk, but thanks to Maria's videos, viewers can see how her sister is doing without Lizzie, how she is handling the separation and why she finally decides to come to terms with her best friend. Moreover, Georgiana (Gigi) Darcy, Darcy's little sister, also records a series of videos that can be found in *Domino: Gigi Darcy*. Their company is implementing a new device and she is trying it; thus she records videos that are uploaded to YouTube. Through them, viewers can see how she helps his brother to find Wickham after he has sold Lydia's sex video. Finally, Ricky Collin's company also has its own channel called *Better Living with Collins and Collins*. In this channel, Ricky and other employees upload tutorials to improve people's lives and answer some questions. Therefore, all these videos and secondary channels show the audience different perspectives of the same story, which can question Lizzie's point of view, and add complementary information. As Allegra Tepper says "a transmedia take on the material opened up the story and allowed other perspectives to inform the storyworld" (2014, p. 60).

Moreover, all videos were posted on specific dates in order to engage the audience, who would always know when they were going to be released. TLBD was broadcast from April 9, 2012 to March 28, 2013 every Monday and Thursday — although they made a brief break between December 28, 2012 and January 6, 2013. Furthermore, Lizzie published Q&A videos nearly every month — although she did not post any in December. In them, she, along with some guests — Lydia in the first one and Darcy in the last, for example —, answers some questions that viewers send her through the different social networks; thus, they knew that they could send their questions during the whole month and Lizzie would select some of them for the next video. Furthermore, these special videos were always uploaded on Saturdays so that viewers knew when to expect them too. *The Lydia Bennet* was posted in three different periods (between July 13 and August 3, 2012, from October 12 to November 20, 2012, and from December 19, 2012 to January 29, 2013), as it was previously explained; however, the videos were always posted on Tuesdays and Fridays. Moreover, her Q&A and special videos were uploaded on Wednesdays. There is only one exception: the special Thanksgiving video which was uploaded the Friday after that celebration was held. *Maria of the Lu* was also uploaded on Tuesdays and Thursdays from September 7 to 28, 2012, and *Domino: Gigi Darcy* was posted on Tuesdays and Thursdays from February 1 to 15, 2013, except the first episode, which was released January 30 (Wednesday). Finally, *Better Living with Collins and Collins* was released sporadically, but mostly on Saturdays.

The use of social networks and the frequency of the episodes engage viewers, who know when a video is going to be published and, furthermore, can turn on notifications on the different platforms so that they are informed as soon as an update is posted. Moreover, this blurs even more the line between fiction and reality because real vloggers usually have a publication schedule and they use their accounts to promote their videos, talk about their lives and interact with their fans so this strategy can attract a digital audience.

On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that TLBD is an immersive experience that relies on viewers. Followers can actually role-play and create “their own entertainment” (Pratten, 2015, p. 67) from the different media available. People are able to interact with the characters themselves and these interactions may have an effect on the progression of the story. In fact, they have an important role in Q&A videos because they are the ones that ask through Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube and even Google+. Viewers sent Lizzie, Lydia and Ricky Collins questions about their lives, their jobs or their family and friends, and also random questions such as “who would win in a fight between a shark and a bear if they were in space?” (*Questions and Answers #5*), “pirates or ninjas?” (*Questions and Answers #6*) or “Ryan Gosling or Ryan Gosling?” (*Answers from The Lydia Bennet*). Moreover, some of these questions and also certain answers make reference to *Pride and Prejudice* and Regency England. For example, in *Questions and Answers #2* one of the questions is actually the first sentence in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Seath Grahame-Smith, 2009; adapted by Burr Steers in 2016), and in *Questions and Answers #6*, Lizzie affirms that, if she was thrown into a vortex and woke up in Victorian England, she would probably “be walking everywhere” and “probably have a lot of muddy dresses”, which is a clear reference to the original novel due to the fact that Elizabeth walks a lot. In each video, they chose some questions and answered them; therefore, these videos would not have been possible without the participation of the fandom.

Furthermore, the audience also interacted with the characters through the different social networks: for example, they left comments on the videos to share their impressions and give their opinions about what was going on. However, interaction goes beyond this thanks to the accounts on other platforms. As Seymour affirms, “the distance between fans and [T]LBD characters is the same as any other online relationship” (2014, p. 114). Therefore, people felt entitled to talk to them and interact. On Twitter, for example, there was a constant exchange between viewers and characters, who liked and answered their tweets. People were emotionally engaged with Lizzie and her friends and even tried to give them advice or warn them. This was even clearer when Lydia started dating Wickham. Viewers, worried because they had seen how he treated her and found out the truth about him, sent Wickham lots of messages accusing him of being abusive and trying to break his relationship with Lydia. They also tried to contact her so that she could realise that he was just manipulating her and she deserved something better than him. However, and even though viewers just wanted to help her, Lydia’s reaction was negative and she started arguing with them. The youngest Bennet sister could not understand why her followers were being so “mean” to her boyfriend. “He wouldn’t do that”, “Don’t threaten him! He would never hurt me” or “Why would I need viewers like that?” are some of the messages that she tweeted those followers who tried to warn her about George’s intentions. Nevertheless, they kept sending them messages and even tagged Lydia in certain TLBD episodes that dealt with Wickham’s past. These tweets and “the resulting dialogue between Lydia and fans indicates the deep level of attachment the fandom has to the characters” (Seymour, 2014, p. 116).

If the “storytelling cube” is taken into consideration, it could be said that viewers have freedom to interact and create their own experience: if they want, they can send questions or messages, but it is not

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mandatory; thus, those who do not desire to participate can simply be consumers (Hayes, 2007). The context is also essential: all social networks that are used, places and cultural elements are real, although the story itself is fictional. Finally, interactions are really important to this story, but do not actually have an influence on the storyline due to the fact that only Q&A videos rely on fandom participation; consequently, it could be said that they have no real impact on the plot (in Pratten, 2015, p. 18). Viewers are not exactly producers of content or prosumers according to the definitions provided by Hayes (2007), Hernández and Grandío (2014, pp. 15-16), Guerrero (2014, pp. 261-262) or Lastra (2016, pp. 79-80) because they do not create any new content. However, their role goes beyond passive consumption and, therefore, should not be dismissed.

Finally, there is a last element that should be analysed in order to understand TLBD and audience engagement: Austenmania and, specifically, Darcymania. This is a phenomenon that was unleashed especially during the 1990s, when the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was released. As Carretero González and Rodríguez Martín affirm “Mr. Darcy is one of the characters that has captivated the female imagination for over 200 years, but Colin Firth certainly gave it a new dimension” (2007, p. 2).

Mr. Darcy could even be considered a cultural icon and fans adore his relationship with Elizabeth Bennet. In fact, the so-called “*Pride and Prejudice* myth” can be “traced back to the 1920s” (Cano, 2017, p. 171). Janeites really like this love story and the myth “produces the notion of Austen as a queen of chick-lit for a modern audience” (2017, p. 171). Cano even believes that this “emphatic reiteration also serves as personal assurance that there is a Mr. Darcy awaiting every reader” (2017, p. 171). Fans wait for their Mr. Darcy and enjoy reading different sequels and fan fiction starring him as the main character. In fact, one of the changes that introduced the 1995 BBC adaptation was Mr. Darcy’s point of view (Cartmell, 2010, p. 60), thus, viewers had the chance to see him under a different light and appreciate his evolution — and that is probably why Colin Firth’s Mr. Darcy is so beloved by Janeites.

Even though Daniel Vincent Gordh (the actor who portrays William Darcy in TLBD) is not Colin Firth, he is undoubtedly Darcy and, therefore, became appealing to the audience. This is obvious when the data obtained from the different social networks are analysed. He is the second most-followed character (18.200 followers on Twitter), although he only follows 9 accounts — his sister Gigi, the three Bennet sisters, Charlotte and her sister Maria, Bing and Caroline Lee and his friend Fitz William — and tweeted only 98 times. He was not particularly active on Twitter during the series and only answered some messages. In fact, in his first tweet, posted April 8, 2012 (the day before Lizzie submitted her first video), he affirmed that he was “too busy to tweet”. Nevertheless, he has more followers than characters that used to tweet a lot such as Lydia or Charlotte.

Moreover, people were anxious to meet Darcy and they even asked Lizzie about him in the Q&A videos: “What does Darcy really do?”, “When will we meet Darcy?” or “Will we ever get to see Darcy?” are some of the questions that she answered in *Questions and Answers #6*. Furthermore, in this video she affirms that she get asked “a lot” about whether they will eventually see him or not. In fact, the ending of episode 59 and the knowledge of viewers who had already read the book or seen previous adaptations provoked the creation of “the Twitter hashtag ‘#darcyday’ and numerous Tumblr posts” (Candem & Faber Oestreich, 2018, p. 33) to celebrate his first appearance on the web series. The audience was expectant and looking forward to finally meeting this new Darcy.

Darcy is such a huge appeal that the chapters where he appears have a significantly higher number of viewers. He only appears in 8 episodes, but all of them have been seen by more than 900,000 spectators: episode 60 has been watched by more than 1,138,600 viewers and episode 61 by nearly 1,035,800; more than 925,600 people has seen episode 78 and nearly 902,100 has streamed episode 80; episode

83 has nearly 1,032,000 views while episode 84 has more than 978,800; and finally episodes 98 and 99 have been watched, respectively, by more than 1,489,500 and 959,900 people. These data are even more surprising when a look is taken at other episodes' statistics because most of them gather around 650,000-750,000 views. Furthermore, the Q&A video where he appears has been watched by more than 538,200 viewers while the other Q&A videos have around 250,000 views.

In conclusion, the influence and the power of attraction that the figure of Mr. Darcy has cannot be denied in this adaptation. He is one of the most popular characters in the novel and the audience — especially those fans who were already familiar to the plot and knew what was going to happen — was looking forward to finally meet him. Therefore, it could be said that he himself acted as a tool to engage the audience, and that Darcymania is still real in the 21st century.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Transmedia is a new influential field that may have an impact on different areas such as adaptation. As Voigts and Nicklas affirm adaptation is nowadays an open process (2013, p. 141) and, therefore, transmedia storytelling could improve this field because it gives producers the possibility to go beyond traditional adaptation and traditional media such as film or series. Moreover, it enables the creators to disseminate the story through different platforms and engage the audience in a new way. Viewers can interact with the story and create their own experiences: some of them can explore all the platforms, some of them can interact with the story, and some of them can focus only on one medium. There is no right path to follow, although the general picture can only be obtained through the use of all the available platforms.

Furthermore, transmedia storytelling introduces a new type of narration that should be studied. The narrative elements of these series, as well as how the story and discourse are transferred, may be analysed in order to fully understand how web series manage to adapt classic stories for a completely different audience. Moreover, further research about the relationship between transmedia storytelling and adaptation is still needed to discover how devices such as social networks or websites can be used to modernise and adapt novels. Finally, the combination of transmedia theories and different extra-cinematic filters should also be considered to understand these new productions. In fact, the author of this chapter deals with this in her PhD thesis and attempts to study how different Jane Austen's novels — TLBD was the first Jane Austen's transmedia adaptation, but there are more — have been adapted as transmedia web series: narrative elements, platforms used in order to recreate the story, and extra-cinematic factors that have had an influence on the final result are being analysed in order to study these adaptations. Thus, transmedia can open a new path in adaptation studies and further research should be carried out to completely understand its potential.

CONCLUSION

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries is a transmedia web series that adapts and modernises one of the most famous English novels ever written: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The producers of the show took advantage of the different media available and used them in order to recreate the story in a new context. Moreover, the role of the audience is especially important in these adaptations because the use of transmedia enables interaction. The story is mainly told through YouTube videos; therefore, viewers can leave their com-

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ments and like or dislike each episode. Furthermore, all characters have their own accounts on different social networks so that viewers can check any update anywhere and anytime, and interact with them: they can send them messages, like their pictures and follow their interactions. Additionally, all videos are uploaded on specific dates so that people always know when to expect them.

On the other hand, in this type of stories viewers become characters and play their own role in the narrative. In fact, participation is essential to create the Q&A videos because they rely on the questions that people send through the different platforms so Lizzie and other characters can answer them. These videos do not have a true impact on the story, but are important in order to get to know the characters and, in the end, they become part of the narrative and expand the universe. Therefore, transmedia enables viewers to participate in the series and this is basic to engage the audience.

Furthermore, the existence of previous fan phenomena such as Austenmania and Darcymania has also encouraged audience engagement. Janeites have always dreamt about living in a Jane Austen novel and becoming heroines. There are previous novels, films and series that deal with the fandom and their desire to enter the novels, but thanks to these transmedia adaptations they can actually become part of the story and have their own role. They can talk to their beloved Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, and check what they are doing by using social networks. In fact, Darcy is one of the most followed characters in TLBD and the episodes where he appears gather more than 900,000 visits each. Moreover, the use of different platforms has encouraged these phenomena due to the fact that fans are able to create a community and talk about the series. For example, many people used the hashtag #darcyday to share their excitement for his first appearance on the show.

In conclusion, transmedia can be used to engage the audience because of the use of different devices. Viewers are able to share their experience, participate and become part of the story thanks to social networks and Internet platforms. The audience can be always informed about what is going on and even leave their comments and talk to the characters. Thus, it can be said that transmedia attracts the audience in a new different way and gives them the possibility of having their own role in the narrative.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Austenmania: A fan phenomenon related to Jane Austen and unleashed mainly during the 1990s.

Darcymania: A fan phenomenon unleashed mainly during the 1990s because of the BBC 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation and Colin Firth's portrayal of Mr. Darcy.

Fan Participation: Interaction performed by followers which may have an effect on the story.

Fandom: A group of people who share their passion about something, especially films, series or books.

Janeite: A Jane Austen fan.

Social Networks: Online platforms that are used to communicate with other people or share information. They can be used for entertainment or for professional purposes.

Transmedia Adaptation: A type of adaptation that uses different platforms in order to recreate the story.

Transmedia Web Series: Series that are released directly on the internet and use different platforms in order to build the story.

Chapter 6

Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Primitive* as a Model of an Expanded Narrative

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ABSTRACT

Primitive is a multi-screen video installation created by the independent filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul. The multi-platform project presents strong ties to Thai culture and consists of a video installation with simultaneous interrelated screens, two short films, a book of art that includes a series of photographs, a journal, a draft text, and its final product, one of his most recognized films, *Uncle Boonmee, Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010), which was awarded the Palme D'Or at the Cannes film festival. The project aims to convey a unified idea and achieves this through stimulating the spectator in various formats. Apichatpong's films use non-conventional narrative structures which explore the juxtapositions between man and nature; rural life and city life; and personal memories alongside political ones. The film maker creates his own universe, which is a recurring theme throughout his filmography. *Primitive* is destined to be experienced as a dream of "reincarnation and transformation."

INTRODUCTION

Apichatpong Weerasethakul is one of the most influential directors within contemporary independent Thai cinema. After completing a degree in Architecture at the Khon Kaen University, in northeast Thailand, he took a master's degree in Fine Arts in Filmmaking at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Afterwards, he decided to return to Thailand to develop his artistic side. His first projects were shown at local art exhibitions and festivals such as the Thai Short Film and Video Festival, organised by the Thai Film Foundation and from which have emerged a large number of the country's current independent filmmakers.

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Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Primitive as a Model of an Expanded Narrative

To understand the audiovisual work of this director-creator, it is defined by Promkhuntong as “uniquely combining Western avant-garde traditions and documentary filmmaking with stories of working-class people across Thailand and the fantasy worlds they construct” (2019, p. 21). His style is highly personal and immersive, it could be stated that it is a type of paracosm (Silvey and Mackeith, 1988), although in this case it does not come from the mind of a child but that of an adult. His films are like a fantasy that is defined by having a complete structure, he creates an almost imaginary universe in parallel with the real world that he develops throughout his filmography. One of the most accurate definitions of Apichatpong’s work is that established by Sicinski:

The films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul are dense, multilayered, often poetically organized rather than driven by narrative, and they tend to emphasize visual and sonic motifs rather than affording primacy to the spoken word. In terms of both pacing and organization, the films can at times feel oneiric, even seeming to induce a kind of drift of consciousness, as though they were bypassing the viewer’s usual capacities for “making sense” out of cinematic stimuli. (2018, p. 195).

Films such as *Blissfully Yours* (2002) *Tropical Malady* (2004) or *Syndromes and a Century* (2006) have references to Apichatpong’s personal world; he has always stated that his works are based on family memories. However, in the case of *Uncle Boonmee, Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010), as he could not know the real Boonmee, the film is closer to Apichatpong than to the book by which it was inspired and he does so through the memory of a town, that of Nabua.

In all the aforementioned films, its director leaves a signature: the jungle, a jungle that is shown as the work of a dream and through which he develops a very individual view of his personal universe: “This motif was established from memories of growing up with his doctor parents in Khon Kaen city in the Thai Northeast, a region and people who have been politically and historically marginalized by the Thai state.” (Promkhuntong, 2019, p. 21).

The impact of Apichatpong’s work and his challenges is better understood by understanding the historical importance of the Isan region (Khon Khaen is one of its provinces), which, although dominant in the national imagination due to decades of employment migration (it borders Laos and Cambodia) and its irrepressible popular culture, is underrepresented in the country’s political and national historiography. The reasons for this abandonment date back centuries and result from Isan’s inconsistent political geography (Teh, 2011, p. 600). The Isan region was never a prestigious competitor. It was always marginal, a buffer zone, and therefore a frequent battleground between its strongest neighbours, a role that was maintained throughout the colonial era. Although acculturation had much to do with the assimilation of Isan to Siam, culture was also at the centre of the sporadic attempts to resist it. The first uprisings in the region that already opposed a nation-state were in 1902. The economic factors were weighty, its economy was mainly agricultural although fairly precarious and very sensitive to the climate. Facing this situation, it was normal for attacks of insurrection to rise up, often in a messianic manner, but always short in duration (Teh, 2011, p. 601).

During the Cold War, the US established bases in the region for air attacks on Indochina. However, surprisingly, since the 1960s the Northeast was the host to a significant communist insurgency, a cause increased by the influx of students who fled the 1976 massacre¹ in Bangkok.

Apichatpong has systematically placed the majority of his protagonists and stories in Isan, precisely within this junction of national and regional imaginations. Apichatpong's characters do not often take sides, but there is always talk of both parties because there is an interweaving of identities. It is very common in this director's cinematic works to find a thematic duality, with Bangkok on one side, along with the city and urban life; and rural communities and the jungle on the other. They are the two ways of seeing Thailand: the capital can be considered a synonym of globalisation and the rural environment as a synonym of tradition. This is so much the case that the region of Isan is considered the place to find the true traditional Thai culture (Thainess). As Teh affirms: "the north-east is exemplary, its open, carnivalesque folk traditions offering an antithesis to the closed, hierarchical and ceremonious forms of official Siamese culture. Isaans animism and religious syncretism, and its matriarchal social structure, were gradually overcoded by a mono-logical Siamese-Buddhist patriarchy" (2011, p. 602).

The dominant vein in Apichatpong's work is a story beginning in the city and travelling to the more rural, more personal areas, but in the case of *Uncle Boonmee* the journey is the opposite; the film begins with the journey already begun in order to return to the city at the end.

While the director was filming *Uncle Boonmee*, visiting northeast Thailand close to the border with Laos, he found a small tranquil town called Nabua. This town was occupied by the Thai army from the 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s as a measure to halt the communist insurgency. In 1965 this area began to gain a certain national reputation when the first battle erupted between the farmers affiliated with communism and the totalitarian Thai government, an issue to which was paid tribute in one of the videos of the installation. In these two decades of occupation, Nabua had been the scene of oppression and violence. Facing this situation, many farmers fled to the forest, leaving mainly the women and children in the town. Nabua is also known as "widow town" due to the popular myths of the region of Isan. Despite Thailand being a country where Buddhism predominates, there are also many customs and beliefs that are rooted in hinduism or animism. The existence of ghosts or spirits (*phi*) is a common idea in most Thai homes. An unhappy or annoyed spirit can cause problems for the beings around it. There are different types of spirits: they can be good or bad, there are those that live in rivers, trees, homes, rice, the wind, etc. Each one of these spirits has its role and nobody can interfere in the domain of another spirit.

Given that in Nabua the men had fled to the forest, one of the most well-known or popular ghosts, and which in a certain manner appears in the film *Uncle Boonmee*, is that of the mysterious "widow ghost", also called *lai thai*. This ghost takes the life of young, healthy men from the town while they sleep. Those who believe in the existence of these spirits state that the deaths are caused by a jealous or angry female ghost. When a man dies for these reasons, it has been known for the nearby residents to take measures to dissuade the ghost from claiming more victims.

With these historical and cultural concepts, Apichatpong makes a film that is geographically located but dedicated to his ancestors and the actors. He chooses Nabua as the strategic place in which to set the story of Boonmee, partially because like Boonmee the residents of this place live with repressed memories; we cannot ignore that one of the features of this character is that he has the ability to remember his past lives. In this case, Boonmee did not need the cinema to be able to see and remember but the rest of us, according to Apichatpong, are primitive beings who in certain ways require the cinematographic medium to be able to record, see and understand.

The narrative exercise undertaken by Apichatpong with the project *Primitive* goes beyond a single film. His work is comprised of various forms of expression that avoid adding to the story but help expand it.

BACKGROUND

When we talk about expanded narrative or even the term transmedia storytelling, firstly it is necessary to refer to Henry Jenkins (2003, 2006, 2007), who was the theorist who most widely developed these concepts academically. Secondly, we must differentiate Apichatpong's work from other transmedia products, seeing as in this case, the creation of his particular narrative world results from a personal and artistic side; he is not thinking of a purely commercial aim but a way of allowing memory to survive.

Jenkins affirms that: "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience." (2007).

What is ideal is that each medium makes its unique contribution to the development of history, like Apichatpong does through the original text of *A man who can recall his past lives* (1983), a video installation with seven video fragments—*Primitive*, *Nabua*, *Making of the Spaceship*, *A Dedicated Machine*, *An Evening Shoot*, *I'm Still Breathing* y *Nabua Song*, the last two were music videos; two short films: *A letter to Uncle Boonmee* y *Phantoms of Nabua*; the feature film *Uncle Boonmee who can recall his past lives*—and a book with images and texts connected to the whole project. Here, not only does a unique story develop through various media, one of the options for which Jenkins advocates, but Apichatpong has also created a world as a container for multiple stories and characters born there that are expanded through various platforms, such as installations in museums, short films, books and a film.

"Most often, transmedia stories are based not on individual characters or specific plots but rather complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories" (Jenkins, 2007). Apichatpong broadcasts his narrative world beyond our reach and he does so through elements of popular Thai folklore and that of a place like the jungle.

the jungle becomes crucial for action and a key element that sets the very tone of the films. It is a radically different world, populated by spirits, mysterious beings, and half-animals. It is the realm of dreams, the non-rational, of secrets and desires (Boehler, 2011, p. 297).

The world that this director proposes is strongly based on popular Thai beliefs and these are merged with the local animism. All natural beings have a soul, a spirit and this can be connected with the human world, it is there that Apichatpong creates his vision of the world, a place where reality and supposed animist fiction coexist. In his films, ghosts are just another character, the spirits walk around without a problem in the cinematic space. As stated by Boehler:

Remarkably, both spirits and animals are integrated into the image and the narration with utter casualness. They seem to inhabit their own space in the narrative alongside human characters, not rivalling them nor being of minor importance, either: the narrative treats them as equal, without the hierarchisation of humans over other beings (2011, p. 302).

Therefore, there is a stratification of the diegetic worlds of this director in which the immaterial materials are perceived as if they were real. Ingawani, in reference to animism and performative realism in Apichatpong cinema, state that "Animism makes real the permeability of human and nonhuman worlds" (2013, p. 91). For this author, animistic practices of possessions and mediums allow for the reality of a performative nature. Likewise, he differentiates between the Apichatpong's performative realism and

the fantasy genre. Both could be present in *Uncle Boonmee*. The fantasy element is related to what this author names as “drama of disbelief” (2013, p. 97) which is presented as uncertainty between the conflicting marvellous or scientific perspectives. In contrast to the hesitation of fantasy, in *Uncle Boonmee* a world is presented in which the characters live in a non-synchronous timeline and respond, by verbal or gestural recognition or corporeal immersion, to appearances, presence and events of a marvellous nature. It is here where the inexpressive charm and humour of Apichatpong’s films is found (2013, p. 97).

With regard to the connections that are established between the participants in the project *Primitive*, it could be stated that it is also a form of transmedia narration in which a collective intelligence is developed. Although it is not aimed at a mass audience, by forming part of his work located in museums with a fixed duration, it encourages a memory, a reinterpretation of part of the history of a town and a connection to memory. Jenkins defined them as follows:

Transmedia storytelling is the ideal aesthetic form for an era of collective intelligence. Pierre Levy coined the term, collective intelligence, to refer to new social structures that enable the production and circulation of knowledge within a networked society. Participants pool information and tap each others expertise as they work together to solve problems (Jenkins, 2007).

However, in the case of Apichatpong’s work, the ultimate aim is not to resolve any type of problem but that of the continuation of the collective memory through audiovisual pieces and the creation of an imaginary world that acts as the backbone for almost all his filmography. There are various authors who have approached the creation or analysis of worlds, that are so important for transmedia narratives because they are central elements of any story, such as: Doležel (1998) through his heterocosmica and Ryan (1991) with possible worlds; Klastrup & Tosca (2004, 2014) with the world inherent to transmedia and Wolf in his work on imaginary worlds (2012, 2018). Within these imaginary worlds, Wolf talks about the stories that enable an interconnection in his theory on narrative threads (narrative fabric). For Wolf, multiple stories in the same world have no reason to overlap, although the author often has connections between them. In this case, Apichatpong has already established a series of narrative guidelines within his filmography. Not only within the project *Primitive*, but also in his other work. Wolf talks about maintaining a series of shared assets that appear in the various pieces, which can be characters, objects, locations or events (2018a, p. 45), as is the case with this director with Isan, the jungle, caves and rivers in relation to his repeated locations, topics such as medicine and spirits or characters such as those played by his repeated actors Sadka Kaewbuadee or Jenjira Pongpas. In addition, as stated by Marrero-Guillamón, his films have created protective spaces where the ghosts of a silenced past can be conjured up and subaltern stories can be told based on these. Their apparent simplicity can be deceiving, however these films are in fact fairly monumental in their ambition to host anything at all: ghosts, dreams, memories, experiences, non-human beings or metamorphosed beings who alert the viewers to issues that are imperceptible in the existing world, etc. (2018, pp. 22-23).

Wolf states that every character, location and/or object that has a significant value is like a type of narrative thread that passes through the story over time. Each narration can cross courses with other stories. If we are aware that we may find these threads and that each one contains a narrative line that can be followed, the created world will be rich, and interconnection will be reinforced. That world will appear more like a real place (2018a, p. 45). This same argument can be perfectly applicable to the project that we are analysing in this chapter. Likewise, the director’s interest in popular and traditional

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Thai culture has already been mentioned, which is very close to Wolf's statement: "Mythologies and national histories also tie together entire peoples, and add depth to a culture and society" (2018a, p. 45).

Wolf's work on designing worlds is also applicable to the case study:

Practically all imaginary worlds begin with the template of the Primary World, the world we live in, gradually replacing its default assumptions and structures with invented material. This is necessary if the new secondary world is to be recognized as a world, and it also allows us to naturally fill in parts of the world that are neither seen nor described, through assumptions based on Primary World defaults (2018b, p. 67).

Apichatpong works on his personal world through a primary known world in which he introduces incredible beings: "Ghosts, spirits and supernatural presences of different kinds and demeanors, occupying a variety of bodies, human and otherwise, are a recurring presence in Weerasethakul's films" (Marrero-Guillamón, 2018, p. 22), thereby constructing a secondary world that seems to us to be real. In his films, both universes coexist, the fictitious-fantasy world and the real one. The worlds partially survive through mythology and stories from Thai folklore. Alexander defends "mythology emerges as a multifaceted syncretic unity, which would later give birth to the three separate domains: the knowledge about the world (science, philosophy); belief systems (religion); and narrative (art)" (2018, p. 115), as occurs with *Primitive* project, belonging to art domain. Moreover, Alexander specifies that "Mythology emerged as a way of contemplating reality, and making the first steps toward conceptualizing it." (2018, p. 116), as done by Apichatpong in this piece: showing a story so that it persists in the memory and therefore being able to contextualise it, even if it is from the traditional Thai perspective, very close to the idea that it is "as a passage between the natural world and the emerging world of ideas" (Alexander, 2018, p. 116).

However, a transmedia world is not only created from mythology. Klastrop and Tosca have developed a series of specific terms to analyse transmedia worlds, although they may also be used to analyse imaginary worlds in general. These are *mythos*, *topos* and *ethos*.

Mythos—the establishing story, legend, or narration of the world, with the defining struggles. It is the backstory that gives meaning in current situation of the world, and it includes creational myth and legendary characters and gods. Topos—the setting of the world in both space (geography) and time (history). It shows how places have changed and events unfolded. Ethos—the explicit and implicit ethics, or the moral codex of behavior for characters. (Klastrop and Tosca, 2014, p. 297)

Within *mythos* would be the armed conflict between the Thai soldiers and farmers or residents of the Northeast judged to be communists between 1960 and 1980, as well as the supernatural characters who appear in the project *Primitive*. This *mythos* is like the essential knowledge in order to interact and interpret the events that occur in the world presented by the director/creator. The *topos* in this case refers to the context between the past of Nabua, the present that is shown and the possibility of a different future. It also involves language and tradition.

The Primitive project is about re-imagining Nabua, a place where memories and ideologies have been extinguished. The video installation features the teenage male descendants of the farmer communists, who were invited by Apichatpong to fabricate new memories in the building of a spaceship in the

rice field. Used as a place to hang out, sleep and dream, the spaceship also takes on its own life in the landscape (Newman, 2009, p. 149)

With regards to *ethos*: it corresponds to the implicit or explicit ethics of the world and behavioural (moral) codes that the characters must follow. In *Primitive*, the behavioural codes are very similar to Buddhism. The manifestation of good and evil is connected to the karma of the protagonists.

THE *PRIMITIVE* PROJECT

Below, we will analyse the narrative of the *Primitive* project. Firstly, the book on which the entire project is based: *A man who can recall his past life* (Samarn, 1983), that was given to Apichatpong by his monk and which tells the story of Boonmee Srigulwong, a person who has been capable of remembering his past lives since he was three years old. The book is a type of summary of his lives, written by a monk who wanted to leave a record of such stories. Firstly, it talks about the education he completes, his ordination and religious studies, his marriage and what his daily life and character was like:

His main occupation was farming, he lived a simple life and was a virtuous man, he disapproved of wickedness and was always afraid of sinning, he always had the courage to do the right thing, whether or not it was the easy thing to do, or indeed if anyone even knew about it. He had a kind and generous nature, he believed that anything we could eat would just spoil in a day and be thrown out, it was better to do good deeds that would result in lasting happiness² (Samarn, 1983).

Secondly, his previous lives are established, which date back over one hundred years. First, he is a prestigious hunter of rhinoceros and elephants, until his death, being reincarnated as a hungry ghost, then he becomes an intelligent buffalo who is capable of understanding human speech, to once again become a hungry spirit. He marries a hungry female ghost and then becomes a buffalo again, in this case in the hands of a cruel and ruthless owner which leads to his death. He then asks his aunt to be reborn again, for this he has to marry and bring this about, and this is when he returns to life as the Boonmee, who is the protagonist of the film, although only in name.

The basic idea of the *Primitive* project is, partially, focused on a concept of memory and extinction; although it is based on the previously mentioned book, it is not an adaptation, but a part of the story, proof that reincarnation and transformation exist.

Below, it will be necessary to analyse the story of the film *Uncle Boonmee who can recall his past lives* (2010) and how it connects to the rest of the work. The film begins with a sentence: "Facing the jungle, the hills and vales, my past lives as an animal and other beings rise up before me" after which we see a buffalo appear on the screen that seems to escape from the place where it was tied up to go further into the jungle. This scene reveals, although we only understand later, that this buffalo may be one of the previous lives of Boonmee, its owner's clothes dating back to a period prior to the history of Thailand. If the work on which it is based is analysed, one of the text fragments relates:

When he was out of sight the young buffalo started to twist and turn around, trying to find a way to reach the young grass, perhaps even the young green rice. Luckily the stake he was tethered to slipped out of the ground and the young buffalo took the opportunity to walk off and eat the young grass³ (Samarn, 1983).

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Nevertheless, Apichatpong has always stated that it is not necessary to try to understand all the references of his cinema, but to appreciate the beauty that there is in his work. For him it is like entering someone's mind where the thought pattern may be random, jumping from one place to another as if it were a monkey.

After the title credits, the ritual of the journey begins, the driving thread throughout the majority of his filmography, in which movement turns the urban world into the rural one, or viceversa. This case is paradigmatic because the opposite journey is made at the end of the film, although we do not see the route. With these journeys, the director brings us into the magical area where Boonmee is. His family have gone to visit him because he is suffering from serious kidney failure and his life is coming to an end. As a recurrent theme in the director's filmography, medicine and illness are often present, either in the visit of a father and his daughter to consult a doctor in *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), the dermatological affliction of Min, the Burmese immigrant in *Blissfully Yours* (2002), the dog who is taken to the vet in *Tropical Malady* (2004), *Syndromes and a Century* (2006) which focuses on life in a hospital and its consultations, a story that pays tribute to the director's parents who were doctors, the previously mentioned *Uncle Boonmee who can recall his past lives* (2010) or the soldiers who suffer a strange dream illness in *Cemetery of Splendour* (2015). Medicine is present in all its varieties: conventional medicine, homemade and traditional remedies and even Chinese medicine.

Boonmee justifies his own illness, the drama of existence, by stating that it is a consequence of his karma; in the past he killed too many communists. He even alleges that his tamarinds are not as good as those of Petchaboon due to his bad karma. His sister-in-law, Jen, who has gone to be with him in the transition, replies that he killed with good intentions. Boonmee replies that he also killed lots of bugs on his farm (using pesticides). Jen tries to justify that Boonmee killed the communists for the good of the country, just like his father did. At that time the army sent him to the jungle to hunt people. But he hunted animals. He stayed there until he could talk to the animals. Boonmee asks her if at any time he visited her after he died. She denies such visits and states that he disappeared after the death and did not become a ghost. Apichatpong continues to break up the story through dialogues that arise between its characters, dissipating the deafening silence of nature. Some stories are repeated, others are small fragments that you must know how to translate to be able to better understand the hidden message of this director's films.

One of the most significant scenes of the film is when in the middle of the night, while Boonmee, his sister-in-law, Jen and a nephew of hers, Tong, are eating, the ghost of Boonmee's wife, Huay, appears. She has no concept of time and her body is an ethereal form that, little by little, becomes more defined. Huay states that she is well, but she knows that her husband is not and that is why she has come. Her sister, Jen, asks her if she has received the offerings from the temple, for which Huay thanks her and states that she felt and heard her words. During the cold nights she states that with the murmuring wind she heard the voices of her relatives, the voice of Boonmee. Perhaps they sounded from her dying awareness.

However, she is not the only character that comes to visit Boonmee, his son Boonsong enters the scene. At the beginning his presence is two red eyes in the night, it is not until they approach the light that we see that it is a monkey ghost. He says that he has come because there are many beings out there, spirits and animals that are hungry like him. Boonsong tells his story: six years after Huay's death he disappeared in the jungle. He had been practising "the art of photography" with his father's Pentax camera and had discovered something in the jungle that moved him. He had recorded⁴ one of these monkey ghosts and had obsessed over this new creature. He tried to communicate with it, he paired with this strange ghost monkey until his hair began to grow and his pupils to dilate.

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Boonsong and Boonmee describe their past lives and their memories that migrate from one life to another. But they have also recorded memory through photographs, Boonmee takes out an old photo album and Boonsong talks about his experience. These photographs will be used by the director for the book of art along with the stories, creating another document as a narrative extension of the first one.

Apichatpong once more introduces a fracture into the film, a fork, as stated by Siciski:

Apichatpong often employs a bifurcated temporal structure in his film, and, although the demands of a linear time-based art such as single-screen narrative cinema require that one strand of time will precede the other, it is indeed possible to read these "times" as parallel or coterminous (2018, p. 204).

In this case, it is not only through stories of ghosts but through the legend of a princess who is transported by her subjects through the jungle to a magical waterfall that seems to return her lost beauty. It is a sequence that at first reminds us of the myth of Narcissus: the princess slowly enters the lake while removing her clothes and various jewellery to be penetrated by a catfish. A new spirit. Although this story is from the past, it does not interfere in the continuation of the story, it forms part of the same world created by Apichatpong, despite them being different timelines or different characters.

This director plays with the characters within his films:

actors Sakda Kaewbuadee and Jenjira Pongpas reappear in new roles in various films, another choice that parallels the notion of life cycles. (...) For example, Kaewbuadee plays Tong in Tropical Malady and Uncle Boonmee, as well as a tiger spirit in Tropical Malady and a monk named Sakda in Syndromes. That his character in Syndromes shares the actor's name erodes the already frayed division between fiction and reality. The fact that Tong becomes a monk like Sakda, and like Weerasethakul and Kaewbuadee themselves once did, also suggests that their narratives and biographies are overlapping. Weerasethakul has even suggested that, despite the nominal difference, Tong and Sakda are the same character existing in a "multi-verse" world, and states that the 2010 scenes may be analeptic to the 2006 scenes. Thus, by repeatedly using the same actor, Weerasethakul not only ungrounds the constancy of identities, but creates delinearizing polychronies that span across films (Grinberg, 2015).

At the end of the film, Boonmee crosses the jungle towards a cave, the same cave where he was born, and which is where he is now going to die. He does not remember in which life he was born in this enclave; he does not know whether he was human or animal, woman or man.

Through still images that recall the soldiers taking photos in *Tropical Malady* (2004), now they focus on monkey ghosts being captured by the army. These visual impressions are those about which Boonmee tells a kind of epitaph-epilogue.

I dreamed about the future last night. I got there in a kind of time machine. The future city was ruled by an authority able to make anybody disappear. When the found 'past people', they shone a light on them. That light projected images of them onto the screen. From the past, until their arrival in the future. One of those images appeared, these 'past people' disappeared.

While his kidney drains, Boonmee dies. The rest of the film wanders between the funeral and the city, between multiple splits and karaoke.

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At this point, the installation of the *Primitive* project takes on a particular meaning with an impression of light and memory. The lights, fire and lamps that banish the spirits are the elements that lead us to think about how everything burns to be reborn and mutate.

This installation consists of seven videos made in Nabua:

- *Primitive* (two synchronised screens) that describes what the area's teenagers use the pre-constructed spaceship for. They play with fireworks and military flares.
- *Nabua*, about how the area is turned into a field of rays. The bursts of light reveal the surroundings then become smoke, dust and silence.
- *Making of the Spaceship*, as its name indicates, describes the process of constructing a spaceship in the course of a month.
- *A Dedicated Machine*, the spaceship lifts off from land and returns back down, it is as if it never really took off.
- *An Evening Shoot* in which a group of teenagers meet up near a rice field to record a film. They use army clothing, they practise with weapons, pointing one by one at a young person who miraculously reincarnates after receiving a shot.
- *I'm Still Breathing*, song by a Thai band that was invited to Nabua to film a music video. The teenagers run through the streets, some of them are kicking smoking balls. According to the director, the video is a celebration of the exaltation and the release of tension, echoing the Thai political atmosphere.
- *Nabua Song*, another music video, in this case the song is composed and sung by a young person from Nabua. It recalls the first shot between the army and the communist farmers 43 years earlier. The song is combined with the image of a friend of the singer whose grandfather was killed by soldiers in the field, not very far from his house.

Lastly, there are the short films, *Phantoms of Nabua* and *A letter to Uncle Boonmee*. The first of these returns to the concept of light and fire, memory and persistence and it does so through a streetlight with a florescent light that is found in a Nabua field at night. Near this streetlight is projected a burst of light onto a type of improvised screen. The images of the rays hitting the floor are repeated and at the same time the silhouettes of various young people appear, who are playing with a flaming ball. They take turns to hit the ball that leaves a trail of fire in the grass. As the film continues, the rays and the young people's action intensifies until the ball of fire burns the screen and they jostle around the burning canvas, behind which is revealed the ghostly white ray of a projector. Memory and its extinction.

A letter to Uncle Boonmee, as its name indicates, is a personal letter from Apichatpong describing Nabua to Uncle Boonmee. The short film consists of scenes filmed inside houses at night, he wanders through these spaces as if he were a ghost. All the houses are deserted, apart from one of them where there is a group of young soldiers along with some Nabuan teenagers. Apichatpong personifies two of them to narrate the film based on the text he has written for Boonmee. At this point the soldiers appear again, the spaceship parked on a rear patio, the monkey ghost that is wandering among the trees, a house of spirits that nobody looks after⁵ or a cow stopped in front of a tree.

Lastly, there is the book of art in which various ways of expanding the story are brought together, firstly through a graphic story that tells of a period in the life of Mr Saengcham, who was a victim of article 17 of Field Marshal Sarit Dhanarajata, and what happened after his death. Secondly, we find the scanned original text on which the film is based, the text of a scene in which Boonsong explains

his situation, a diary of Jenjira Pongpas and Apichatpong, with conversations between the director and members of his family. And to conclude, a photographic series on Nabua and the characters who live in Apichatpong's universe.

CONCLUSION

The *Primitive* project is an example of how a cinematic artist such as Apichatpong can explore his own identity through various media and formats. His narrative is based on that artistic-creative vision on which are often posed the problems between humans and their particular ghosts, as well as between beliefs and their links to time. The characters are often immersed in a spiritual search, their ideas can confront the external future and create conflicts. The way in which the world of the living and of the dead combine is through dreams, it is as if at that time the border that separates both worlds is broken and becomes permeable.

Survival and extinction are often constant themes within his work. As Newman states, "his works are like time capsules, preserving memories and histories and asking us to remember" (2009, p. 143). The use made here of expanded narration is to try to tell a story that can be transformed as it is told and consumed.

Through all the elements that make up *Primitive*, the director creates echoes between the stories and his films and installations. The story may be based on a book, developed on a personal level in the film and short films and expanded in the installation and the art book. It is a mix of documentary and fiction, where the ultimate meaning is achieved through a juxtaposed narration. Ultimately, it is a different form in which a story can last and recall a past, present a present and clarify a future, all based on memory and pre-existing memories.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Monkey Ghost (*ling phi*): Ghost invented by Apichatpong inspired by the popular legends and tales of northeast Thailand.

Paracosm: A detailed imaginary world. It is thought that paracosms generally originate in childhood and have one or numerous creators.

Widow Ghost (*lai thai*): Belief in spirits and ghosts is very common in Thailand. One of these spirits is that of the widow ghost. According to the Thai people, this ghost takes the life of young, healthy men from the town while they sleep (Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome).

ENDNOTE

¹ At the beginning of 1970, some Thai students began to be interested in Marxism and as a result, they began fighting against the oppression that they were suffering at the hands of the government, which was based on a military dictatorship. In June 1973, the first demonstrations took place, focusing on the issue of restoring the Constitution and democracy. The military generals refused to negotiate and arrested some of the student leaders. After this altercation, the government published a communication in which it stated that the students were being manipulated by communists. During the three years that it took to remove the military officials from power, Thailand became a democratic country once more in which two elections took place that were used to make the country aware of the problems they were suffering. Tensions between the right and the left were increasingly ferocious and eventually erupted on 6 October 1976 when hundreds of students organised a campaign at Thammasat University to protest the return of general Thanom Kittika-

Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Primitive as a Model of an Expanded Narrative*

chorn. In a climate of enormous tension, the media of the right-wing groups accused the students of attacking the monarchy and wanting to destabilise the country, two reasons for enormous alarm for the Thai public. Groups from the army and the police shot at the students who were protesting at the University, causing a genuine massacre: the real data on the number of deaths is unknown, although the official figure was 46 victims (Sungsri 2004, 150).

² Translation of the original Thai text provided by Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

³ Translation of the original Thai text provided by Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

⁴ Reference to *Blow-up* by Michlangelo Antonioni (1966).

⁵ This type of altar is placed at the entrance to the houses. For them to carry out their protective function, they must be given offerings.

Chapter 7

Augmented Reality and Franchising: The Evolution of Media Mix Through *Invizimals*

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ABSTRACT

In 1996, with the advent of video game franchises like Pokemon (Game Freak, 1996-), the concept of media mix (originally a Japanese concept that refers to the communicative strategies in which media content is spread across multiple platforms) began to take off. However, media mix is not exclusively limited to Japanese productions. In 2009, Novarama, in collaboration with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, launched the Spanish Augmented Reality video game Invizimals. A decade later, this universe has notably expanded across different platforms, evolving considerably from its original format: but falling short of integrating the entire universe. In this chapter, we examine hybridation between transmedia strategies and media mix through the Invizimals universe to demonstrate how the franchise has expanded a decade later to the point where it has consolidated its own strategic model for developing content.

INTRODUCTION

Media mix is a Japanese term referring to those communication strategies in which media content is disseminated via multiple platforms: television, cinema, videogames, third screens, collectible card games (CCGs), manga, theme parks, pop-up stores, etc. Although they had been around since the 1960s, it was not until the 1980s that these strategies came into their own. However, it was in 1996, with the launching of *Pokémon* (Game Freak, 1996-), when the concept began to gather steam, thanks to comprehensive media coverage, the advent of new technologies at the end of the twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first century and the geographical scope of its success. This franchise marked the coming of

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a new era and paved the way for the contemporary media mix, which shifted the focus from the texts central to manga to videogames. CCGs such as *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (Kazuki Takashi, 1996-2004), *Inazuma Eleven* (Level 5, 2008-) and *Yo-Kai Watch* (Level 5, 2013-) continue to expand and explore that model of multiplatform exploitation.

But, in the contemporary globalized world, the media mix has continued to develop as a strategic business model in markets that do not usually resort to these marketing techniques. In 2009, Novarama, a Spanish software development company founded in Barcelona in 2003, launched, in collaboration with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, the videogame *Invizimals* for the PlayStation Portable (hereinafter, PSP), Sony's handheld console. In this augmented reality game developed in the intersection between reality (the camera) and the imaginary (the design of the monsters), players have to catch the invisible beings and battle them in order to make them evolve. A decade on, this universe has been expanded with six videogames, a TV series, CCGs, mobile and tablet apps, magazines, comics, action figures, books and all types of merchandising, from stationery items to children's bed linen, but with a number of differences with respect to the original model.

This chapter analyzes how the Japanese strategies have been applied to the *Invizimals* universe, in order to show how the franchise has developed over the past 10 years, until consolidating a strategic model inherent to content development.

A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE MEDIA MIX PHENOMENON

As with many concepts relating to multiplatform communication, it is a complicated matter to find an all-encompassing definition of media mix. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on its different aspects in order to understand it fully. A good departure point is the definition proposed by Ito: “[A]n approach to storytelling pioneered in Japan in which information is dispersed across broadcast media, mobile technologies, collectibles, and location-based entertainment sites” (Ito in Jenkins, 2006, p. 289). That dispersion requires an analysis of the phenomenon from two perspectives: on the one hand, its construction at a business level, involving the generation of material or virtual content; and, on the other, the social aspects of its consumption.

To analyze the first characteristic, Ito's definition can be supplemented by another put forward by Steinberg: “[T]he most widely used word to describe the phenomenon of transmedia communication, specifically the development of a particular media franchise across multiple media types, over a particular period of time” (2012, p. 135). Namely, if the planning is designed from the start, there should be a master plan on the possibilities of exploiting the product. Nevertheless, this term first appeared in the “Contemporary Advertising Dictionary” column of the January 1963 issue of the ad journal *Senden kaigi* (Advertising Meeting), in which it was defined as a sales technique involving several forms of organic advertising, which should be planned with an advertising goal in mind, before specifying that the strategic objective is to sell the product by all possible means (in Steinberg, 2012, p. 139).

The anime and manga industry uses the media mix as a seminal practice that has made this entertainment business one of the most profitable and wide-reaching in the world. So, what could be called “anime's media mix” is based on three key elements:

1. Television as a key factor in the recognition of multiple avenues of advertising goal [...]
2. Focus on medium specificity [...]
3. Emphasis on the “synthetic” use of the media toward a particular advertising goal (purchase a product) (Steinberg, 2012: 139).

These three elements, which offer a number of clues as to how this strategy works, can be summarized in one: each one of the products on sale serves to sell the rest of a promotion that only comes to end when it loses the public’s favor. One of the most noteworthy examples of this way of understanding cultural product marketing is the animated series *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Fuji TV, 1963-1966), an adaptation of Osamu Tezuka’s homonymous manga. It became the cornerstone of this type of product sales relating to Japanese popular culture. In the eleventh instalment of this anime, entitled, “Time Machine” (Fuji TV, 1963, 12 March), the main character and his creator travel back in time and, when the latter steps out of the time machine, a Meiji Seika chocolate bar appears as the central advertising element. The scene is then interrupted and repeated, with the scientist responsible for creating the main character this time completing his descent. The series per se was thus transformed into an advertisement thanks to the introduction of new characters, narratives and all sorts of products, with respect to the original manga. To this should be added the support of Meiji, the leading chocolate brand in Japan. The synergy between both brands—although it would be better to speak of convergence—involved their mutual support for the sake of a common good. Meiji sold a type of product that could not be purchased directly, the chocolates coming with a sheet of stickers that children could buy, but in a random and uncontrolled manner. These stickers were essential for understanding the idea of character-based merchandising. On the one hand, Mushi Production, Tezuka’s production company responsible for the animation, published the magazine *Tetsuwan Atomu Kurabu* (*Tetsuwan Atomu Club*). Every month, fans could enjoy new adventures in *Shonen Magazine*, the comic strips not only being compiled in albums, but also new ones being published in other comic books (Steinberg, 2012, p. 145).

The approach was a narrative environment in permanent expansion. But the dispersion of *Tetsuwan Atomu* was down to a technical and economic reality. Technically speaking, and despite the fact that it still has a certain charm, it was a low-quality series using eight photograms per second—instead of the 24 that the US animation industry employs—and was sold cheaply to the television channel in the hope that manga sales would increase, while also demonstrating the profitability of both industries (Hernández, 2017, p. 92). Tezuka, both the creator of manga and the owner of the animation studio, intended to recuperate his investment through licensing characters for the production of merchandising materials (Steinberg, 2012, p. 40). Accordingly, *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*) was the first character to be licensed in Japan and, in passing, Tezuka created the exploitation model for manga- and anime-related products that would be used thenceforth: i.e. character merchandising (Steinberg, 2012, p. 40). It should be recalled that it was Tezuka, known as the *manga no Kamisama* (god of manga), who revolutionized this medium and that of anime after the Second World War and was also the originator of this creative-commercial practice. The introduction of new characters, narratives and products produced a synergy between the original text, the television adaptation and the licensed products, leading to the growth of this fictional universe through its economic exploitation.

Steinberg himself helps to develop the media mix concept, proposing two ideas for its adaptation to other media as a basic principle: “Translation or deployment of a single work, character or narrative world across numerous médium or platforms [...] and the synergetic use of multimedia works to sell other such works within the franchise or group” (Ibídem, p. 142).

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Insofar as it covers different media and due to its clear synergistic character, the concept can be defined as an investment model that, in a sector of the entertainment industry based on manga, anime and videogames, involves the so-called “committees”. This idea can be summarized as a joint enterprise in which publishing houses, distributors, advertising agencies, TV channels, music producers, videogame developers and toy makers participate (Hernández, 2017, p. 55). These committees are financed through a common fund and distribute the copyrights and licenses among themselves (Hernández, 2017, p. 57). It should also be borne in mind that a media mix can be devised by any of the companies sitting on the committee, and the rest of the members can decide whether or not to participate in a specific project.

According to Steinberg (2012, p. 148), one of three intersecting features defining anime’s media mix is “the deployment of a text across numerous media, among which anime plays a key role in popularizing the franchise”. Anime as an element, not now unifying but, until the advent of the mass consumption of audiovisual products on the Internet, allowed franchises to reach the largest audiences, on whom the product life cycle ultimately depended. But “the dependence on other incarnations to sell works within the same franchise” (Steinberg, 2012, p. 148) also served to broaden the commercial horizons of anime’s media mix. With *Tetsuwan Atomu* it became clear that the key to sales was the main character—or the most charismatic of all—on whom everything depended not only to pursue a direct affiliation with consumers but also because it was a way of using “the character as a means of connecting these media incarnations” (Steinberg, 2012, p. 148). In other words, the aim was to find a connection that increased the sales of all the products making up this commercial universe from one end of the marketing chain to the other. Thus, the success of a media mix can be defined by the strength of the links between products.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the exploitation model based on Tezuka’s work. The first is that the objective of this strategy is to boost sales, something now taken for granted, and that the consumption of a product of this type “has no goal or theological end” (Steinberg, 2012, p. 141). For which reason, it can be assumed that the objective is to promote the growth of the brand and the company through the general consumption of its products, thus triggering consumer socialization processes relating to that consumption. This gives rise to a second goal that in itself “will support its collective medialife” (Steinberg, 2012, p. 141). The larger the user base is, the higher the chances will be of the medialife of the products comprising the brand remaining steady or increasing.

Buckingham and Sefton-Green (2004) single out a key aspect of media mixes using one of the essential videogames in the past decades as an example: “Pokemon is something you do, not just something you read or watch or consume” (p. 12). *Pokémon* defines the last stage of the contemporary media mix, i.e. a shift from passive consumption towards building a narrative that involves user activity. To this should be added the acquisition of individual knowledge, to wit, watching the animation series to acquire skills that can then be leveraged in the videogame or the CCG (p. 22), what Young defines as additive comprehension “the expansion of interpretive possibility that occurs when fictional franchises are extended across multiple texts and media” (in Jenkins, 2006, p. 279). Both aspects lead to a third that is determined by the process of acquiring knowledge in a new fictional setting. Learning is shared, thus giving rise to the occupation of new types of social and cultural structures. The possession of cultural capital implies legitimacy and authority and the differences in its possession fragment society in general, while the subculture that is generated around the media mix creates different subcultures; this capital being understood as an illusion compensating for the working classes’ lack of social and cultural power (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 229-230). Further on, he divides these factors into four: economic, symbolic, social and cultural (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 131-164). Although the first operates in the sphere of money and in the accumulation of wealth,

For its part, cultural capital signifies for those who possess it a baggage of socially recognized knowledge and skills [...] while social capital constitutes a network of contacts and alliances of all types [...] and symbolic capital involves the possession of collective recognition (Casti n Maestro, 2004, pp. 319-320).

Those who acquire knowledge capital or, in the case of videogames, those who possess more developed skills may occupy a higher position in the hierarchy of a particular community. The definition of this feature can be extended as “this media mix of children’s popular culture is wired, extroverted, and hypersocial, reflecting forms of sociality augmented by dense sets of technologies, signifiers, and systems of exchange” (Ito, 2007, p. 90); something that we can summarize as digitally augmented sociability.

Evidently, the current context is not the same as that of *Tetsuwan Atomu* in the mid-1960s. The new media mix model, now global, was *Pok mon*, a project involving the launching of two videogames: *Pok mon Red* and *Pok mon Blue* (Game Freak, 1996). It was a novel idea featuring Pok mon, beings with very special powers that live in very specific settings, which players had to hunt and then fight against those of other players to complete the Pokedex, an in-game encyclopedia. The novelty lay in that both multiplayer games could be connected together with the Nintendo game link cable—an accessory for the Game Boy line of handheld videogame consoles—allowing Pok mon to be traded or battled between games, a prerequisite for completing the Pokedex. This initial social approach has been maintained in all of the sequels appearing in the past 20 years, until *Pok mon Go!* (Niantic, 2016), the recent adaptation for smartphones that leverages geolocation to increase the product’s socialization and viralization.

Pok mon’s success has been due, to a large extent, to the fact that it is a game “of strategy, skill, perseverance, training, and knowledge, and the play activities it is said to promote include collecting competition, pet raising, mastery adventures, and roleplaying” (Ellison, 2006, p. 192). In this digital multigenre entertainment product, Pok mon have growth potential, thus obliging players to collaborate with others in order to complete the game by trading evolutionary stones and by battling. As to the media mix expansion, this was achieved with manga, an animation series, films, CCGs, toys and action figures, in addition to stationery items, prepared foods and trains and airplanes painted with pictures of various Pok mon. This global success story with more than 20 years behind it is still going strong and has become a model that other media mixes have taken as an example.

Over the years, videogames such as *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *Inazuma Eleven* and *Yo-Kai Watch* have borrowed different aspects of *Pok mon*. The first of these is based on the idea that they are games that foster the active, rather than passive, participation of players: “in *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, Yugi and his friends collect and traffic in trading cards just like kids in the real world” (Ito, 2007, p. 94), the same cards with the same strategies, rules and material objects. For Ito, these cards have a narrative content, for, as with manga and anime; “networked media mechanisms supplant the structures of traditional narrative media” (Ito, 2010, p. 86), they are collectable and allow players to put together competitive packs (p. 90). And those using these packs can learn from manga and the animation series.

At this point, it is necessary to draw a number of distinctions between the characteristics of this type of media mix. To start with, although not all the products are narrative—i.e. the stickers, posters, clothing, complements, stationery items, toys and action figures—those forming part of the franchise should be in some sense. This macrotextual situation provokes two effects: first, the “non localizable nature of the original” (Sasakibara 2001, p. 248-249), and second, “the rise of the textual logic segmentation and flow” (Steinberg, 2012, p. 161). This begs a number of questions relating to their consumption. According to Azuma (2012, p. 32), for *otaku*, who consume both the originals and the copies alike, they have the same value, thus blurring the line between both categories until it disappears. For Otsuka, it is

possible to sell countless products, since consumers tend to believe that by purchasing them the “grand narrative” will be gradually revealed to them. But this cannot be actually bought, insofar as only fragments of it are consumed throughout the system (narrative consumption) (Azuma, 2012, p. 36). In other words, it is the belief that by accumulating short narratives, and even building some of them themselves and giving them the same value as the originals, fans will have the chance to catch a glimpse of the grand narrative. In their own production, *otaku* opt for a cultural remix, this being an appropriation and reformulation of cultural content destined for the masses, as well as its reassessment through alternative forms of economy: a black market for cards, amateur comics, the creation of fan art, fanvids, etc; “the otaku consumed only the information that was behind the works without relation to the narrative or message of this works” (Azuma, 2012, p. 42).

This reality created and recreated by individuals has begun to be perceived by the young generations as an improvement on the real thing and has even substituted the one on which it was based. As a “porous membrane between the real and the virtual, the imagination and everyday life” (Ito, 2007, p. 92), it is reliable thanks to the portability facilitated by technologies that virtually augment reality. This has involved a series of technological innovations. The Japanese cultural industries are behind the production of increasingly more immersive mass media ecologies integrating domestic television and videogame consoles, elements based on media like cinema, special events, trading cards and handheld gaming devices (Ito, 2007, p. 91) which leads to a “peer-to-peer ecologies of cultural production and exchange pursued among geographically local peer groups. Among dispersed populations mediated by internet and through national peer-to-peer trade shows” (p. 91), another feature that confirms the hyper-social of these multimedia entertainment contexts. In a social context linked to final user training, it can be claimed that “learning (as) an act of participation in culture an social life rather than as a process of reception or internalization” (Ito, 2010, p. 82) in which reception becomes a joint productive action of creation through proposed and shared imaginaries and by participating in a social world.

THE MEDIA MIX PHENOMENON BEYOND JAPAN: THE CASE OF *INVIZIMALS*

The rules for determining the right media mix appear to be abundantly clear to the Japanese: who are the targets and who should deal with each aspect of the marketing of licenses; how to establish the correct periodization; and above all how to lay the groundwork so that it is actually possible to predict a long life cycle for the product in question. In short, it is a market that has been experimenting with this commercial strategy for more than 50 years. The crux of the matter, however, is to determine how a media mix can work in Southern Europe, a market very different from that of Japan, and, more specifically, in Spain, and how to apply an imported consumption model totally foreign to that of this European country.

Invizimals, the Design of a European Media Mix

Invizimals is a brand that has developed around a videogame saga developed by Novarama for a young audience, which has allowed for the exploitation of different product lines including six videogames, a TV series, mobile and tablet apps, magazines, CCGs, comics, action figures, books and all kinds of merchandising.

After listing the related products forming part of this multiplatform franchise, the moment has now come to examine its functioning during its first decade of life. To this end, that period has been divided into stages, some of which, as will be seen, correspond to specific years, while others cover longer periods, which have been determined on the basis of the launching of the main product, a videogame in all cases.

Stage 1: Launching the Brand (2009)

In 2009, Novarama launched *Invizimals*, a game designed for Sony's handheld console, with a target audience aged between nine and 12. It was a product that pursued the same idea as the Japanese media mix, which served as a model, i.e. *Pokémon*. The concept of the active participation of players was taken to an extreme with the incorporation of augmented reality technology, which can be defined in the following way:

Technology that combines the real world with computer-generated data, thus allowing for an enhanced or augmented perception of that reality in which the data are three-dimensional and inserted in the users' real environment, so as to offer a realistic impression in the merging of both worlds and to enable them to interact as if they were real physical elements (Ruíz Torres, 2013, p. 20).

Novarama leveraged this technology as a way of further integrating the game in the players' daily lives and to make its narrative more immersive. In *Invizimals*, players interpret themselves in a subjective dimension, being recruited by a scientist called Kenichi Nakamura who represents an organization dedicated to performing research on Invizimals, beings that, as their name suggests, are invisible to the naked eye and can only be detected with a PSP equipped with a rear view camera attachment. The game has two interesting aspects. The first is Kenichi, who acts as a unifying link to the universe as a whole and who appears in all the franchise's adaptations. The second, which has already been addressed when discussing the research performed by Ito on *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, is that players use the same character cards as in manga and that, in Novarama's videogame, the console serves to hunt Invizimals.

The videogame comes with a rear view camera attachment, fitted to the top of the console, and a matrix marker, a cardboard rectangle with a grid that allows the software to generate a computer image capable of interacting with players. The users travel all over the world to catch these beings. Their quest starts with Kenichi telling them to search for a type of color in which an analogous Invizimal will appear and, following the detector's confirmation, the Invizimal against which players must battle will appear on the marker. The narrative justification for this item is that it is a trap for Invizimals.

Just a year after its launching, the videogame became immensely popular in Southern Europe and the PSP's leading product in Europe as a whole in 2010 and 2011.

Stage 2: The Franchise's Beginnings (2010)

Although the first videogame started the adventure at a narrative level, it was only after this stage that it was possible to glimpse the first indications of the construction of a much more complex and open environment. In 2010, Sony gave the project its full support and the franchise was officially launched in partnership with the Barcelona company. During this period, the focus was placed on promoting the videogame *Invizimals: Shadow Zone*, which continued to involve collecting monsters and leveraging technology. It was the bestselling videogame during seven months. In this stage, the first licenses were

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granted with an eye to expanding the brand. On the one hand, under the most well-known and long-standing license (from 2010 to date), Panini has handled the sticker and card collections and variants relating to the *Invizimals* brand. The second, granted to the Spanish toy manufacturer Comansi, was for a collection of 20 figures in blind box format, that is, consumers do not know which figure they have purchased until they open the box. The inducement to buy and collect them was that each figure came with a small sticker and when consumers had collected them all, they mailed them to the company, which then sent them a larger figure unavailable on the market.

Stage 3: The Publishing Factor (2011-2012)

In this stage, the foundations were laid for what would be the explosion of the *Invizimals* franchise. In 2011, *Invizimals: The Lost Tribes*, the last instalment for the PSP, was launched. Although the agreement with Panini dated back to the previous stage, this was when it came into its own. On the one hand, that same year a sticker album was published, together with a monthly magazine entitled, *Invizimals*. Following this, in 2012, another collection with the same characteristics, going by the name of *Invizimals Evolution*, was launched for the Italian, French and Spanish markets, thus evincing the phenomenon's geographical expansion.

The magazines of franchises of this type tend to serve the purpose of unifying content in order to announce new developments and to engage their target audiences. *Invizimals*, published from 2011 to 2016, was a prototypical publication for a young audience that served to reinforce their engagement with the product. Its specific content then began to promote the franchise's new products: game tips and tricks; character profiles with their strengths and weaknesses; comics with the adventures of the main characters; posters; matrix markers with new characters that the reader could add to players' digital collections; character rankings; and some or other report on digital entertainment. The magazine also began to offer content typical of these publications, such as pastimes, and some pages featuring drawings sent in by young fans.

Stage 4: The Phenomenon's Explosion (2013)

Five years after being launched, the *Invizimals* franchise sought to enhance all those elements with the potential to transform it into a global brand. For instance, the videogames could now be played in more than one language, mainly European ones, the sticker collections were used to expand in Southern Europe and, what was more important, the franchise's player base, all now fans, was exploited by tapping into their activities.

In an interview for *Star-T* in 2010, the CEO of Novarama Daniel Sánchez Crespo underscored the fact that the franchise had become a phenomenon thanks to its player base and user-generated content. He then went on to stress the importance of listening to their fan community, offering a number of examples: the thousands of messages posted on the game's website; the videos posted on YouTube of children unboxing the videogame, game openings, full games, and tricks and cheats for the card game, and the drawings sent in by fans each time a new adventure was launched (González España, 2010, p. 43).

In this stage, the moment had come to capitalize on that support to fill the market with multimedia consumer products. In 2013, Novarama launched *Invizimals: The Alliance* for PSVita, Sony's new handheld console, with a rear view camera attachment, and *Invizimals: The Lost Kingdom* for Playstation 3 (PS3). While the first maintained the game structure of its predecessors, the desktop console version

was a third-person adventure game revolving around Hiro. The two platforms could be connected with each other—in what has become to be known as crossplay—to battle against and trade Invizimals and objects using multiplatform functions.

In parallel, the CCG *Invizimals: Hidden Challenges* was released. Firstly, they were several types of collectable cards, some of which were very difficult to come by, while others were only available in packs or in the franchise's magazine. Secondly, players could use the cards at face value, with their own rules. And, lastly, and this is where the novelty lay, the cards could be collected and used on third screens, thanks to an app going by the same name that was launched simultaneously with the game. For the platform, this was a leap forward, but augmented reality was still regarded as an important factor for engaging the public.

For its part, the magazine continued to be published as a product in its own right, the special cards going a long way to enhance its value for the franchise. From this emerged the first comic adventure entitled, *Invizimals, El secreto de El Dorado* (Panini, 2013). At this juncture, Novarama sought to expand to other media and, once it had exploited those focusing more on the young public, it moved on to a general medium like television, specifically the theme channel Clan, belonging to the Spanish public broadcasting corporation TVE. BRB Internacional, specializing in computer animation, was the production company chosen for the job. The project involved making a series with 13 episodes narrating the adventures of Hiro, the main character appearing in *Invizimals: The Lost Kingdom*, as an Invizimal hunter, accompanied by two other characters of the same age and with Kenichi as the universe's mediator. The first six episodes also provided material for two TV movies. However, an interesting aspect of this series was that viewers could hunt Invizimals that they could then add to their collections on other platforms. When a special AR marker appeared on screen, all they had to do was aim the Invizimals: TV Tracker, a specific app, at it to capture the Invizimal.

Stage 5: Maintaining Expectations (2014-2015)

In this stage, it was now possible to glimpse certain signs of decline. On the one hand, the TV series had not worked and was discontinued. On the other, *Invizimals: The Resistance* (2014) for PSVita returned to the franchise's origins with the support of a conventional game, as in the previous stage. The highly successful *Invizimals: La nueva alianza* (Panini, 2014), a second card game with an app, was released. And the magazine continued to cover the phenomenon as a whole and to encourage the public to purchase the new products. *Invizimals: The Resistance* (Panini, 2014), magnetic Staks depicting Invizimals, were also put up for sale.

The novelty in this stage were the toys, produced this time by the company IMC Toys, which launched articulated figures, playsets, board games and a collection of 24 figures in blind box format with their respective cards. The figures were inspired by the products of the previous stage, such as the TV series and the videogame *Invizimals: The Lost Kingdom*, and it can be said that they did not reinforce the global product. As with the franchise's other products, those of IMC Toys were supported by an app, *Invizimals Revolution* (Playstation Mobile Inc., 2015), designed to give life to the figures.

Stage 6: False Closure of a Cycle (2016)

This is the longest period during which the franchise has not launched any new products. From the start, it has been the stage in which fewer construction elements of the franchise have appeared. As already observed, despite the dispersion of products—including the magazine, the CCGs, the figures, the TV series, the apps, etc.—and the ease of access to the franchise, the videogames were the mass entry point. In this last stage, that idea of the videogame as the most attractive way of penetrating this universe has been maintained. In this case, however, the platform has varied. *Invizimals: Battle of the Hunters* (Novarama, 2016) is a combat game for tablets and smartphones, in which Kenichi and Hiro serve as the players' guides. It is supported by cards going by the same name, published by Panini in 2016. They follow the same rules of the previous CCGs, but this time they have been designed to be used independently of the videogame, serving to increase the number of Invizimals, objects, powers, etc., of players. For its part, the magazine ran its course during its last year of publication and the same publishing house also released a collectable sticker album called *Invizimals Legends*.

Through these stages, the media behind the franchise's evolution, namely, those involving a greater narrative element and receiving greater media coverage, have been analyzed. But it is important not to forget the brand's more than 20 product lines, including stationery, clothing, licensed toys that have nothing to do with the universe, food products, etc.

Is *Invizimals* a Media mix?

In the theoretical section, a review was performed on the origins, consumption and principal features of the Japanese media mix, arriving at the conclusion that it is a business model adapted to a very specific market and aimed at an audience accustomed to that sort of consumption. From that section it is possible to retrieve several concepts and to compare them with the franchise developed by Novarama and Sony. Firstly, returning to the definition proposed by Ito, the media mix involves dispersing information across different media. In this sense, *Invizimals* would fit this definition, insofar as it is a franchise that has used different media, all of its videogames, except one, being designed for mobile devices and both the CCGs and the figures being collectable.

Steinberg underscores the centrality of television in anime's media mix. Albeit an extension of little importance in the case at hand, *Invizimals*' media mix does coincide as regards its second characteristic: its focus on the specificity of the medium. Although, as already noted, the apps are a clear example of transmediality between two different media such as the CCGs and the videogames.

Another feature of fictional universes of this type is the transfer of characters to other media. In this case, the adaptation of the beings to different platforms was effective, but, as stressed in the analysis of the franchise, it was Kenichi who brought it all together. For his part, Hiro, the main character of *The Lost Kingdom*, served the same function as of 2013. According to Steinberg, there is no end to media mixes. Perhaps this can be defined in another way as the false closure of a cycle. Nonetheless, there is no narrative closure as such, but the very idiosyncrasy of the product, mutable over time and in the media, has given rise to periods during which there has been no new production, pending a more propitious moment.

As to the untraceable nature of the original, in the words of Sasakibara and Otsuka (2001), it is possible to observe that in Stages 4 and 5, the videogames lost ground to the CCGs, the apps, the TV series and the toys and action figures, these consumer products all being independent.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

By examining a foreign business model, it is possible to grasp an idea of the development of these types of strategies outside Japan. *Invizimals* is not the only European case. *Gormiti* (Giochi Preziosi, 2005) is an Italian multimedia product that has been around for over a decade, notwithstanding its mixed sales results on different platforms and with different lines of marketing in diverse areas over the years. Without jumping to conclusions, it can be seen how markets are increasingly more homogeneous as regards both the consumption of specific products and the way that they are consumed.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this chapter has been to confirm whether or not the Japanese media mix can be implemented in completely different economic, social and cultural contexts. In the case of *Invizimals*, there are a series of trends that point to a copy of the model adapted to a totally different market. As has been seen, many of the principal features of the Japanese media mix are also apparent in the franchise run by Novarama and Sony. The Japanese electronic entertainment company sought a franchised media mix model in Europe in order to target, or at least attempt to, *Pokémon*'s youngest audiences. But is *Invizimals* a media mix in the same way as the Japanese products are? This question is very nuanced and has two answers: it is not a Japanese media mix in the strictest sense of the word, since there are evident differences in the exploitation model. While in Japan committees are created to carry forward a project, the *Invizimals* model has involved licensing products to third parties that then exploit them during an established period. The second answer is affirmative. *Invizimals* is a media mix, but not of the Japanese type, the business differences mainly ruling out that notion of equal partnership. Nonetheless, it is a model perfectly adapted to a very specific market with a very different way of understanding the consumption of products, above all of the electronic entertainment kind. In conclusion, the media mix business model varies according to mere contextual issues, for which reason the Novarama and Sony franchise can be understood as an adapted media mix.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Anime: This refers to both TV series and animated movies produced in Japan or influenced by this industry.

Creation of worlds: The design of fictional universes that support the franchise's environment and which have to offer the chance to explore different narratives.

Extension: The action of disseminating content and/or brands through different distribution channels in order to reach potential markets.

Hypersociability: A term coined by Ito to refer to how information on and experiences of a specific product are shared by different users under the same conditions.

Immersion: When the users of a fictional universe emotionally identify with the text.

Manga: Japanese comics or graphic novels or those inspired by them.

Multiplatform entertainment: A form of narrative entertainment in which content is dispersed across multiple entertainment channels.

Chapter 8

The Poetics of Videogames: The Logic of Sense and Meaning in the Videoludic Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The poetic processes that underlie the production of narrative and literary works, film or television screenplays are adapted to transtextual and intertextual logic, which facilitates the transition of the text from its sense to its meaning. All narrative production generates its own sense in the act of linear reading by the reader and/or the spectator. However, the access to the sphere of meaning can only be found in the within the whole of the relationships that a given work maintains with other works that are absent. From this point of view, we propose to apply the logic of the poetics of sense and meaning to the realm of the videogame. Our goal is to prove that such a logic may exist. Yet, videogames have certain rules which regulate their lending and borrowing, thus a legal framework replaces a discursive influence.

INTRODUCTION

The origin of a work of art is no longer a secret. One of the most important principles of art criticism consists in underscoring that Rembrandt, Tchaikovsky, Hitchcock, etc., do not have their complete meaning alone. As Bloom (2009) suggests when broaching the subject of poetry, the meaning of a work of art is the appreciation of its relationship with traditions and artists of the past. As readers or spectators we never stop searching for the new, and as critics we strive to consider a new work in light of the existing corpus. We are incapable of evaluating it on its own and only its relationship with the ideal state of the rest of the works provides us with the necessary tools for incorporating it in that patchwork that should, in one way or another, rearrange itself in a new order to accommodate it. In this sense, what happens to the new work of an artist also occurs to all those preceding it. In other words, just as past symphonies, novels and films alter the physiognomy of current ones, so too do the latter affect the former in a limit-

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less exchange of memories. Therefore, we could say that each work is a fragment of memory, a thread that, whether we be creators, critics or receivers, should link us invisibly to a hybrid state in which the past and present merge.

For Gérard Genette, the object of poetics – this being understood as the set of principles or rules characterizing an artistic genre, school or author – can never be the uniqueness of a text, but rather its significance, namely, “all that overtly or secretly relates the text to other ones” (Genette, 1989, p. 10). Riffaterre, influenced by the works of Batjin (1986) and Kristeva (1978), refers to *intertextuality* as a mechanism inherent to literary reading. He puts forward the essential argument on which this chapter is based when recalling that it is in the intertext, be it literary or non-literary, where the *significance* of any work resides: (Riffaterre, 1980, p. 10). To his mind, the significance of a work “l’intertext n’est alors qu’un postulat, mais le postulat suffit, à partir duquel il faut construire, déduire la signifiante”¹ is a question that exists *elsewhere*, in a context that can be unprecedented or not for the reader, and differs from its meaning, a concept that inevitably stems from itself and which always occurs in the linear reading performed by the receiver: “Indeed, only intertextuality produces significance, while linear reading, inherent to literary and non-literary texts, produces merely meaning” (Genette, 1989, p. 11).

In view of this difference between meaning and significance,² we can claim that the *poietic* process underlying the production of narrative, literary, film and television works adapts to the transtextual or intertextual logics that, in the words of Riffaterre, allow for the transition from the meaning to the significance of a text. All novels, films and TV series generate their own meaning when read/watched by the reader/spectator. However, access to the sphere of significance can only be gained through the set of relationships that all works have with other absent ones. By virtue of this nexus forged *in absentia*, the mechanisms of influence that regulate the construction of characters and their roles, the establishment of genres and their typologies and, at another level of interference, the different generations of artists whose creative works have felt the weight of tradition are determined in the fields of theory and critique. It is thus possible and necessary to speak of a *poetics of meaning*, enclosed in each and every work, and a *poetics of significance*, only plausible beyond its limits, in the narrative environments of literature, cinema and television. Would it be possible to understand the nature of Anna Karenina without Emma Bovary? On the other hand, would the character of Emma Bovary exist without the idealistic influence that Cervantes exerted on Flaubert? Moreover, could Joyce’s *Ulysses* exist without Homer’s *Odyssey*? As can be observed, the realms in which the meaning and significance of traditional narrative works dwell are boundless and characterized by a creative free will only limited by the artist’s imagination. But transtextual and intertextual procedures can occasionally clash with the laws governing the protection of intellectual property and copyrights.

The regulation and protection of intellectual property and copyrights in the sphere of audio-visual creation are commonplace in international jurisprudence. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Copyright Treaty (WCT) was a pioneering initiative in defense of intellectual property for two reasons. The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property encompassed patents, product and service brands, industrial plans and models, trade names, geographical designations and repressive measures against unfair competition (WIPO, 2019). For their part, copyrights were covered in the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886), granting authors control of the terms of use and conditions of their works (WIPO, 2019b).

Curiously enough, in the review of intellectual property and copyright laws it is possible to detect a common denominator: albeit with slight variations, the international and national legal framework places all artistic creations in a similar position as regards the use of other works in transtextual or intertextual

processes. As already noted, to the dismay of the acolytes of artistic originality and purity, these have always formed the very foundations of a creative process facilitating the transition of a work from *not being* to *being*. Bearing this in mind, namely, the scope of copyrights as regards any work, there should be other reasons, apart from the legal ones, why the poetics of meaning and significance differ notably depending on the artistic field. Certainly, if the legal restrictions on borrowing from other works, irrespective of whether this is discursive or material, equally affect novels, films and video games, what are the real grounds that allow for this distinction? Our hypothesis is that significance, from the perspective from which it has been presented here, functions differently in video games than in traditional media like cinema or literature. As will be seen below, there are several reasons behind this.

THE ECCENTRIC TRANSTEXTUALITY OF VIDEO GAMES

Within the terminological limits of this chapter, it is obvious that video games can clearly shape a poetics of meaning; this emerges in the act of playing in which each player gives the videoludic work a meaning. However, is a poetics of significance possible in the video game context? In other words, does the significance of a video game reside, as occurs in literature and cinema, in others? In order to answer this question, we will summarize a triad of elements of a very different nature in which, to our mind, the principles pertaining to videoludic discourses are to be found. As an initial hypothesis, we are of the opinion that its two last components are decisive. Following their analysis, we will focus on transtextual contamination defined by Genette as *intertextuality* (1989, pp. 10-11), dispensing with the rest of the elements making up its typology – architextuality, hypertextuality, paratextuality and metatextuality – either because they have to do with forces exogenous to the text itself³ or because we consider that the conclusions derived from their analysis are repetitive.⁴ Our intention is to verify the functioning of Genette's model applied to the videoludic medium, with an eye to evaluating its degree of deviation, should this indeed exist, from the results that have traditionally been obtained in the fields of literature and cinema.

To give shape to this chapter, the relationship between video games and the laws protecting intellectual property and copyrights has been included among the three intangible spaces from which the medium's transtextuality should emerge. Although, as already noted, we believe that the logic of transtextual or intertextual processes, owing to the intervention of the aforementioned laws, does not differ from that of other expressive media, it is worth commenting on due to the fact that video game engines are a major development for the laws protecting intellectual property. That said, the following changes affecting videoludic transtextual reasoning should be highlighted:

1. **Video Games as Technological Devices and Intellectual Property:** The advent of video games in the regulated and normative sphere of engineering has lent greater weight to intellectual property laws. However, copyright laws do not involve any new developments prefiguring an atypical use of transtextual processes.
2. **The Market's Tradition and Stigma:** Owing to the medium's lack of historical tradition, compared with those of literature and cinema, the notion of authorship has been hitherto downplayed and, as a result, there is an almost complete absence of imitable stylistic currents, apart from the mechanical process. The feeling of admiration for the works of other authors or companies, a gesture that

often justifies transtextuality, has been ostracized by increasingly fierce market competition and the status of video games as mere commercial products destined to entertain.

3. **The Form of Expression of Video Games:** Namely, their semiotic system based on rules and mechanics is more abstract and ambiguous than those of other media. Consequently, the appearance of transtextual logic in video games frequently results in an asemantic process.

Video Games as Technological Devices and Intellectual Property

In *Unit Operations*, the designer and researcher Ian Bogost claims that the discursive relationship between videoludic works has been marked by intellectual property laws. Unlike literature and cinema, in which the oedipal relationship between novels or films can be regarded as a line of research in the field of literary and film theory, in video games this nexus becomes a legal function when the *materiality* of game engines, deriving from their status as technological and programmatic devices and sometimes shared by different games, is regulated by intellectual property laws:

Although the two games do relate to one another in a history, and perhaps even a hierarchical history of the FPS, their relationship is not one of Oedipal anxiety. In lieu of this anxiety, both games agree to mediate their commonalities through an external structure: intellectual property. Unlike psychoanalysis or literary theory, IP is a stable relationship regulated by governments and markets instead of critics. The rules of IP are flexible and may change, but its fundamental principle is legal, not literary. (Bogost, 2006, p. 61)⁵

In narrative, literary and film studies, according to this author, there is no legal corpus for reaching a consensus on intertextuality and the influence of tradition. On the contrary, in the videoludic field, licensed content has converted the practice of borrowing discourses into a legal function. Although Bogost's idea is brilliant, that intertextuality is not regulated by law in the fields of literature and cinema could not be further from the truth. As with the literature on the subject, there is a vast body of case law in this field. On the other hand, the *materiality* embodied by game engines, shared by all those games created under that same IP, never results in an obligatory or inevitable relationship in video game development. Let us say that each video game studio or company can develop a game engine for its projects from scratch, thus blurring the legal relationship between two games created by different developers, regardless of whether or not they belong to the same genre. Furthermore, the versatility of current engines allows for the development of video games belonging to different genres, thanks to the communication capacity between software components, regulated by an application programming interface (API), which provides access to a host of libraries of classes and methods. In other words, a game engine does not currently influence the notions of genre or style in the video game field. Considered as a framework, a game engine does not have a greater say in the final result of a project than that of other more abstract, and only initially more material, concepts, such as those of the primitive mode of representation (PMR) and the institutional mode of representation (IMR) (Burch, 1991) in film creation. In the longer term, game engines and both modes of filmic representation only foreshadow the act of creation as an application of functionalities regulated by technological, expressive and social criteria. But beyond these issues, although the protection of intellectual property in the video game industry reveals the strict regulation of game engines, it is impossible to claim that this has been decisive in enhancing or diminishing the presence of transtextuality in the medium.

The Poetics of Videogames

On the other hand, video game copyrights do not differ from those in literature or cinema. Artistic, literary, cinematographic and videoludic works are protected by copyright laws inasmuch as no one has the right to copy someone else's creative work. However, certain *topikós* and common areas in the development of works of this sort fall under "the *Scènes à faire* doctrine" (Greenspan, 2014, p. 82). These elements are not protected by copyrights insofar as they are necessary for consolidating a specific genre. For instance, driving game copyrights do not protect the genre's characteristic elements, such as cars, roads, grandstands, drivers, related technical features, trees, lawns, etc., as artistic expressions. And the same can be said about any other type of game: "While you can't copy these elements verbatim from another golfing game, you have the right to include such elements in your game because otherwise no one else could create a golfing game" (New Media Riders, 2018), since they are regarded as a priori elements. This exception is equally valid for literary and filmic creations.

By the same token, the concept of fair use is extensible to all artistic processes. In the copyright context, this consists in the possibility of using part of a protected work for a limited purpose and without paying a license fee. Although this does hold for the United States, the majority of countries, especially in Europe, do not envisage authorizing the use of material protected by copyright laws without a license, except in certain situations like public interest or educational ends. Ultimately, fair use is a defense against copyright infringement claims, which means that copyright holders can sue companies that incorporate part of their works protected by copyright or develop new *derivative* works without a license. Naturally, very few companies run the risk of being sued, owing to the legal costs and the negative publicity associated with copyright infringement claims. The decision to include material protected by copyright in a video game, using the protection of fair play as an excuse, involves risks that should be weighed up calmly (Greenspan, 2014).

The Market's Tradition and Stigma

The scant importance of its historical and critical tradition, together with the role assigned to the medium by the market are more decisive elements than the previous legal provisions for justifying the absence of a poetics of significance in video games. The concept of *authorship*, in addition to the derivative notion of *individual universe* employed to define the style of a writer or filmmaker, has found no parallel in the videoludic medium. As demonstrated by the medium's history, the technological component has outweighed creative genius; a fact that is closely related to the market belief that satisfaction can only be found in novelty (Navarrete & Vargas, 2018). Who remembers the last game designed by Ron Gilbert for Double Fine in 2013? Why did this designer develop in 2017 another point-and-click adventure game with aesthetic and ludic elements reminiscent of another age? Why have not these games been as successful as those designed by Gilbert in the past? The answer is rather stark. Any designer can currently produce a game like those that Gilbert continues to develop, because the difference does not lie in the authors or in the universes that they create, but in the evolution of the technological component. Gilbert considers himself to be an author and acts as such, but the market and its fleeting memory have turned a deaf ear to his pretensions. In economic terms, it can be claimed that, notwithstanding the exceptions, the value added of a product in the video game industry has nothing to do with the author.

The importance of technology in video games is also associated, albeit in a less evident fashion, with the concept of tradition. How can new players access past games? In plain English, why is it more complicated to access previous games than old novels or films, an essential aspect of the creative process in these last two fields? First and foremost, because a technological component, to which many play-

ers do not have access, is required to play them, and, above all, because there is a purely technological awareness that the medium is constantly evolving, for which reason there is no need to recuperate them, except for nostalgic reasons. If this utilitarian reflection were firmly grounded in the importance of the past for the future progress of video games, we would have the adequate means, without any type of impediment, to revisit these videoludic discourses of yesteryear.

On the other hand, the absence of imitable discourses, beyond the transfer of mechanisms – which we shall address in the following point – will remain an irresolvable issue if video games do not evolve towards more humanistic positions, namely, towards dealing with matters concerning literature and cinema. Besides conveying an evoked and generic and, as a result, ambiguous and polysemous, message, what is a video game like *The Last Guardian* (SIE Japan Studio/Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2016) trying to tell us? Apart from its *scènes à faire* components, which on the other hand will never be openly recognized as transtextual relationships,⁶ what could be cited or copied from Ueda's work? But, most of all, why cite or refer to a work in another work when, as will be seen, the current videoludic context lacks the means to define the process? Moreover, this lack of signification justifies and ratifies the fact that the callous conscience of the vast video game industry never cites or alludes to the work of competitors to acknowledge achievements or expressive innovations. Instead, it prefers to copy them aesthetically or mechanically, always within copyright limits, in order to offer the public a similar formula. Another very different matter is the self-citation of works belonging to the same company, a process that, as will be seen, does not satisfy the minimum threshold of signification.

The Form of Expression of Video Games

The form of expression of video games is the crux of the matter. Not for nothing is it where the medium's expressive capacity is to be found, in this case restricted to the use of rules and mechanisms. This depleted capacity for signification does not allow for the real transfer of significations between different video games. As already observed above, only the medium's *humanistic* evolution, which for us is tantamount to its *narrativization*, would be capable of expanding its current semiotic system in pursuit of attaining a new state that enables the transtextuality of video games. However, they pose many challenges for telling stories.

If we center our attention on the classical structure of narrative morphology, basically divided into expression and content, we can catch a glimpse of this problem. It should be recalled that both dimensions are mutually implied and that their separation is only a device for their intellection. In other words, although video games and literature share specific elements making up the substance of expression – even more so when compared with cinema – restricted in this case to the word and the text, the major stumbling block lies in the incapacity of their form of expression – to wit, in the peculiarity and definition of their semiotic system – to tell a story divided into events, actions, characters, space and time without – and this is the nub of the problem – betraying their own nature. While with words, image and sound many stories can be told, with rules and mechanics huge difficulties arise in the form of expression of the videoludic medium in which its significance resides, owing, among other things, to its failure to verbalize particular actions due to the paucity of verbs/actions, located waist down – running, shooting, jumping, climbing, throwing or flying – of video game characters, versus the verbs/actions of the characters of literary works – arguing, negotiating, talking, complaining or convincing (Schell, 2015, p. 303). Obviously, cutscenes, i.e. dialogue scenes or those with the voiceover of the narrator, are spurious elements borrowed from literature and cinema that point to an ontological expansion of the medium's form of

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expression beyond rules and mechanisms – an expansion observable since the release of *Donkey Kong* in 1981. This is happening for better or for worse and will be resolved in the future with the semantic prolongation of the current canonical meaning of the term ‘video game’.

Table 1. *The medium’s structure or morphology*

Form of content	It is the story divided into events, actions, characters, space and time
Substance of content	Under the authors personal code, it is the way in which the previous components are contextualized
Form of expression	The particular semiotic system to which the story belongs (cinema, radio, television, opera, ballet, theatre, video games, etc.)
Substance of expression	The material nature or materiality of the significances employed in the narrative discourse (voice, sound, text, words, music, infographics, etc.)

Source: own elaboration.

But, at present, when many scholars and players opt for a video game in the strict sense of the word, videoludic transtextuality has no future, simply because if there is nothing to say, there is not anything to define either.⁷ It is true that it is possible to convey a large number of messages through rules and mechanisms, but not to say them. Nonetheless, the fact remains that their affirmation is always superficial and appears to be firmly linked to the game context: significance merely appended to meaning? Consequently, the transtextual transfer between video games can be summarized in the exchange of mechanisms that yet again shape a new significance, but whose continued existence is still anchored to the context defined by the meaning of a new game. In other words, game mechanics are a device whose substantial power of significance only appears in the logic of meaning and which, therefore, vanishes in its transfer to other video games. Let us take a look at an example.

In *The Extraterrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982), Elliot is in the college laboratory with his fellow students, who are all about to dissect a number of frogs. When the boy starts a revolution to save the amphibians from their destiny, we witness his psychic connection with the alien, hiding at home while the rest of the family are at work. When the alien becomes drunk on beer, Elliot also experiences its ethylic effects while in class. And, most importantly, the film *The Quiet Man* (John Ford, 1952), which has caught the alien’s attention while watching television, will help Elliot to sought out his relationship with the girl with which he is in love as if he were John Wayne himself. The reference to Ford’s film, an intertextual process that would explain the nexus between both films, transfers the passionate love of its characters to those appearing in Spielberg’s film, united forever as deeply as Elliot and his new friend. Certainly, a new significance justifying the transtextual process emerges from the confluence of these two moments that are both significant per se.

In *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013), many of the game’s recreational aspects are developed through stealth mechanics. With a long tradition in the medium’s history, players use these mechanics to hide from their enemies in order to reach their objectives, sometimes being an alternative to the violence resulting from the direct confrontation with adversaries. In this video game, the character of Joel spends most of his time crouching and throwing objects to distract the Infected with a view to forging ahead or to be better placed to eliminate them. The character of Sebastián Castellanos in *The Evil Within* (Tango Gameworks, 2014) employs the same mechanics, attitude and modus operandi to resolve his conflicts. Could we speculate on a strong relationship between both games, beyond the *scènes à faire*⁸

that have been evidently transferred and which would enable us to speak of real transtextuality? This allusion, a transtextual process that would explain the link between both games, is impossible because neither do the mechanics transferred from *The Last of Us* to *The Evil Within* possess an independent and full significance to corroborate this, nor did the author intend to implement this intertextual procedure. Therefore, highlighting this from a critical perspective leads us nowhere.

It could be argued that stealth mechanics possess a generic, architextual one could say, value, by reliving in these games all those other games in which players crouch and throw objects to resolve their problems, as in westerns in which all the characters do so by toting guns, riding horses and getting drunk in the bar. But even at this architextual level, while the *scènes à faire* of westerns can indeed determine the genre of a film, stealth mechanics do not have that capacity because they are cross-genre, incapable of defining in this case a genre for themselves. It is important to recall that the survival horror genre, to which both the aforementioned games belong, is defined by its theme and plot and the player's sensation of helplessness, rather than by the available mechanics (Vargas, 2018; Vargas & Navarrete, 2019).

TOWARDS A POETICS OF SIGNIFICANCE IN VIDEO GAMES

After analyzing the elements preceding and regulating the principles of transtextual activity, we will now attempt to apply the notion of transtextuality established by Genette. Our intention is to determine the nature of its status in the video game world, taking into account the arguments set forth to date.

Genette defines intertextuality as “a relationship of co-presence between two or more texts, that is, eidetically and frequently, as the effective presence of one text in another” (1989, p. 10). This adopts two main forms: the *citation* and the *allusion*. As to the former, co-presence is produced by invoking the cited text, and as to the latter, by evoking it, a distinction that marks the degree of competence required by the reader/spectator/player to recognize the transtextual logic, and extends the limits of what the author can potentially say. Thus, the author could cite a non-existent text, something very commonplace in cinema that also appears in the video game *That Dragon, Cancer* (Numinous Games/Ryan & Emily Green, 2013), with the reference to the eponymous game played by Joel, The Baby Knight. But before addressing the field of allusion or evocation, let us dwell for a moment on real invocations of video games.

In the chapter *You Arcade* of the video game *Shenmue* (Sega/Suzuki, 1999), Ryo Hazuki visits an arcade to play the arcade games developed by Sega and designed by Suzuki, including *Hang-on* (1985) and *Space Harrier* (1985), among others. When the character plays one of these old games, players can experience them first-hand. And that is the end of that. Apart from the nostalgic or anecdotal component of this self-tribute, the trivial contribution of these games to the main plot of *Shenmue* is metaphorically converted into the transfer of their complete lack of signification as a transtextual operation. In the case of cinema and literature, a similar situation would have sufficed to generate a dialogue or to pose a question in the mind of the reader/spectator. Here, there is no such question because the confluence of these games in the same space is asemantic; just as nothing can be learnt from this, so too is it impossible to say or infer anything.

In *Fallout 4* (Bethesda, 2015), players can collect different editions of the magazine *RobCo Fun*, which come with a holotape of a retro game. These games can be played on terminals scattered about the setting and on the *Fallout* Pip-Boy. Besides being purely anecdotal, the citation of these games lacks signification, insofar as their absence, as with their presence, would not affect the meaning of the recreational experience offered by the main game. It should be noted that the aforementioned games are not

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exact recreations of the originals, but transformations, transpositions or parodies of the classic arcade games of the 1970s and 1980s, such as *Donkey Kong* (Nintendo, 1981) and *Space Invaders* (Taito, 1978), called *Red Menace* (Vault Tec, 2075) and *Zeta Invaders* (without copyright), respectively.

This type of asemantic relationship of intertextual citations can be found in many current games. *Naughty Dog* included the possibility of playing *Crash Bandicoot* (1996) in *Uncharted 4* (2016). Although this game is more closely interwoven with the plot of the main game than in previous examples, since it forms part of a challenge between Nathan and Elena to see who will wash the dishes, the relationship is not significant because there is not any dialogue between the two games, the nexus being restricted to a ludonarrative pause in the player's real world. It is true that, in this case, with lax hermeneutic rules, it is possible to draw a parallel or simile between the adventures of Crash and Nathan, in which the schematism of the mechanics of the PS1 game remains largely unchanged, under a sophisticated packaging, in its PS4 counterpart.

Much more interesting and meriting a chapter of their own are the false citations (or playable allusions?) of games like *Dead Space 2* (Visceral Games, 2011), *Bioshock Infinite* (Irrational Games, 2013) and *Resident Evil 7* (Capcom, 2017). In these games, players can revisit scenes featuring in previous instalments or witness ludic prolepses that generate complex and unclassifiable significant relationships, similar in value to the authentic intertextual processes of literature and cinema. As occurs with the authentic kind, this false intertextuality is always to be found in the games developed by the same company, an all-too-common denominator in the video game industry.

As observed at the beginning of this section, allusions in the field of video games, as occurs in literature and cinema, depend on the encyclopedic knowledge of the player, owing to the fact that they stand on the shaky ground of evocation. Their ability to generate a significance through the relationship established between the two texts employed – the evoker and the evoked – is similar to that of literary and film texts. This is so because, unlike citations, allusions do not refer to the ludic-mechanical dimension, but to that of the storyline or plot. In a strict sense, allusions are not produced in the form of expression of a video game, namely, at the heart of its semiotic system, but in the spurious part of it (cinematics, dialogues, narratives, etc.), which would invalidate them as a purely videoludic transtextual logic. In *Dead Space* (Visceral Games, 2008), the final cutscene shows Isaac, the main character, fleeing in horror in a spacecraft only manned by himself. When he looks to the left, he realizes that there is someone else on the flight deck: a Necromorph attacks him when everything seemed to have ended. The game ends with this final shock. The playful and dubitative look that the engineer gives Ellie at the end of *Dead Space 2* will only be meaningful, through evoking the hypotext, that is, the first game, to the saga's fans.

Allusions often boil down to a transfer of *scènes à faire* between the games of the same company or those developed by the same person. In these cases, the relationship between hypotexts and hypertexts, to wit, between the evoking and evoked texts, is only significant at a perceptive level, playing the role of a hallmark or distinctive tag: for instance, the Victorian house with a double staircase appearing in the games making up the *Resident Evil* (Capcom) saga or in *The Evil Within* (Tango Gameworks, 2014).

CONCLUSION

Even though we cannot conclude that there is no transtextual logic in video games, we can indeed claim that it is atypical and eccentric in relation to how it functions in other discourses. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. If we strictly relate the phenomenon to the core of the process of signification of video games, ultimately the best place to study it, we can observe that the rules and mechanics are elements that can be transferred from one game to another, but without maintaining or exporting their significance. To our mind, meaning, as defined by Riffaterre, plays a role in the videoludic medium that differs from the one that it plays in other media by defining its process of signification. This converts any game mechanics, from physics to resource management, through tactical maneuvers or social interaction, into a mere *scène a faire* unprotected by copyright laws. Thus, these elements, considered as an a priori of videoludic creation, will never be able to form part of the transtextual device because the industry, the law and its own logic stubbornly deny it. Simply put, the relationship between two games with identical mechanics cannot be regarded as transtextual.
2. Intertextual processes, such as citations and allusions, have also been defined in the video game world by their hypertrophied nature of commercial products, in which priority is given to the concepts of competitiveness, efficiency and profitability. The transtextual game has been subject to these laws, in which different game developers have opted for self-citation, but not citation, thus generating a textual endogamy never seen before. But this cannot only be explained by entrepreneurial meanness, for the crux of the matter lies in the flexibility and modularity of the game mechanics as the significant core of any video game. What discursive need can there be in provoking a fleeting process of signification that can be reshaped and redefined in each game? This has banished transtextuality to the realm of tribute or nostalgia, always as a asemantic process.
3. All considered, the sole effective transtextual logic, according to the old model established by literature and cinema is that in which video games emerge from spurious elements that, strictly speaking, do not belong to the core of the medium's semiotic system. But, as we have been able to determine in this case, there is also evidence of an exacerbated endogamy.
4. So, where can we find a transtextuality, similar to that of literature and cinema, in video games? If the mechanics per se are incapable of sustaining it and the spurious elements of a game are powerless to imitate it, perhaps we should look further afield to the abstract dimension of game dynamics and experience. Would it be possible to group together games by genre, according to the dynamics arising from the act of playing them and the experiences that they offer players? This would be tantamount to a revolution in videoludic transtextual logic, based on two totally uncontrollable elements, but absolutely crucial to defining the medium. We will leave this question unanswered, like an open window, pending further research.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Allusion: A type of intertextual relationship in which a text appears emotionally in an another. It is an evocation.

Citation: A type of intertextual relationship in which a text appears physically in an another. It is an invocation or effective appeal.

Intertextuality: A relationship of co-presence between two or more texts, namely, the effective presence of one text in another.

Poetics: A set of principles or rules characterizing a literary or artistic genre, a school or an author.

Rules and mechanics: In the videoludic field, the rules and mechanics form the individual and exclusive semiotic system of a video game. Rules, which are obligatory, define the action of players in the fictional world of a game. Mechanics express an action, a verb, which can be performed by players in that same fictional framework.

Transtextual logic: A normal method for relating texts that enables the transition from a text's meaning to its significance.

Videoludic: An adjective that defines something that has to do with or is related to the individual language of a video game.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ “the intertext is then only a postulate, but the postulate is sufficient, from which it is necessary to build, to deduce the significance”. *Author's translation.*
- ² The concepts of meaning and significance, employed as a dichotomy or apart, have different uses in other scientific contexts like philosophy, psychology and linguistics. The description of these dissimilarities would on their own produce a new work.
- ³ Thus, paratextuality tells us about the pragmatic dimension of a work. For its part, metatextuality, in which texts are linked by the subjective criterion of an expert, plays a critical role itself. As both modalities beg unanswered questions, we have decided not to address them here.
- ⁴ The results of analyses performed on the application of hypertextual and architextual processes can be hazarded thanks to those obtained as regards the intertextual dimension of transtextual logic.
- ⁵ Bogost sets out his arguments employing the first person shooter (FPS) genre and the relationship established between the games *Quake II* (Id Software, 1997), *Half Life* (Valve Software, 1998) and *Counter Strike* (Valve Software, 1999). All use, under license, the game engine developed by id Software.
- ⁶ It should not be forgotten that when citing a text in another work, the intention of the author is essential for arriving at its significance. Without this intention, the imitated elements continue to exist, but discursively lack significance.
- ⁷ For a critique of the expressive power of video games strictly based on rules and mechanics, as Bogost claims, see Navarrete-Cardero, Luis (2016). *Retórica de los Serious Games. Una aproximación crítica*. Actas del V Congreso de la Asociación Española de Investigación de la Comunicación (AE-IC), Congreso Iberoamericano de Comunicación: Comunicación, Cultura y Cooperación. Facultad de Ciencias de la Información, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. 778-792.
- ⁸ The mechanics of a game are *scènes à faire* not protected by copyright. The logic cannot be protected behind the *Candy Crush* puzzles (King, 2012), the impacts of physics and their consequences on *Angry Birds* (Rovio, 2009) or the first-person shots in *Doom* (id Software, 1993).

Chapter 9

An Epistemology of the Event for the Digital Media: From Lewis Carroll to Eltagate

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the twentieth century, game studies have concentrated on epistemological positions seemingly unable to make significant distinctions between traditional games and video games. This approach has hindered the development of a post-modern ontology for decades, in a medium—video games—that is decidedly postmodern. This chapter proposes going beyond the mechanistic notion of considering observable reality as a combination of a determined state of things, which is a prevalent feature in today’s game studies. To achieve this, the author argues from the Deleuzian notion of the “event.” When referring to the concept of the “ideal game,” as proposed by Deleuze, is intended to enunciate an epistemology that describes the implicit potentialities of digital media in general. The application of the epistemology would comprise memetic and viral statements, generative aesthetics and the forms of video games themselves.

INTRODUCTION

The novel that made writer and mathematician Lewis Carroll famous, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, ends with a chapter that is systematically overlooked in its subsequent film adaptations. In it, Alice’s awakening reveals that the entire story was a dream and after explaining it in detail to her older sister, she leaves. Then the narrator points out: “But her sister sat still just as she left her, leaning her head on her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of Little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion” (1865, p. 190).

What her sister dreams next is the literal transfer of the world dreamt up by Alice; strictly speaking, the repetition of an entire universe that is responsive and recursive, turning this moment into the first

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recognisable literary reference to a virtual reality experience. If Flaubert was in 1857 foreseeing the possibilities of cinematic language with his famous use of parallel scenes in *Madame Bovary*, not even a decade later Carroll was bearing witness to another as-yet unborn language, although much more distant in time.

In general terms, the mathematical-logical dimension of Carroll's stories seems highly applicable to the formal fundamentals of the digital revolution. George Steiner was already connecting the death of the novel to the birth of what he was calling the "Pythagorean genre", set in an approximation of literary forms to scientific languages and a hybridisation of genres which until that point had been entirely separate: "In Western culture, with its urban and technological character, the representative transitional genre seems to be a kind of documentary poetic or 'post-fiction'" (1970, p. 83). Likewise, moving from a paradigm of representation to one of simulation opens the door to an understanding of logic that has little to do with the formal languages championed by the analytical schools. Without the need to resort to such an open and contingent territory as that of virtual reality, video games have been shown to be capable of simulating non-Euclidean surfaces, holistic narratives, spaces with indefinite recombinations, paradoxical temporalities, and logics that are synesthetic, extra-cultural or based on error, among other realities. Strictly speaking, if something can be simulated, it can also be experienced and the range of possibilities of what can be simulated far transcends the realities that may be found in the category of "reason" and what is "reasonable".

Therefore, it is worth suggesting that the logic of simulation systems, and with them video games and virtual reality experiences, has a more specific connection to Deleuze's research on sense than to characterisations of it from within semiotics or traditional cybernetics, which currently act as foundations for ontological approaches to the digital issue. While in his book, *The Logic of Sense*, Gilles Deleuze carried out an analysis of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* from the perspective of an emerging post-structuralist logical conceptualisation, this text will seek to provide a reading of the reality of digital spaces in those terms, insofar as these exceed the limits of Cartesian thought on the available epistemological discourse.

ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

For some time, the winds of change have been felt regarding the comprehension of that which is specifically digital. This has particular meaning with regard to video games, considering that, since the game studies revolution arrived in 1999 with the journal *Game Studies*, in response to the current's cornerstone represented by the book *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997) by Espen J. Aarseth, it could be argued that the ontological question has tended to be resolved in excessively reductive, if not reductionist, terms: video games are games, and as such they are systems based on formal sets of rules and mechanics. According to game studies, any approach in any field, whether in decision theory, discourse analysis or in cultural or gender studies, should be able to be reduced to this fundamental basis.

However, the rule/mechanic dichotomy replaces the classical story/discourse dichotomy of narratology in more than one sense: although its definition focuses precisely on the game dimension of the video game, the fact remains that it is limited to the traditional game formulae as narratology was limited to the traditional formulae of stories. It is true, as indicated by Eskelinen, that game studies has been able to "offer critical views on the game's so far greatly overlooked capability to model human behaviour, real societies and social relations" (2012, p. 325), but these models cease to function when we transcend "merely" human dimensions and scales. It can certainly be said that video games have already reached

this point, as has philosophy (considering specifically the speculative realism of Object-Oriented Ontology, thankfully put forward by Ian Bogost in *Alien Phenomenology*), while game studies theory has continued to be preoccupied with the aforementioned limits, increasingly detached from a medium that resembles less and less its theoretical conception.

In ideological terms, we have been warned of the danger of limiting the tools for analysing video games to a purely formalist state, as the univocality of such an approach supports the self-absorbed character (radically useful for a neoliberal capitalist system focused on industrial understandings) of a medium confined to the status of a simple state machine, detached from any tradition or connection to other narrative-expressive media, and therefore stripped of its use value, lowered to the status of simulation (Navarrete & Vargas, 2018). In addition, in strictly cybernetic terms it has been noted that the ontological characterisation of game studies is insufficient as it is limited to studying the machine as a unique system and relegates the player to the functions of a servo. To compensate for this lack, which has obvious repercussions on the possibility of a video game reception theory, a cybersemiotics-inspired model has been proposed that combines the natures of machine and player to account for the dynamic relationship between both systems in the video game's unique system (Vargas, 2018; Vargas & Navarrete, 2019).

Both criticisms can be extended to proceduralism, an epiphenomenon of game studies in the context of discourse analysis. Ultimately, its comprehension of video games as processes that can be analysed in ideological terms results in a preservation of the *status quo*, due to leaving the player with the accommodative impression, inherent to the postmodern progressive middle class, of merely capturing and comprehending a message ideologically in accordance with their own expectations. It is worth understanding, therefore, that the separation of the orders of aesthetics and politics that operates in liberal democracies stops any effect on proceduralist logic that may go beyond the sterile "conquest of the concept", limited to the self-complacent context of the game; and therefore, the well-known website *Games for Change* would shed light on an improbable proposition with its name.

Overall, in recent years Bruno Latour's actor-network theory has been constantly called upon in order to consider the sociological, political and narrative repercussions resulting from the agency of gamified processes (Casey, 2014; Conway, 2014; Jenssen & Jenssen, 2014; Barranco, 2016; Muriel & Crawford, 2018a, 2018b; Vargas, 2019). Likewise, efforts have been made to define new video game ontologies that surpass the classical notions (Vargas, 2016; Larsen & Walther, 2019). In all cases there is the underlying need to discover new orders of meaning that can even transcend the very concept of the video game; a medium that, although industrially established, should not be interpreted as immutable or eternal, especially considering the liquid digital context from which it emerged and which currently includes it as just one more element.

VIDEO GAMES AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

With his actor-network theory, Bruno Latour aims to apply Deleuzian concepts to holistic social models of decentralised causality. Although the statistical tradition, organised around conventions and stable categories, was entering into crisis from the 1980s, such an application of the decentralised model seemed to be facilitated by the neoliberal trend towards predictive calculation, aimed less at representing reality but at acting on it (Cardon, 2015). What matters in this new pragmatics is not the value of the figure, but the evolution of the value measured between two records; i.e., the evaluation of its transformation, with regard to its modification, in market terms.

The fact that the Internet's predictive algorithmics may lead to the automation of processes in the web 4.0 version is an effect resulting from the growing complexity of a system that the markets need to control. However, it would be not only reductionist but outright incorrect to affirm that the neoliberal decentralised control tactics directly correspond to Deleuzian notions regarding sense: it is rather the opposite. Anarcho-capitalism, in effect, tends towards the centreless structure of the rhizome (something that Foucault himself already noted with his denouncement of the capillarisation of power in late capitalism), but this only confirms Deleuze and Guattari's idea that the capitalist machinery tends to decodify the social order with the aim of accelerating its productive processes. The connection, however, may be useful when establishing an initial approach between the Deleuze's philosophy of sense and the digital realities.

What Deleuze calls transcendental empiricism is the affirmation that there is a prior logic to any connection that can be humanly imagined, and that this logic is what makes it possible for the subject based on sensory experience. Therefore, contrary to Cartesian or Kantian idealism, what mediates in the constitution of the subject is not the subject itself, but the experience. It could be said that, according to Deleuze, transcendental philosophy is deprived of the traditional inconsistency of the founding myths, which always assume God to be the transcendental entity prior to the world. The conditions in which such a subject is founded through experience (or, in the terms of Marxist theory, the "relations of production" which make the subject possible) are the starting point for all Deleuzian theory on sense. Therefore, this external nature imagined by a philosophy without a subject establishes the concern regarding the inhuman, key for understanding post-structuralist thought and its postmodern derivations.

There are three concepts on which Deleuze bases his particular logic: series, event and sense. A series should be understood as a *variation* independent from (and prior to) objects and intents, and not limited by these. Meanwhile, there is variation, synthesis and therefore structuring of series. Thus, the series can be defined as a disjunctive synthesis that occurs on various pathways, through two sides of reality that are interdependent but which cannot be reduced to the other: sense and expression. The event is the *modulation* of series that are in progress and constantly changing, and it implies a selection (meaning, the emergency of a series, not an intentional "choice") with two aspects: something that repeats a series but which is also transformed by it. Lastly, Deleuze understands sense as an alteration in the intensity (difference) between given values; in other words, the *introduction* of meaning to a neutral system, not the meaning itself.

The event must not be understood therefore as something that interrupts, but as the alteration of the differential intensities (and therefore the sense) that this interruption triggers in a series. The awareness of this aspect of transformation "prior to things", on which experience is founded, is the sign of a modernity that is being extinguished. In "I Saw the Whole Thing" (Alfred Hitchcock, 1962), episode 4 of the first season of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, there are several witnesses to a car accident. The driver flees and the motorcyclist who is struck dies. The following day, a man goes to the police station to confess that he was driving the vehicle that struck the motorcyclist and adds that, although he did flee due to panic, he had obeyed the traffic light that ordered him to stop, therefore he was not responsible for the accident. During the story, which occurs almost entirely within a courtroom, the five witnesses for the prosecution take their turn. Each one of them is convinced that they witnessed the driver being in the wrong, but ultimately, due to the subjective circumstances revealed through questioning, none of them have the sufficient capabilities to render the testimony reliable.

The dramatic framework that Hitchcock uses in this case, following the trigger of the accident, is showing the conditions of sense that result from modulations in at least five different series. The term

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“showing” is used here rather than “representing” as the repercussions of these alterations of sense are suspended contingencies in the legal relationship, and therefore subject to a temporary halt. Unlike what occurs in his films, such as *Vertigo* (1958) or *Psycho* (1960), the situation that affects the story is not represented, meaning that it is not included in the narrative’s linear subjectivity by adopting forms that are more or less visible to the viewer, but instead it is shown in its programmatic bareness. As Wittgenstein indicates in point 4.0312 of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, “the logic of the facts cannot be represented” (1922, p. 42). At the end of the episode, there is a new twist which verifies this even more if the status of the above as a *dispositif* is appropriate: the person who said they were the driver of the car that resulted in the accident was not even behind the steering wheel; the true occupant was his wife, who accelerated and fled the scene of the event due to imminently giving birth. In an acute comment acting as a prelude to the postmodern condition, the observed object, the only one that could provide any objectivity, is the one that is most absent of all: there are only versions that echo the sense of the eventuality.

What is offered in “I Saw the Whole Thing” is the X-ray of an event that would end up crystallising into a visual-dramatic motif. The significance of the car accident in films such as *Bittermoon* (Roman Polanski, 1992), *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 1996), *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), *Amores Perros* (Alejandro G. Iñárritu, 2000), *Mulholland Drive* (David Lynch, 2001), *No Country for Old Men* (Joel & Ethan Coen, 2007) or *Joker* (Todd Phillips, 2019) reveals a constant in postmodern cinema, concerned with possibility and contingency. The car, a common symbol of American individualism and virility, could be identified as the technological and accelerated witness of that same reason for contingency, the obscure and chaotic reverse of comprehension of reality in terms of contemplation and simulation (Baudrillard, 1988). The collision of two vehicles provides equanimity to the parties which focuses the significance on the crash itself, meaning, on that which is not found in the object in any way, what Deleuze, recalling the stoics, calls “the incorporeal”, the attribute, as opposed to the quality of the object in itself. In this regard, speculative realism theorist Reza Negarestani reflects on the repercussions of “Hidden Writings” in narrative orders:

In addition to being the manifest symptoms of other ongoing plots, plot holes originate from pseudonymity, anonymity and deliberate distortions linked to issues of authorship usually associated with Hidden Writings. Shifting voices, veering authorial perspectives, inconsistent punctuations and rhetorical divergences bespeak a crowd at work, one author multiplied into many. In fact, mis-authorial problems which are usually associated with Hidden Writings give rise to tendrilled plots as new narratives spreading out from the surface plot in all directions; plots capable of seizing the surface story or the textual structure from the dominant authorial space (2008, p. 75).

The relocation of the issue of sense into difference itself, into the “gap” (the nothing by which the system is produced), and its ability to cover multiple series in various directions at the same time, is literalised in the video game. Barranco (2014) considers this subject with the example of the independent title *Don’t Look Back* (Cavanagh, 2009). In it, the player takes part in what appears to be a classic dungeon side-scroller game, with a character faced with various creatures; the player is not told the purpose of their adventure at any time, a purpose that they end up inferring, precisely, by resorting to a rule: when they reach the end of their journey, once they have overcome the potential endpoints along the way that represent the enemies of the various phases/screens, the player finds what is established by the video game’s design as what they were seeking from the start of the adventure: an evanescent figure approaches

the avatar and follows where it goes, which is a return to the starting point, facing towards the left. The player does not take long to notice that, if their avatar turns towards the new presence (meaning to the right, as it must be remembered that this is a 2D platform video game), the latter disappears into the air with a sigh. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is therefore announced in a rule, that of the *prohibition of the gaze*, a ploy that, as Barranco adduces, institutes the rule as directly narrative and results in all the elements observed to that point attracting a new meaning. The rule, concludes the author, does not define the story of the gameplay, *but the story of the game*.

The rule is, in strict terms, an absence that organises the reality of a system. It is not found in the object but as the incorporeal¹, or in other words, as the consequence of an action. Therefore, the specific capacity that the video game has, through the automation of its productive-narrative relationships, to promote the emergence of systems with non-linear series (defined, but not necessarily determined, by rules and mechanics) in view of a modulating event, is a feature that establishes a radical difference compared to classical games, played in the actual dimension and which reduce the virtual dimension to the necessary minimum to subsist as games. Although there is an entire range of video game genres that insist on an understanding of the game as a state machine (the most progressive ones based on established teleologies for fixed achievements to be unlocked), the particularity provided by the algorithmic nature of the medium makes it susceptible to potentialities in the order of the event, that are today beginning to be noted.

The video game *Baba is You* (Hempuli Oy, 2019) provides a very deliberate example of this type of potentiality. In this game, the rules are written into the game's interface itself in the form of brief propositions: "rock is push", "flag is win", "Baba is you", "crab is defeat", etc. This representation, often used in early video games, is shown to be particularly innovative when the player realises that they can push around the subjects and predicates of each proposition and change their positions, creating new rules: only in this way will they be able to solve the puzzles proposed by the game. In this manner, situations that are somewhat bizarre can occur, such as when the player, who has put together the rule "rock is you", stops controlling the avatar and begins to control, as a single being, all the rocks shown on the screen. *Baba is You* poses the possibility that the mechanics (the /being-able-to-do/ what the system enables the player to do) consist themselves of being able to alter the rules (the /having-to-do/ what the system imposes on the player). In other words, it simulates the conditions of an event, if defining an event as the alteration of the relations of sense that trigger new series.

In Deleuzian terms, that "everything comes to the surface" is one of the conditions of flat ontology that defines the media of the digital era. At its heart, this rethinking of the analytical categories could already be found in the archaeology of Foucault, methodological historicism consisting of considering the supra-structural effects, located in the cultural order, in order to understand the alterations of infrastructure; also recognising the lack of structurality of the structure that through Derrida began the ethical turn towards deconstructivism. The lack of ethical distinction between the virtual and the actual is in the latter instance due to the stoics, which, as Deleuze recalls, name any cause, in the realm of attributes, as "quasi-causes", that have an anti-platonic regime of reality, in which the original causes define the qualitative states of things, but not the extra-being of the incorporeal.

This understanding entails a fundamental paradox (that the event repeats a series and is also transformed by it) which Deleuze resolves by invoking two simultaneous and mutually exclusive temporalities: Chronos and Aión. The former, sufficient or insufficient, defined by a univocal and linear present that can be articulated using the gerund of the verb ("doing"), is a present in which the possibilities of past and future converge; the second, too much or too little, which is beyond the human measure, is a "pure"

time, of the idea, which makes the event possible insofar as in it the verbs are in the infinitive (“to do”), and therefore they are freed to an indeterminate combination.

With this understanding of the temporal forms, Deleuze initiated, among other philosophical arguments, an ethics of revolution and a perspective on art. While Chronos’ time leaves us without time, as it imprisons us in structures that are infinitesimally subdivided that profit from the possibilities of the subject (past and future) and reinvert these possibilities in an absolute present, that of Aiôn frees us to a time without measure, making discovery, contingency, imagination and convulsion possible. There would be no revolution possible without Aiôn, as there would be no order possible without Chronos, and both times coexist in the possibility of existence as temporal versions of Dionysus and Apollo. The theatrical experiences of Jan Fabre, of increasingly extensive durations (the performance of his work *Mount Olympus* lasted for 24 hours), entail an understanding of time as Aiôn, of infinite repetition. This is also the case of the anthropological idea of the festival, as defined by Robert Caillois (1950). Likewise, the absorption of an interesting film or reading (which is the same as saying “contingent”) brings us precisely to this time without temporality (structure without structurality), of the unconscious and free combination, in which time passes without passing: “do not watch the clock” means, literally, do not pay attention to Chronos, dedicate yourself to being a viewer of expectation itself.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the Ideal Game to the Video Game-Idea

The extent to which Chronos and Aiôn can present themselves in a video game is, admittedly, a question worth asking; in particular considering that the temporality of video games is, as a starting point, a variable to be programmed and at the same time a free solution, as the act of playing has no assigned durations. Deleuze, alluding to the games that occur throughout Carroll’s work, refers to the possibility of the “ideal game”. This would be radically distinguished from the “known games”, characterised by: a) a group of categorical rules, b) some defined hypotheses that divide chance into degrees of probability, and with it into gains and losses, c) organisation into distinct turns or throws that trigger an individuation of the cases and d) the ultimate consequence of victory or defeat. In the case of chess, the group of rules would be: the ultimate aim (checkmate) and the possible movements of each piece; the defined hypotheses would be the conditionality of those movements, as depending on the chosen strategy there are repercussions regarding the other strategies and vice-versa (quasi-causes); and these repercussions trigger the various possible plays (cases), which result in the player’s victory or defeat.

In the ideal game, by contrast: a) there are no founding rules, as each player invents their own; b) the group of plays affirms chance, which infinitely and eternally branches out in each one rather than numerically dividing into plays with differing probabilities; c) each play is a series as a distribution of singularities, but the plays as a whole are in themselves the only play of all the singularities; and d) such a game most closely corresponds to the reality of thought than to any current reality. An example of the logic of the ideal game can be offered through an extensive understanding of the game of chess: specifically, in the particular case of Bobby Fischer, winning an important chess match meant losing an even bigger game, as after winning the world championship in 1972 against Boris Spaski he withdrew from international championships due to an irreducible fear of subsequent defeats. The rule, therefore, creates itself in the ideal game (meaning that the game transcends the “known games”) as a function of

a context of chance which becomes indefinitely established, and in which the ramifications are at the same time eternal and changing. In a game such as this, defeat and victory have no meaning: any notion of both is voided by their repercussions, product of the fundamental affirmation of chance. Aiôn, therefore, is subdivided by Chronos and in turn subdivides Chronos, and its differentiations are paradoxically eternal, insofar as they have possibilities the unfolding of which will make new actions possible, which in turn will determine new eternal differentiations.

This means that if in the “known games” there is a clear predominance of Chronos over Aiôn, the domain of one of the two over the other lacks sense in the ideal game. To a certain extent, Deleuze offers a model of analysis for Heidegger’s well-known proposal: “While God plays the world comes to be”, which came to amend Leibniz’s judgement: “When God calculates the world is made” (Heidegger, 1955-56/1991). In the experimental video game *Everything* (David OReilly, 2017), the player can play as any object in the game, individual or collective, and control it through worlds that vary from the subatomic to the astronomic, interacting with other objects and playing them through contact, creating small events that provoke a generalised becoming-series. In the case of *Everything*, it could offer a first approximation to the general concept of the ideal game; however, its repercussions on the order of the event remain limited, programmed (subdivided) by the possibility of taking control of various objects through contact. Thus, although there is not actually a probabilities-based division in the game, nor with it the possibility of victory or defeat, there is very specific rule that makes possible a very specific becoming-series, based on a scalar model. A similar example is offered in the video game *Entire Screen on One Game* (Tom Murphy VII, 2014), a side-scrolling fractal game in which the player controls a square in a simple geometric environment. Its special feature, and what makes any idea of victory or defeat irrelevant, is that shortly after starting the game the representation framework that it contains is revealed as being contained in another square that appears, and which is also controlled by the player. This idea is infinitely repeated; thus, each square contains in itself all the prior dimensions and every movement the player makes affects all the squares. The scalar model of *Everything* gives way to a fractal model in *Entire Screen on One Game*, but in both cases a form of experience is established that has more to do with the complacent bourgeois contemplation of the simulation than with a true appreciation of the event. Something similar occurs in the case of the video game-installation *For(){}* (Brent Watanabe, 2013), where the elimination of the general rule, or main challenge, results in an atomisation of the rules, reassigned as micro-mechanics with no more sense than that of the permanence of the avatar until the birth of a new generation: the diversification of mechanics with no ultimate aim can serve as a single performative metaphor for the gratuity of existence, which abstracts the model to the purely relational, but yet anticipates the untouchable nature of the virtual regime.

As previously indicated with the example of *Baba is You*, there is the possibility of a game in which the alteration of rules from the mechanics can take place, something which would be similar to the subdivisive capacity of Aiôn in the Deleuzian model of the ideal game. That, however, remains an example of this idea of reality that is too “naive”, due to being aimed at, once more, the possibility of victory or defeat. Stochastic logics that are not explained or suggested, various mechanics, the gamification of glitches, random alterations or obscuring the game’s aims are some of the practices that, making explicit a paradigm of complexity, characterise video games such as *Black Lodge 2600* (Jak Locke, 2011), *Fjords* (Kyle Reimergartin, 2013) or *Strawberry Cubes* (Loren Schmidt, 2015). Worlds in which the virtual order is not expressed or probably recognisable, and in which therefore the player finds themselves naked, without a handhold, in a radically strange level, purely superficial. Strangeness must necessarily be a quality of the ideal game, as cultural games exist precisely to remove it; and with them one of

course signs up not only for the games as the formalised systems of incentives studied by game theory, but for the very “language games” in which Wittgenstein found the exception and limiting of any logic that was assumed to be universal: meaning language itself and its mythical and institutional productions.

The automation of these complex worlds, in which chance is established, in which the various elements, far from being defined factors in a causal structure, enter into quasi-cause relationships, in which there are no defined rules or numerical division of probabilities, and in which the combination of plays, as they are disconnected from a later teleology, is in itself a single turn, could be approximated to the notion of a Deleuzian ideal game. The emergency, as the ability of a system to behave in a manner not defined in its rules, would characterise, therefore, in its purest form, the ideal dimension of the game; however not an emergency in the terms until now understood by game studies (Juul, 2002), but a disconnection of the formalism of game studies: not “emerging” from a system of pre-established rules, but “immanent” to the affirmation of singularities: not qualitative, but incorporeal. If the known games and video games make a distinction, through Aristoteles, of a difference between substance and accident (in computing terms, programme and playable objects), the ideal game distinguishes, according to the stoics, between objects (understood themselves as substance) and quasi-causes.

Nevertheless, the possibility of organising a game in these terms likewise produces the question of the type of player who would be suitable for such a game. What subject is produced by such an understanding of games? Without a doubt, it is not a subject established by any causal relationship, because the notion of the game in which it is inserted transcends the asymmetrical, idealistic relationship of subject-object causalities. It is therefore worth thinking about a pure abductive subject, in which the interpretive exercise would be subject to a permanent updating process: a game version of Nietzsche’s *übermensch*, and therefore the stoic proposition of the domain of will over the material elements of disturbance. The player, therefore, would carry out the function of a Chronos who simultaneously would have to recombine the playable effects to conquer their own *Aiôn*. Navarrete (2014) proposes that abduction is the reasoning that can most closely be associated with the video game medium, and Vargas & Navarrete (2019) distinguish between three manners of abductive thought (overcodified, undercodified and creative), of which the third would characterise the most unclassifiable examples of games. Meanwhile, accepting that these examples contain the possibility of the game as ideal, it remains necessary to break down what makes the video game-idea specific, i.e. the video game in its most elemental logic, beyond the well-known interactivity and the abductive dimension resulting from it, the latter shared with experimental works with highly restricted interpretation paradigms.

The video game *45 guys I brain* (Armel J. Gibson, 2012) offers an opportunity to analyse this issue. The player controls the journey, through a cornered area, of a crew of forty-five avatars, each of which responds identically to the orders given. The scarce driving sophistication of the horde, and the intricacies of the setting, mean that many components end up scattered, ousted from the perimeter of control of a player who at all times must try to maintain the unity of the group. In the impossible balance between the player’s intention and the technological limits imposed, a temporal suspension takes place that unifies, not the conduct of the group’s members, but the pure reality of movement without a coordinate. If Deleuze understood space and time in the cinema (standardised around the 24fps film transport mechanism) as earlier medial and virtual examples of actual movement (1983, pp. 9-10), the algorithmic condition also assigns movement to virtuality, the predecessor of any update to the representable order. The consequence of the inhuman condition implied by this temporal suspension is the deceleration imposed on the player, meaning the production of a human experience of displeasure.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The Meme and Contingency: The Case of Elsagate

The video game-idea would therefore place movement, as it corresponds to the player to exercise it, in a virtual dimension prior to any contextualisation. This “pure movement” would constitute in the digital the very possibility of events (understood, let us remember, as alterations in the intensities of relations of sense), occurring through redefinitions of the connections between objects, which would reconfigure the possibility of the game and the game as a possibility².

At one point in the statement about the ideal game, Deleuze makes the following observation:

The ideal game of which we speak [...] can only be thought as nonsense. But precisely for this reason, it is the reality of thought itself and the unconscious of pure thought. [...] This game, which can only exist in thought and which has no other result than the work of art, is also that by which thought and art are real and disturbing reality, morality, and the economy of the world (1969/1990, p. 60).

In the terms introduced by the digital era, and specifically the predictive algorithms of the Web 3.0, it is worth understanding certain memetic events as forms of this “pure thought”, or logic of the unconscious that crosses through the series of thought and makes this possible. This is the case with Elsagate, a viral phenomenon that occurred between 2014 and 2017 consisting of the fan-made production of strange, disturbing or sexualised content, featuring children’s characters and labelled as suitable for all ages. This content was in principle limited to a format of 2D animations that were created quickly, with predefined movements and backgrounds, which provoked certain narrative constants. The result of these videos was the foundation for some highly specific forms, which suggested a certain creative automatism due to the influence of the IT application with which they were created, and which later were imitated in silent videos featuring masked interpreters on YouTube channels such as *Webs & Tiaras* or *Toy Monster*, stop motion productions, and even flash games such as *Elsa Eye Surgery*.

The production of this strange content was based on winning visits with the aim of increasing popularity and therefore publicity revenues. As a result, the media began by giving the phenomenon polite coverage, to within the space of a couple of years echoing the growing concern of parents due to content that was clearly increasingly inappropriate. The range of channels that took part in one way or another in the spirit of Elsagate, inserted into the Kids TV app belonging to YouTube itself through the algorithms’ reading of the key words associated with the videos forced the video social network to take restrictive measures and demonetise content associated with the phenomenon.

One article in *The Verge* points out the unconscious dimension of the main reasons for Elsagate: “Peeing, pooping, kissing, pregnancy, and the terrifying notion of going to the doctor and getting a shot. These are the Freudian concerns which young children find endlessly fascinating, frightening, and hilarious” (Popper, 2017). However, here the future inherent to the unconscious is not yet assimilated to the narrative of the story as in Carroll’s work (in the phenomenon of YouTube the story is limited to clichéd statements with a confused tone, as created by Markov machines), but to the productive act itself. Without restrictions of space and time, Elsagate seems to demonstrate that “pure movement”, understood as distance between events, underlies the logic of the digital, from the privacy of the connection with a video game to the collectivity of the sociology of a viral phenomenon of a transmedia nature. In Deleuze’s words:

An Epistemology of the Event for the Digital Media

Each thought emits a distribution of singularities. All of these thoughts communicate in one long thought, causing all the forms or figures of the nomadic distribution to correspond to its own displacement, everywhere insinuating chance and ramifying each thought, linking the “once and for all” to “each time” for the sake of “all time” (1969/1990, p. 60).

The example of Elsagate not only integrates into the transmedia logics the “aionic” potential that, as previously stated, can be found in avant-garde video games, but also provides a window to the future of the videoludic medium in particular and of transmedia in general. Inasmuch as in this case the restrictions of “known video games” to a specific programming have disappeared, this phenomenon represents a privileged chance for observing the behavior of becoming-series in the digital media. When Marie-Laure Ryan states that “the potential appeal of a narrative message is not necessarily realized in performance” (1991, p. 149), she differentiates clearly between the domains of plot (tellability) and discourse (performance). Nevertheless, this distinction that the author allocates to the comprehensive environment of transmedia narratives ceases to be operational here, since in this case the conditions of plot *are* themselves the conditions of discourse. The simultaneous ongoing of sense and expression in series is structured by the algorithmic criteria of pure signifier, that human intervention, far from assessing or actualizing on their own terms, merely imitates when their turn comes. The viral potential of the result (strictly, a self-created universe) points to the birth, or at least to the brief glance, of a new form of transmedia that comprises the digital as something beyond the margins of representation, in other words, more consistent with its simulative and generative nature.

It is certainly worth putting into perspective the ontological exemplary nature of a phenomenon, that of Elsagate, the aim of which is financial; however, it is this nature that provoked a series the variations of which went beyond permutations around a single aim that are common to viral phenomena. The production of improbability, which Vilém Flusser (1985) already indicated as an ontological function of the technical image, according to this author expresses the symptom of a limiting stage of social entropy, in which resorting to developing improbabilities would intend to save human culture from absolute progression and thermodynamic death. The attack on “common sense” that we may find in these strange YouTube videos would be in the final instance the capitalist appropriation (as such, always preserving the *status quo*) of a dimension that Deleuze understood as revolutionary. In any case, the phenomenon gives us, at the very least, an interpretive consideration: Elsagate can be understood as the correlate, in the schizophrenic society of simulation and performance (the society of the reduction of sense and of the maximum acceleration of the quantitative gain), of what for the neurotic Victorian society, that of restriction and sublimation, was *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

CONCLUSION

The creative developments of the video game have in the last few years come to show the insufficiency of epistemological approaches limited by structuralism and the first cybernetic. This text, defining the issues on the sense that Deleuze unveiled in his post-structuralist semiotics, has problematised the manner in which, in the simulation devices, the measure of the infrastructural can become removed from the narrative metaphysics inherited from previous media. If the cinematic fictions of postmodernity represent incorporeals as phenomena of collision (in certain extreme circumstances, managing to suspend their own representation), the video game already lives performatively in the logic of the incorporeal. With

this, it can be established that Deleuzian thought regarding sense makes possible a new approach to the sociological and media particularities of the digital media, the hyperconnected and hyperaccelerated nature of which in the internet era gives them a new ontology, radically non-mechanistic.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Emergency: Theoretical concept of systems that refers to the capacity of a system to perform in a manner not anticipated in its rules.

Event: Philosophical concept from transcendental empiricism that refers to the modulation of series in progress and constantly altering.

Game studies: Group of academic studies that consider the issue of the video game from ontological, methodological or field theories perspectives.

Ideal game: Philosophical concept from transcendental empiricism that refers to a game form of conceptually inverting the arrangements common to conventional games.

Incorporeal: Stoic philosophical concept that refers to the consequence of, or on, an object, as something opposed to its properties.

Post-structuralism: Philosophical reaction, the origins of which are usually dated to 1966, to the methodological ambitions of structuralism, and which aims to confront the latter with the contradictions of its idealist inheritance.

Transcendental empiricism: Philosophy introduced by Gilles Deleuze which focuses on the conditions of the experience and considers the possibility of formalising a logic prior to the subject.

ENDNOTES

¹ Strictly speaking, as will be understood later, this is about the simulation of an incorporeal and not an incorporeal itself. In the discussed example, it appears appropriate that the prohibition of the gaze, as indicated by Bateson (1987), is based on the same principle of absence (that of the gaze, and with it the admission that what is visible is useful to social order) to institute an entire system of differences that characterise a culture.

² It is worth clarifying that space in video games is not necessarily Euclidean nor is time necessarily continuous, and this imposes a radical differentiation compared to other discourses from a simulation paradigm: although other visual media can “represent” non-conventional spaces and times, the video game is the only one that can “simulate them” and make them interactive, i.e. “perform them.”

Section 2

Social Media, Marketing Online, and Digital Promotion Strategies

Chapter 10

Symbolic Consumption in the Online World: The Construction of Social Identity and Fashion Influencers

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ABSTRACT

Symbolic consumption is defined as a process by which people use symbols—products and brands—to construct and communicate ideas about themselves; to transmit identity on the social stage. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the phenomenon of fashion influencers for a deeper understanding of the concept of symbolic consumption; a phenomenon that has not received the attention it deserves. Fashion influencers share their outfits, purchases and ideas online and they inspire other people to imitate the way they dress and therefore drive the way their followers consume. Influencers participate in symbolic consumption because they select brands that coincide with the images they have of themselves or that they wish to convey to their followers. Fashion influencers offer themselves as sources of inspiration for followers who aspire to be like them by buying and consuming the same brands and products. To support our thesis, we rely on a case study of Chiara Ferragni, who won the number one place on the Forbes list of fashion influencers.

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INTRODUCTION

Technological advances have posed a challenge to traditional advertising models by making it more difficult to connect with audiences. Traditional channels of promotion have lost their effectiveness as the audience has been saturated with marketing. As a result, communication efforts have readjusted in order to find new, non-intrusive ways of reaching the consumer (Halvorsen et al., 2013). Within this paradigm, the rise and consolidation of formulas developed through social networks stand out (Gillin, 2009) and they are presented as opportunities for the development of brands and the stimulation of individual purchasing decisions (Jiyoung & Ko, 2010, p. 166). Around last decade “[...] social media has become an effective marketing tool, it has not only created a new dimension of marketing but has also provided many opportunities to the marketers [...]” (Ahmad, Salman & Ashiq, 2015, p. 1). This perspective has a direct impact on the recipients of said advertising. The public is significantly affected by these new strategies which results in an enormously empowered consumer (Pérez-Curiel & Luque-Ortiz, 2017) who finds traditional formats and advertising messages obsolete and actively searches for alternatives to discern, compare and adopt new products.

In the case of the fashion industry, there is an increase in the use of social networks to make designers and brands more visible in the marketplace (Wiedmann, Hennigs & Langner, 2010). The industry has reinvented itself through an accelerated process that creates a scenario in which designers and consumers forge relationships, generating engagement that benefits both brands and individuals. These relationships are based on the recognition of a consumer who actively contributes to the image and reputation of the brand (Fondevila Gascón, 2015). Users have the possibility to make themselves heard. Thanks to social networks, users’ opinions and appreciations gain legitimacy with fashion firms, fostering the development of competition and concern for consumer ratings (Pérez-Curiel & Luque-Ortiz, 2017). The fashion industry is especially sensitive to comments and opinions as they directly affect the perception that other consumers have about the brands themselves. This practice is currently one of the most reliable and effective sources of information and recommendation among consumers and buyers (Castelló, 2016).

Social networks are a natural milieu for opinion leaders to communicate their ideas (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). The development of this type of digital strategy is included in the academic literature and noted for having an influence on marketing (Castelló-Martínez & Del Pino-Romero, 2015) in situations where social networks have emerged as advertising spaces through active users, such as opinion leaders, prescribers and influencers (Castelló, 2016). One of the issues that determines the effectiveness of influence marketing is precisely how to identify the influential personalities that are capable of generating positive and natural engagement with a target audience thus leading to a ‘non-promotional’ approach to marketing (Hall, 2016).

These high-profile users stand as the main agents of influence marketing. However, it is necessary to recognize that, although the influencer figure is identified as a new facet of marketing (Díaz, 2017), this kind of promotion is framed in the classical theory known as a ‘two step flow of communication’, which Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) refer to under the term ‘opinion leader’. Thanks to social networks, these prescribers manage to exert their influence through a leadership role based on everyday, casual, online interactions. In short, easy access to new communication channels not only causes a democratization of opinion leadership, but also necessitates a reconsideration of traditional marketing and communication plans which results in a massive production and transmission of information by users.

Fashion influencers offer an especially interesting case for addressing the notion of symbolic consumption. They share their latest looks or acquisitions on their social networks and inspire other people to

buy things. Our approach in this chapter is based on symbolic consumption as a process by which people use symbols -products and brands- to project identities on the social stage. In other words, consumer choices are made not only by considering a product's functional utility, but also by taking into account its symbolic meaning. Influencers participate in symbolic consumption because they select the brands that match the self-image they want to convey to their followers. At the same time, they serve as a source of inspiration for their followers, who consume the same brands or products to emulate the influencer.

The online environment is configured as ideal for symbolic consumption. According to Langner, Hennigs, and Wiedmann (2013, p. 31), people use their acquisitions to express their identities in the social context, creating labels by which they are socially classified. For example, by purchasing a certain car or clothing item you can signal social status or membership to a certain group. Buying and consuming behaviours can be interpreted as acts of communication. In this communication process, brands are used as symbols to convey messages loaded with meanings of intangible value.

The main objective of this study is to establish a connection between the figure of the influencer and symbolic consumption through social networks. We intend to gain an understanding of the influence of marketing strategy by addressing the use of brands for communicative purposes. On this basis, we study the way in which fashion influencers are able to construct an image of themselves through their social networks and the symbolic consumption of brands associated with their personality and lifestyle.

INFLUENCERS AS AGENTS OF INFLUENCE MARKETING

Studies about influencers have recently been recognized by academic literature. Recent articles have included studies that focus on influencers in specific networks such as Instagram (Ramos-Serrano & Martínez-García, 2016), looking at their categorization from a taxonomic point of view based on their influence (Pedroni, 2016); or, specifically, in fashion research carried out by Navarro and Garcillán (2016) which focuses on fashion blogs. Other literature on the subject includes that of Jijoung and Ko (2010) which looks at the impact of social networks on the consumption of luxury fashion brands. Finally, recent research by Aguilera and Baños (2016) focuses on new digital users.

One of the main advantages of marketing strategies that involve influencers is their capacity to generate interaction and engagement between brands and consumers (cf. Castelló, 2016, p. 51). Thanks to the content they generate - usually paid content (Abidin, 2016) - microcelebrities (Senft, 2008) provide their followers with information about their personal and daily life while communicating their experiences and opinions about a product or brand (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). This recounting of daily life causes the consumer to perceive the influencer as a 'normal and ordinary' person who can be trusted (Díaz, 2017). The effectiveness of this strategy lies in the fact that the public seems to value the opinion of the influencer over that of the brand itself (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Langner, 2010).

However, the power of the brand still plays an important role. Brands have taken advantage of the boom in consumer empowerment by gaining the support of prescribers who effectively recommend their products. These prescribers manage to multiply the quality and scope of their advertising (Castelló, 2016). Indeed, brands increasingly focus their efforts on the so-called influencers because they manage to overcome the barriers imposed on traditional advertising strategies; thanks to their personal touch, they lend authenticity and credibility to the products. These influencers are able to break down consumer resistance to the advertising message (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang 2012).

Influence Marketing and Fashion Industry

The fashion industry has undergone a major change in the way it communicates its promotional messages due to the consolidation of the technological landscape (Ruiz, 2013). The sector has been deeply affected by the arrival of a variety of virtual platforms, particularly the first so-called personal blogs (Rowley, 2009). The advent of blogging forced fashion brands to adjust their content in order to adhere to the new rules of the environment. Fashion stands out as one of the industries most exposed to the activities of internet influencers (Pérez-Curiel & Sanz-Marcos, 2019). Thus, Abidin (2016) articulates that the term ‘influencer’ encompasses concepts such as microcelebrity or blogger, assuming a growing tendency in the use of influencers by fashion brands.

The success of the phenomenon has gone beyond measure in recent years due to the appearance of so-called ‘*It girls*’, referring to important advertising collaborators that star in countless fashion campaigns and manage to set fashion trends among their followers (cfr. Navarro & De Garcillán, 2016, p. 90). Although this market primarily attracts women (Abidin, 2016), the reach of these prescribers or influencers is massive; they effectively disseminate not only advertising messages, but also launch communications about corporate events, such as the release of new products or messages from the large fashion houses (Ahmad, Salman & Ashiq, 2015). The personal and charismatic style of many of these influencers generates organic engagement that transmits certainty and confidence to the audience when they make the decision to purchase something. This is to the benefit of both the brands, which take advantage of the prestige linked to the persona of the influencer, and to the influencer herself (Díaz Soloaga, 2014, p. 53).

Instagram stands out as one of the most popular social networks for the application of strategies using influencers (Pérez & Luque, 2017). Above other industries, fashion finds in this social network an optimal way to connect with its audience (TrackMaven, 2016). Instagram is perceived as the best channel for promoting brands through influencers (cfr. Segarra-Saavedra & Hidalgo-Marí, 2018, p. 322).

THE SYMBOLIC ASPECT OF CONSUMPTION

Brands are systems of meaning that contain relevant values for consumers which weighs heavily on whether a customer considers purchasing one item over another, beyond the mere functional aspects of the product. According to Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy and Pervan (2015, pp. 4-6), the brand has a symbolic function that offers the consumer a decrease in the risk of the purchase choice. The current context is defined as a symbolic economy, commodities can become symbols full of meaning (Atkin, 2004). The current trend is to understand symbolic value as the key to brand differentiation and that “every [marketing] manager is de facto meaning-manager” (McCracken, 2005, p. 175). Therefore, current brand communications tend to focus on meaning more than on basic product performance. The consumption of goods is really a consumption of meanings.

According to Oswald (2012, p. 44), the brand provides consumers with intangible benefits, specifically, the satisfaction of needs —such as the needs for status, self-image, and love— in symbolic terms. Among these needs is the transmission of identity values through the meanings that the brand represents. These meanings constitute the brand’s true competitive advantage as they add value to the product.

Symbolic consumption is the process by which people give meaning to products and objects (Batey, 2016), which occurs through consumer experiences as brands are inserted in the social and cultural context,

where the exchange of products gives way to the exchange of meanings. In addition to the acquisition of an object, symbolic consumption includes any form of expression in which the brand, as a vehicle for the transmission of meanings, is the protagonist. It is an expressive and interpretive process aimed, fundamentally, at the construction of identity. As Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan state, “symbolic brands do the talking for us. They are used to define our very being” (2015, p. 31). According to Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1998), consumers try to build their identities using the symbolic meaning of brands, along with other resources.

The experiences of consumption represent a complex process of the construction of meaning. Symbolic consumption is a specific way in which people relate to goods, brands or experiences of consumption in order to project their selves before others in a context of social interaction. Beyond choosing brands that fit with their values, consumers try to build a self-image based on the expression of the meanings contained in them. The key to symbolic consumption is to project these meanings in the social context.

Brands constitute a symbolic vocabulary through which people communicate. A desired self-image is transmitted through consumption behaviour, which is often linked to the individual’s desire to be identified with a certain social group. Specifically, the preference for a brand is determined by its ability “to endorse the consumer’s own personality (identification) or to bring the ideal, desired personality closer (aspiration)” (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009, p. 254). In that regard, Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan maintain that “the social-symbolic meanings of brands can be used to communicate to other people the kind of person we wish to be seen as” (2015, p. 52).

Thus, the satisfaction of psychosocial needs is another key to symbolic consumption. Under this perspective, it is essential to understand consumer behaviour as a process of meaning management marked by a search for experiences aimed at building and maintaining an identity. Buying behaviour implies, consciously or unconsciously, an expression of meanings associated with one’s identity. Symbolic consumption, therefore, works essentially at the social level, since it provides consumers with social benefits, as “to embellish or extend their identities, identify with a group, and mark transitions from one life stage to the next” (Oswald, 2012, p. 17). Hence, the management of symbolic meanings in the social context implies resorting to the cultural dimension of consumption. According to Batey (2016), the cultural and social value of consumption patterns requires understanding the way in which the social environment influences the choices and perceptions of individuals (also buying choices or brand perceptions). Consumers are clear that what they consume and how they consume helps them define their position in society. Within this process, the influencer figure has come into play in the last decade.

Symbolic Consumption and Reference Groups

Reference groups can determine consumption behaviour, because when a consumer wishes to integrate into a group or be associated with a certain group, s/he often tries to achieve this by imitating the group’s consumption patterns. In this way, reference groups—“social groups that are important to a consumer and against which he or she compares himself or herself” (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, p. 341)—have an immediate effect on consumptive behaviour. The individual uses certain products and brands to socially indicate which group s/he wishes others to recognize that s/he belongs to. The process would be the following: An individual intends to define his or her identity as being associated with a determined social group. Among the defining characteristics of the group is the preference for certain brands or products (whose associated meanings, in turn, fit with the group’s identity values). The individual, through the symbolic consumption of such brands or products, communicates in the social context the meanings

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associated with them. This process of meaning management leads, ideally, to the recognition by society that this individual belongs to that group (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Escalas & Bettman (2003, 2005), establish that consumers can appropriate the meanings of brands that are associated with reference groups. This appropriation is an essential means for the construction of the self. This establishes a 'self-brand connection' (2003, p. 341), which occurs as follows: People will choose the brands that allow them to express their association with certain groups. The meanings associated with the brand (including the use of the brand by the reference group) are inserted in their identities when the consumer recognizes a connection between themselves and some aspect of their egos. From this point of view, brand meanings are important because they help consumers build and express their inner selves: "consumers actively construct themselves using brand associations that arise through reference-group usage and the resulting self-brand connections" (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, p. 341).

Reference groups are used as sources of information to elaborate thoughts and develop behaviours, which inevitably determine the ways they consume. Taking these premises into account, brand management that recognizes the value of reference groups for their current or potential consumers can benefit from positive effects derived from strategic management that contemplates the meaning of products and brands. The 'self-brand connection' concept represents a key strategic value for developing audience engagement. The phenomenon described makes even more sense in the current context of social networks.

Symbolic Consumption and Social Networks

There is a connection between symbolic consumption and online social networks as an element of identity expression, based on the fact that people often express their identities through their possessions (Belk, 1988). New technologies make it possible to talk about online symbolic consumption. The processes and phenomena described above are transferred, following the same dynamic, to the digital context. In their social network profiles, people use brands as a symbolic vocabulary to communicate identity values to others. These values are oriented to the construction of the self or the association with a reference group.

However, there are new variables in this equation. Users of social networks have a more expansive audience when compared to the traditional social environment, since the audience of their personal profiles transcends the space-time limits that condition offline symbolic consumption. Information is shared with unknown people, the expression of meanings associated with brands is much more careful through the construction of sophisticated backgrounds and social validation is obtained through likes or comments. As we said, symbolic consumption works essentially at the social level and in contemporary societies, this 'social level' takes place, to a large extent, on digital social networks. The networks not only serve as a scenario upon which to share consumer experiences, but also offer a platform for discovering and finding reference groups and imitating their consumer behaviours. Social networks function, in this regard, as a virtually unlimited resource bank in which users are inspired to consume. Today, consumers are highly impacted by their digital environments. Information from social media is a major influence on consumer decision making (Stephen, 2016). Indeed, people define themselves vis a vis other people through consumption and they display this in a social context that is now digital. Users build digital identities by projecting similarities with other users (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) and this projection of identities in the digital world has an important connection to consumption (Schau & Gilly, 2003).

Luna-Cortés (2017) addresses the relationship between symbolic consumption and social networks, studying how they contribute to the construction of identity. According to the author, they work as tools that consumers use to show their consumer experiences to different groups and, therefore, represent an ideal opportunity for reinforcing their identities, because “documentation of personal experiences is one of the main reasons for the consumers’ use of digital social networks”; following the satisfaction of social needs: “the act of self-presentation through virtual social networks is motivated by the consumers’ need of belonging and their need for establishing statuses” (2017, p. 44). In this chapter we focus on Instagram for its ample potential for presenting the self. Instagram’s simple interface allows, at a glance, to observe how the individual projects a desired image of him or herself through images. The power of this social network lies precisely in the power of the image. The user can build complex scenarios replete with symbols and share photographs intended for an audience to build an image associated with their identity and lifestyle. Among these symbols, of course, are the brands.

The peculiarities of symbolic consumption, as it has been traditionally understood, expand in the online environment. The possibilities of expression increase as the audience multiplies and the reference groups gain strength by gaining visibility that would be practically impossible otherwise.

Symbolic Consumption and Fashion Influencers - A Case Study of Chiara Ferragni

The case of the Italian influencer Chiara Ferragni (@chiaraferragni) allows us to analyse the implications of symbolic consumption for the construction of the self in the online environment in relation to fashion. Ferragni’s profile is very interesting, as she has 16.5 million followers on Instagram. Harvard Business School dedicated a case study to Chiara in 2014 (Keinan, Maslauskaitė, Crener, & Dessain, 2015), so she has also been surveyed from an academic perspective. Additionally, it should be noted that according to Forbes magazine, the model ranked as the number one fashion influencer in 2017 (Forbes, 2019). Chiara Ferragni offers a clear example of an influence leader whose impact is developed through the Instagram platform.

What began in 2009 as a personal blog (Keinan et al., 2015) has now reached a level of celebrity and sway that it generates a revenue of millions of euros. In several interviews in fashion and beauty publications, Chiara Ferragni describes how fashion has always been one of her greatest passions. This enthusiasm materialized in the publication of photos and videos aimed to show her different looks and styles. The impact of her posts has reached such magnitude that exclusive luxury brands, including Balenciaga and Hermès, have collaborated with her, and her image has been used for important events such as the New York or Paris Fashion Weeks, the Cannes Festival and magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* (Farled, 2018). The community of followers that she has created on Instagram provides an extraordinary worldwide audience for the promotion of certain brands contributing to their image and reputation as Fondevila Gascón (2015) advanced. Her profile also serves as a go-to reference for configuring and projecting an identity and can be clearly recognised as a successful fashion Instagrammer (Wiedmann, Hennigs & Langner, 2010).

For the development of this case study, the authors focus on the analysis of three interrelated phenomena. Firstly, we study Chiara Ferragni as an influencer in the way she projects a personality and lifestyle, a series of determined values through her posts and the people and scenarios that appear in her photos. Secondly, we look at the brands she chooses for representing these values and the extent to which her personal values fit with the symbolic meanings contained in the brands. We examine if the brands

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are actively recommended or not. Finally, we describe the influencer as a person of reference, and we attempt to identify which parts of her personality and lifestyle are likely to be imitated by her followers.

Chiara Ferragni is a very active Instagrammer. In the biography section of her profile, she describes her philosophy towards life as being about love and she shares photographic documentation of her day to day. Additionally, she presents herself as the founder of three businesses connected to the world of fashion and beauty. In her highlighted stories you can find four sections: 'Leo', 'Business', 'Fede' and 'Wedding'. Therefore, she defines herself according to two fundamental pillars: family (her son and husband) and work, contributing this way to the idea of the effectiveness of her influence based on her close up with the audience provoking positive and natural engagement (Hall, 2016).

Chiara Ferragni projects the identity of the successful contemporary woman: she is a businessperson, mother and wife. However, her roles as wife and mother are not envisaged in the traditional role associated with the housewife. To the contrary, she represents her relationship with her husband as one being centred on friendship, unconditional love and fun. She presents motherhood as an experience to be enjoyed accompanied with her little son and her beloved husband, in Figure 1 she reflects her own concept of a carefree and distinctive modern family that poses spontaneously at any corner of their house. She presents herself, however, as an independent woman, since in a good part of the images she shares, she appears alone. All the photographs shared show Chiara herself, her husband and her son (in different combinations among these three individuals, either together or separately). If her family does not appear, Chiara appears in different settings, usually at home, at parties or on trips (restaurants, natural environments, clothing stores, swimming pools, etc.) As we can see on Figure 2, in these scenarios she usually portrays signs of her healthy and active lifestyle promoting her personality. The meanings that she projects on her personality through these images revolve around family, style, luxury and events. The value she places on family is communicated in the fact that she also shares photos of her mother and sister. Friends rarely appear, although other celebrities (like George Clooney or Penelope Cruz) do. It is noteworthy that she never shares images of places or objects.

Care is taken in the production aspect of the photographs. For example, the pictures are posed and seem to be taken by professional photographers as opposed to images taken with a smartphone. There are hardly any selfies and the images are high quality, which contributes to the presentation of Chiara being someone who belongs to a world of style and luxury. The images do not appear to be edited with popular apps, but with professional editing tools since the lighting or the locations seem to be perfectly selected (Figure 3). This carefulness contributes to communicate her identity elevating the style of her account to something more like a glossy magazine than a personal journal. Thus, Chiara is presented as a role model and at the same time as inaccessible. This is reflected in the fact that she does not usually engage in conversation with her followers, the captions on her photos are merely descriptions of the place she is and the brands she uses, which are accompanied by the use of hashtags. Less frequently, in some posts she may ask questions like 'How are you spending your Sunday?'

As described previously, Chiara participates in symbolic consumption activities in which she uses certain brands as symbols that communicate relevant aspects about herself. She uses different symbolic resources to project this image and lifestyle, which consist essentially of different scenarios and her clothes and accessories, following Belk's (1988) principle that people express their identities through their possessions. Because Chiara aspires to being associated with a life of luxury and travel, the brands she chooses to share on her Instagram profile have values that fit in with these meanings, thus using brands as a symbolic vocabulary through which she communicates with her audience (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). In addition to her own brands, she focuses exclusively on the fashion, beauty and the luxury

Figure 1. “Lello fotomodello. Pics by @tadyellow”

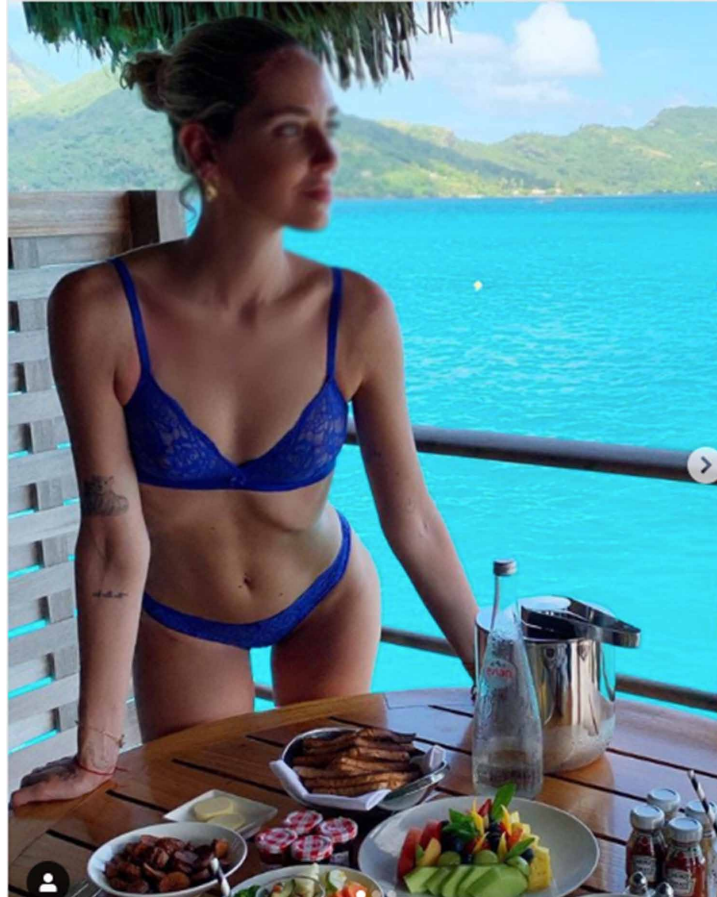


sector: Santoni, Furla, Dior, Pomellato, Fendi o Liu Jo are some of her most shown brands. She also collaborates with Intimissimi, Calzedonia, Amazon or Lancôme. Many of the brands she chooses are from Italian luxury firms. This promotion reveals the expression of identities through the consumption of the objects since these brands are vivid representations of symbols that aim to express certain aspects of the personality of the influencer (Langner, Hennigs & Wiedmann 2013).

Chiara often uses brands that are not accessible to the general public, either because of an elevated cost or because they are exclusive to stores which are only found in certain world capitals. Therefore, the meanings associated with these brands, such as elegance, exclusivity, timelessness or luxury, are transferred to Chiara through their symbolic consumption and projected before a worldwide audience by sharing them on her Instagram profile. By choosing these brands, Chiara is openly trying to integrate their meanings into her lifestyle and social networks (Oswald, 2012, p. 18), which become an important part of how she builds and communicates her social identity (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2015; Luna-Cortés, 2017). It is interesting to note that there are no predominant brands in the children’s or household sector (she collaborates, for example, with Westwing), which are two of the great pillars of the personality she conveys. Normally, she indicates which brands she is using in the photos where she appears alone, without her family. She usually talks about the brands she uses, without engaging

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Figure 2. “Bora Bora breakfast in my favorite @intimissimiofficial lace lingerie #intimissimi #chiaralovesintimissimi #advertising”

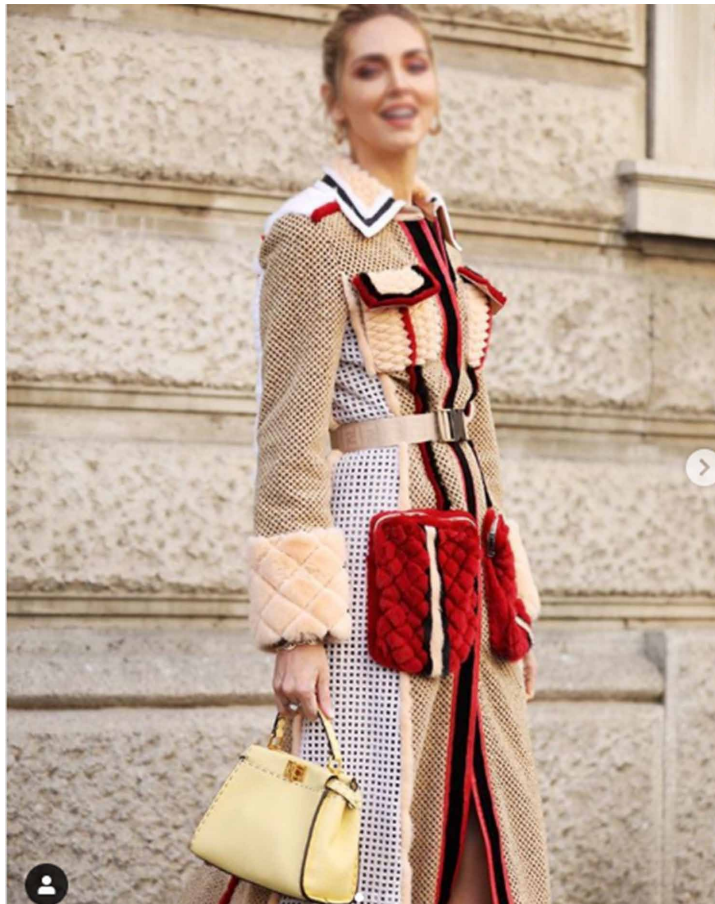


in detailed product recommendations. This is an indication that the symbolic consumption that Chiara develops on Instagram is aimed at associating her identity with the meanings contained in the brands, completely obviating the functional performance of the product. This may be due to the fact that clothing brands have a very similar product performance, the only means of differentiation is their associated meanings, which add real value to the product (Oswald, 2012).

In some publications she expressly indicates that she is participating in a campaign or collaboration (e.g., #advertising, #adv, #suppliedby) and an advertising style is observed. As represented in Figure 4, although the influencer is not actively engaging with the brand, the product seems to fit in her style in a natural way that reflects an ideal partner for the implicit meaning of her look. However, normally she only ‘informs’ which brands she is using. In the latter case, the audience understands that there is some kind of agreement between Chiara and the brand, but there is no obvious endorsement.

Thanks to the projection of these meanings, Chiara Ferragni serves as a role model and is capable of guiding the consuming behaviour of her audience. What she provides is an aspirational lifestyle. Luxury is always featured in Chiara’s photos; therefore, it is logical to expect her to serve as an inspiration for a public with higher purchasing power. As a fashion influencer, she embodies Escalas & Bettman’s

Figure 3. My @fendi look for the show #SuppliedByFendi”



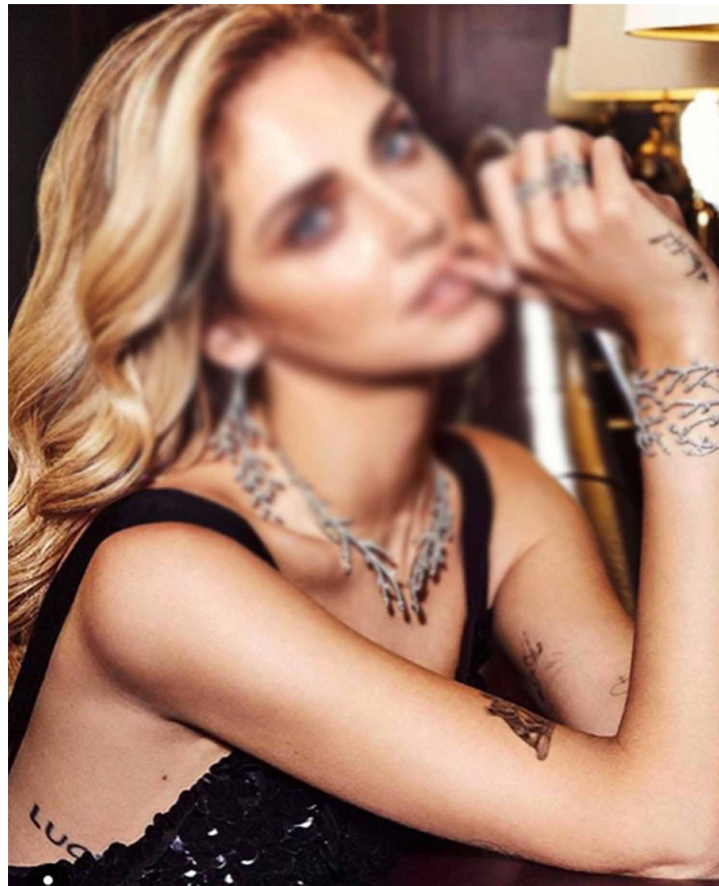
(2003) theories of the reference group, being indeed a ‘reference person’ that inspires individuals when it comes to consuming. Chiara offers a desirable lifestyle and users who want to be associated with what she represents would seek this association by purchasing the brands she consumes, assuming that that “consumers make brand choices to selectively communicate to others personal characteristics and/or desirable group identities” (Torelli, Keh & Chiu, 2010, p. 115). A less affluent public would obviously not be able to imitate this influencer’s lifestyle or associate with the meanings that she transmits, with the exception of the brands mentioned above. The glossy magazine presentation of her Instagram profile coincides with the low engagement between Chiara and her audience, since she does not usually answer the hundreds of comments generated by her posts, strengthening her inaccessible position.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The potential of social networks has been consolidated in recent years thanks to the implementation of strategies that base their success on influence marketing of which the protagonist of our analysis, Chiara Ferragni, is a clear example. The study of her official Instagram page highlights not only her ability to

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Figure 4. In my favorite @apmmonaco jewels #apmmonaco #advertising”.



influence her followers, but the scope and style of her posts also reveals an important value for brands. Through her social network, brands are able to reach their target audience in a more effective way. In this case, what appears to be just another Instagram profile turns out to be, in reality, an important promotional channel for high fashion and luxury brands.

One of the factors that makes Chiara's influence so effective is the personality she manages to project through the brands she uses. She conveys the image of a successful, entrepreneurial and independent professional woman, which she achieves through photographs and videos that portray an atmosphere of luxury and ostentation that is not available to all users. This projected identity is precisely one of the main attractions for both her audience and brands. In effect, the model sets up a sophisticated scenario that serves as a platform for the communication of high-end brands as well as an aspirational showcase for her followers. One of the attractions that sustains the success of her influence is the personality she presents through her Instagram account. Chiara perfectly combines her professional persona with a representation of an intimate lifestyle in which she portrays herself as dedicated to her husband and son in a caring and family-oriented environment. Her online self is configured as a model for her followers, who consider the influencer as an aspirational point of reference, which they will reach one day through the repetition of certain patterns of behaviour, such as consuming certain brands.

In Chiara's profile, we have a clear example of symbolic consumption. Chiara manages to imbue the brands she uses with a certain kind of lifestyle and personality, which in turn holds a series of meanings relevant to the consumer who aspires to imitate the atmosphere of exclusivity the influencer creates in her social media.

Ultimately, we observe that symbolic consumption not only effectively describes the process by which individuals define their identities through their consumer choices. It is also a tool that explains the influence and reach that these new digital profiles present for consumers in contemporary society.

Future lines of research could consider other markets, dedicated to fashion or otherwise, in order to establish comparatives. Likewise, the use of other techniques such as discourse analysis could enrich this research, specifically applied to advertising campaigns in order to study the symbolic nature of the messages used in other communication efforts carried out by brands in the fashion industry and luxury market.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Branding: Process by which the integral strategy of a brand is developed.

Influence Marketing: A marketing discipline whose strategies are developed by a relevant prescriber for a given virtual community.

Influencer: Person who has a large number of followers on social networks and whose opinion is relevant to them. There are specialized influencers in various fields such as fashion, food, sports, etc. They usually become role models for their fans.

Online Self-Presentation: presentation of the self that individuals carry out in the digital environment, mainly on personal websites and social networks. It consists of the use of a symbolic vocabulary (whether verbal or audio-visual resources) to project a desired image before an audience.

Reference Groups: groups that are important for consumers and that serve as a reference and guide when consuming. Reference groups determine the way in which individuals carry out symbolic consumption actions.

Self-Image: The image the individual projects in the social context. To do this, s/he uses symbolic resources such as behaviours, words, facial expressions, objects or brands and products. The image can be real or aspirational and is often linked to the desire to be identified with some social group.

Symbolic Consumption: interpretive process by which people give meaning to products and brands, which takes shape in consumer experiences aimed at the construction and expression of an identity.

Chapter 11

The Book Trailer as a Publishing House Promotional Tool: Current Situation of Publishers in Spain

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ABSTRACT

When referring to the cultural industry, it can be said that literature is a product like any other, a product that can be sold. As such, publishing companies seek to make their products profitable. In order to sell books, physical books or e-books, publishing companies resort to marketing them as if they were any other product. The same concepts used to sell a car are used to sell a book, although the strategy and tactic does not have to be the same. In the continuous change and evolution that society undergoes, promotion techniques and, in particular, those related to literature, must be updated in order to overcome market fluctuations, changes in consumer behaviour and, in this same line, adapt to technologies. In this sense, marketing does not usually make distinctions in the type of products or services when selling them, treating them all as goods or services that can be sold and, therefore, applying the strategies of the four variables of the marketing mix.

INTRODUCTION

When referring to the cultural industry, it can be said that literature is a product like any other, a product that can be sold. And, as such, publishing companies seek to make their products profitable.

In order to sell books, physical books or e-books, publishing companies resort to marketing them as if they were any other product. The same concepts used to sell a car are used to sell a book, although the strategy (and tactic) does not have to be the same.

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Among them, as could not be otherwise, is communication. This is the specific aim of this text: to show the new ways of communication in editorial marketing.

This is where the adaptation of this very specific sector to advertising techniques is considered. And, for this reason, it is necessary to show the appropriation of a format alien to literature, such as the audiovisual format, used in its commercial intention for another type of product. And, starting from the possibilities that the audiovisual format allows, the publishing industry has succumbed to a traditional format of cinema and television, but adapted to the 21st century: the book trailer.

In order to understand the importance and potential of the book trailer in an advertising campaign, it is necessary to start from the fact that both the authors themselves and the publishers are beginning to realise that it is a very powerful promotional tool. Despite this, it has hardly had any projection, and even less so in Spain, where it is beginning to grow at a high rate.

In this way, it is necessary to closely study the audience to which the product is directed, as well as the means available. There is talk of a good aimed at a consumer who is very accustomed to the cinematic aesthetics as well as being a regular Internet user, which is where this advertising format is usually marketed and developed.

Therefore, to summarise, the main objective of this chapter is to describe, analyse and understand the form of the book trailer, as well as to establish its foundations and bases. In order to achieve this fundamental objective, we propose other primary aims:

- Firstly, it is necessary to define and understand the booktrailer and develop its typology and classification, and establish the common features of the booktrailer, understanding its main characteristics
- Secondly, it is necessary to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tool for future advertising use and to understand its possibilities as an advertising promotion method.

Similarly, the following secondary objectives are pursued:

- Analyse the characteristics of the Spanish reader as a buyer, consumer and user.
- Show the importance of the audiovisual format and place it in the Spanish panorama.

In this way, it will be possible to establish a conceptual route of the book trailer at a general level and in Spain in particular, establishing theoretical bases and an analysis of the environment that serves as a base, not only as basic knowledge, but also as a starting point for future research—and always from the starting point of view of today's digital society.

FROM THE INFORMATION SOCIETY TO THE DIGITAL SOCIETY

The Information Society

In order to understand the concept of the information society, it is necessary to turn to the late sixties and early seventies, when a series of authors revealed the beginning of a period of economic and social changes that would lead us to a new stage in history. Among them are Peter Drucker and Daniel Bell. These authors stress the fact that a fundamental transformation is taking place in the economic structure of countries: the transition towards an economy in which knowledge will be the key productive factor, relegating traditional factors, capital, labour and land to a second plane.

According to Drucker (1969), the rupture with respect to the previous stage is comparable to that which occurred as a consequence of the second Industrial Revolution. The new era that is beginning is characterised by how the generation of value will be produced from the transmission and application of information; in fact, this author considers that being able to have information quickly and at a low cost will have an impact such as the one implied by the advent of electricity.

Bell (2006) highlights the transition towards a post-industrial society, characterised by the transition from an economy producing goods to an economy of services, the mastery of a class of professionals and technicians, the importance of knowledge as a source of innovation, the control of technology and the creation of a new intellectual technology.

The precursor of the information society concept is the Japanese sociologist Yoneji Masuda through his two best-known works: *An Introduction to the Information Society* (1984) and, especially, *The Information Society as a Post-Industrial Society*, Institute for the Information Society (1980). It is in the latter where he first articulates the term, defining it as a society that grows and develops around information and brings a general flowering of human intellectual creativity, rather than an increase in material consumption; and highlights knowledge and innovation as key factors, together with the adoption and dissemination of technologies that facilitate the processing and transmission of information and knowledge.

In this sense, Castells (1996, p. 35-118, 2006, p. 45-69) distinguishes information societies through a series of technological, political, economic and social indicators that define different models of societies, such as: the use of new technologies in all social spheres (education, health, transport, etc.); the degree of economic development; the dynamism of the economy; competitiveness, innovation and productivity; the relationship between universities, R&D centres, the business sector and the public sector; and the state of social welfare, which includes the degree of health and education coverage, values and degree of political commitment, as well as social values such as freedom, levels of injustice, gender discrimination, social exclusion due to functional illiteracy, etc.

The Digital Society

There is also talk of the digital society, as a synonym for the information society and the knowledge society. From here, it is not intended to defend any of the terms as the most correct ones, but rather to highlight the emphasis on how it is changing the way to access media, consume its contents, as well as the way to create them: blogs, podcasts, wikis, and so on. And a large part of this digital revolution lies in the growing leading role that the media consumer is acquiring—not as the passive traditional consumer but as the active creator and disseminator of the content itself.

The tools for creating blogs, exchanging photos and instant messaging are simple, accessible and transparent, which has led users to become what Pisani and Piotet (2009) call web actors. Connected in networks, they make it possible to create links, to weave relationships between data, between people or between people and data. The relational dimension of the web has accelerated due to the strong increase in the number of users and the tools at their disposal. The more web actors there are, the more relationships they establish, the richer the system and the better it works.

A blog post generates comments, reactions, retrievals, revisions. The registration of a web actor on the social networking site Facebook will allow, in a few clicks, to interact with thousands of people and exchange, share and organise events. The active role of users, potentially all users, is a revolutionary novelty and is what the French reference blogger, Loïc LeMeur, calls an amateur revolution.

Along with new forms of production and distribution of content, the so-called web 2.0 has also led to substantial changes in the way of organising the information available. The new means of communication that have emerged on the net have not only given up producing specifically for their public in favour of the latter doing so, but they have also established systems so that it is also the users who, automatically, through their actions, decide on the hierarchy and relevance of the contents. This phenomenon is known as folksonomies, taxonomies constructed between peers, and materializes in the possibility of labelling contents to create collective filters of social criteria.

Ridderstrale and Nordström, in their book *Funky business* (2000), state that society is changing from the point of view that people's talent is increasingly determinant and affects results in an increasingly significant way: anyone can broadcast their message on the Internet, anyone can express an opinion, anyone can create their blog... and talent is what makes the difference. These authors call 'funk forces' (new values, technological development, globalisation, information society, etc.) the phenomena that are giving rise to a different world, the so-called 'funk village', which means that both people and companies are faced with a new paradigm that forces them to change attitudes, no longer in order to succeed, but simply to fit in.

As Lara (2009) puts it, this new techno-social environment, strongly mediated by digital technology and the social practices it generates, requires new skills to know how to manage risk and lead change, as well as to develop in hybrid spaces where the public and the private coexist and where it is increasingly difficult to control communication flows.

We read and write in different media, in contexts and in languages, since reading-writing is increasingly multimedia. The communicative skills required by these new environments require the adaptation of traditional skills such as the critical analysis of information, but also their combination with the exercise of new skills that are being developed in the use of ICT networks, including, for example, teamwork and multitasking skills.

THE BOOK TRAILER

What is it?

The book trailer is an instrument for promoting a book in video format that uses techniques similar to those used by the cinematographic trailer, with the peculiarity that it circulates on the Internet, that is, it is disseminated through social networks. Therefore, it is defined as a mode of promotion that has to

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do with a reader, of the 21st century, that develops in a natural way in social networks and receives information through multimedia supports that integrate text, images and sound of a hypertextual nature.

In general, it can be said that the book trailer is a video in which, by making use of different visual techniques, the main characters of the work are shown, along with a brief presentation of the plot through voice-over, accompanied by a musical background. At the end of the book trailer, there is information related to the author, the purchase of the product and its physical appearance. So, it is a short video, similar to a traditional film trailer, which aims to promote a book.

It does this by showing the most attractive aspects of the book but without revealing the plot. In this way, just as a film trailer creates expectation about a film, a book trailer creates expectation about a book. Thus, and following Silva (2009), we highlight as the main difference the fact that a film trailer has previous images to work on, while in a book trailer the director has to adapt written words into visual images.

Today, in the environment of the web 2.0 (Cassany, 2011, 2012), the reader finds new ways of approaching reading. However, this tool has been questioned in some environments for being indebted to cinematographic language and, therefore, using image and sound to advertise a discourse that, in principle, constructs meanings through words.

It is a tool that allows us to reach a new type of consumer more accustomed to cinematographic aesthetics and linked to cinema and television series. In any case, it is important to understand that it should not attempt to work against the literary work, but that it is a multimedia foretaste. It goes hand in hand with the current consumer's tendency to resort to virtual spaces before making a purchase, in this case, of a book.

Its value lies in the fact that the public does not see it as an advertisement but as creative short films. That is what people want to see, the kind of content they share (Kneschke, 2012). In this sense, if a product offered is attractive to readers, they themselves will be able to act as opinion formers of the book trailer itself. At the same time, this can promote the work, so you get a very profitable and efficient feedback.

The graphic medium is saturated with advertising for many other products, so the trailer appears to separate the literary work and make it stand out in the advertising maelstrom in which it is immersed. As limits, we find the audiovisual limitations or the creative and image policy limits of the YouTube platform, the most used channel for the emission of book trailers (Pogoriles, 2013). It is for this reason that the leap has been made to online platforms, in which more and more investment is being made, in an attempt to complement media campaigns and get closer to the consumer on the Internet, where they have a more proactive attitude.

The book trailer is a clear example and proof of the efforts of the publishing industry to create new interactive and communicative experiences for the reader.

Backgrounds

Although the format of the book trailer appeared more than a decade ago, the truth is that they have not been relevant until now for a very simple reason: the poor quality of audiovisual creations (Metz, 2012). The reason lies in the low budgets allocated to their production and insufficient management.

The first uses of this tool date back to the 1990s in the United States. As Trabalzi (2008) points out, the first book trailer was broadcast on television in 1996. It was a three-and-a-half-minute video promoting Douglas Anthony Cooper's novel *Amnesia*, published by Hyperion.

However, the first time the book trailer was used as an online promotional tool was in 2002, by two different publishers: The British Cannongate, with the novel *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel; and the American

publishing house Jove Book, which projected the promotional video of *Dark Symphony*, by Christine Feehan, within the framework of the congress on editorial marketing strategies held in California that year.

In this sense, the definition of book trailer as a concept to refer to the idea of the promotional video of a book corresponds to Sheila Clover English, CEO of Circle of Seven Productions, a production company specialised in literary publications, which in 2002 coined the term, as Peixoto and Lima (2014) and Gomes, Botelho, Terceiro and Covaleski (2012) pointed out.

The most common platforms for broadcasting book trailers are sites such as YouTube or Vimeo, and they are shared through social networks. With this, they can be disseminated throughout the world without, in principle, any cost of emission. In this way, the advertisement can be offered to viewers in such a way that they choose the time and place to view them without the need to carry out costly conventional media planning. This is because, as Silva (2009, p. 23) states, “online video is a perpetual form of advertising. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for week, and it works as a commercial for as long as you want. The longevity of a book trailer is larger than most other marketing tools”.

In the same sense, we see that the book trailer would work as a usual film trailer when it is, in addition to being included in a media plan, hosted on the internet. Thus, as Delmar (2012, p. 96) states:

The appearance and development of the Internet introduces four new features in the consumption of trailers. Firstly, the trailer is no longer intrusive, and the viewer decides when and where to use it. Secondly, with the rise of web 2.0, the viewer controls the distribution of the trailer. Thirdly, the trailer becomes a microsite through which the viewer can navigate freely. And fourthly, the viewer becomes the creator of the trailer.

Thus, the proximity of the format and the film language itself make the book trailer one of the most suitable means of advertising the book. If we add to this the characteristics of the current reader, it is understood that publishers have taken this sales incentive tool as a reference. It would be convenient, therefore, to deepen the understanding of the characteristics that define this way of communicating the book and, therefore, of reading, through the idea that the book trailer, having been born with a very concrete extra literary purpose, is showing as an entity in itself.

Main Characteristics

The book trailer, like the digital trailer, must by definition be brief, stimulating, eloquent and precise (Lloret & Canet, 2008).

But, in addition to this, and starting from this general characteristic, it is necessary to expose the main formal and technical characteristics that describe a book trailer.

First of all, the average length of a book trailer, which is 1:15 minutes, is significant, being especially noteworthy that a book trailer with a duration of less than 30 seconds can rarely be found (except in the case of teaser campaigns, whose duration is around 15-20 seconds). It is also necessary to point out that there are few book trailers whose duration exceeds two minutes. In any case, the recommended duration for the format is between 60 and 90 seconds. In this way, it is possible to capture the attention of the spectator and introduce him or her superficially in the plot, without the content being too heavy or too explicit.

In addition to the duration, it is necessary to take into account the category used. Of the three existing ones (cinematographic, testimonial or 3D animation), the most used in Spanish literature is the

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cinematographic category, due, presumably, to the fact that today's society, immersed in the era of visual information, is highly sensitive to cinematographic aesthetics. It is notable in this respect, as Rivera, Tusa, Tejedor, and Cervi (2019), pointed, that certain publishers do not create specific content for the book trailer, but they use previously existing filmography, the theme of which is adapted to that of the book, so that the final result is less specific but much cheaper.

As for the sound elements, despite the different natures and productions, the book trailers have a musical base that accompanies the images and serve as a thread, providing dynamism and creating an environment conducive to the viewer/reader.

The characters have a high frequency of appearance in the trailers, although it is true that they do not do so with the same exhaustiveness: while in some, they are described physically and psychologically in detail, in others they only appear in partial images (Collado, 2017).

One element shared by all is the sample cover. Even when the aesthetics of the cover do not coincide with that of the video, it is shown at the end to remain in the mind of the consumer and provoke recognition at the time of purchase.

In the same way, the title and the author are remembered, as well as the possible launch dates or points of sale, since it should not be forgotten that the ultimate aim of the book trailer is to promote the sale of the book and encourage viewers to read it.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Since reading is participating in an act of imaginative personalisation (of the narration, the images, the conditions), this implies that any literal representation in a video can generate interpretation problems. It is unusual for it to represent in detail what something looks like in a work of fiction, and it is generally not accepted by the public (Metz, 2012). One must respect the fact that people's imagination is a deeply private matter, which raises the question: To what extent can we show what in a book trailer? To what extent can we constrain the reader's imagination?

The main advantage perceived is the possibility that they know something more about the novel in which they have been interested or which has been sent to them, beyond what they can obtain from the cover, back cover and synopsis.

In this case, the surveys (Elías, 2018) show that the main problem with the use of the book trailer is the possibility of restricting the imagination of the readers and the distrust that this provokes in them. Similarly, revealing important aspects of the plot is the second disadvantage that both respondents point out far ahead of the rest.

The opposition to the production of book trailers is based on two main arguments. The first is that book trailers are merely a mercantilist practice and therefore seek only to stimulate consumption. The second argument is that, by producing a video with images of characters, stage, music and other scenic elements, the imaginative possibility of the reader is being limited in relation to the elements that make up the story and with it a primordial aspect of reading is being destroyed: the reader's possibility to travel, through his or her imagination, to the stories contained in the books (Peixoto & Lima, 2014).

However, its advantages cannot be denied, not only from the mercantilist perspective of the search for increased sales, but also from the position of promoting culture and the incentive to attract new generations of reluctant readers. A person who claims that he or she does not like to read may not have found the right book. There is a story for each person, and a book trailer can help you find the right book at

the right time. Especially if we consider children's and young people's literature, since we are dealing with a generation of young people and children who live immersed in the world of image.

On the other hand, and referring to the problem of limiting imagination, we must consider the fact that readers have been making book trailers on their own for years. This means that an official book trailer of a book is just another point of view, which can induce the reader/spectator/consumer to create their alternative works.

There is a stream of authors who assert that the placement of book trailers in spaces such as YouTube and social networks can help build greater sociability among readers. The comments made by readers from and around book trailers and their reading experiences end up building a variant of the traditional Reading Club (Peixoto & Lima, 2014).

What we cannot deny is the symbiosis that exists between the promotion and the promoted product. In the case of the publishing industry, the quality of the product is a much more powerful factor than in other sectors, and not even the most effective advertising promotions could counteract the effects of the so-called word of mouth, which, in the words of Pena for *La Vanguardia* (Ayén, 2013), continues to be the best means of promotion. Although we increasingly find the proactive reader moving on the net rather than in bookshops, the opinions of friends and family and the work of the press remain the "usual circuits of recommendation", says Silvia Fornells for this same medium (Ayén, 2013).

Type of Book Trailers

There are multiple categorisations of the book trailer according to its content: linear, biographical, informative, comic, personal, among others. Thus, authors such as Baudo and Casesi (2011) or Rovira-Collado (2016) have developed their categorisations by taking into account different aspects. In this sense, we find:

- **Slideshow Book Trailer:** It is an audiovisual piece made up of a series of images that are usually from the cover of the book (or inspired by it) and that usually take the form of a series of still images that alternate with phrases from the book. This is the lowest level of the book trailer, where the audiovisual piece is usually made, quite often, by amateurs.
- **Cartoon:** It is a format widely used by and for illustrated books and/or graphic novels. In this format, the images are usually some of these illustrations but in animated version. This implies a great work of animation and knowledge of both the work and the techniques of audiovisual animation.
- **Short Film:** It is a short scene of the book interpreted in the form of a real film with actors that are part of the book, summarising and adapting the work to the cinematographic language.
- **YouTube-like:** It is a format of recent appearance, related to the contents created by users and the web 2.0. It is a video that talks about the book, creating a creative situation free of conventional schemes. This is viral marketing applied to the book trailer: videos that become famous through the exchange on the network between users and (ab)using the word-of-mouth technique.
- **Interview With the Author:** Although for purists it is not really a book trailer, but a talk, a conversation about a book, the truth is that it acts as a promotional video to make a work known and, as a direct aim, to achieve sales.

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In some literary forums, such as the Criminal Element website (Crime, 2012), they also make their own classifications. We cite this one because we understand that, as an alternative, it is very complete:

- **Informative:** It explains the historical background and the premise of the book with thematic images and music to help establish the state of mind.
- **Author:** Contains information about the focus of his or her writing, the work process, and the history of an author.
- **Personal:** Shares personal images of the author's daily life, either from the book or from the audiovisual production.
- **Demonstrative:** Uses a part of the book and develops it. For example, using a recipe that appears in the book or singing a song that is in its pages.
- **Comic:** Has a strong use of humour, even if the theme of the book is not at all humorous.
- **DIY (Do it yourself):** When the distribution channel (in this case, Amazon) is in charge of making, conceiving and producing the audiovisual format to sell books in its portal (and, consequently, in other points of sale).

Because the book trailer is explained from the perspective of brevity and fragmentarity, from resources such as ellipsis and hypertextuality as keys to approaching the reader, the recipient must collaborate in the construction of meanings through a hypertextual reading (Landow, 2009; Mendoza, 2010 and 2012) typical of the virtual support, which is inherent to it. On this basis, and following Taberero (2013, p. 26-27), different types of proposals can be distinguished:

- **Suspense Book Trailers:** The book trailers that start from the exposition and suspense in the plot to hook the reader. In this type of book trailers, there is a basic use of the ellipse as a resource and, questioning the receiver, together with a kind of omnipresent intertextuality, is fundamental.
 - Here, the plot is suspended, questioning the receiver with the intention that he or she seeks the development of the story in another place (the book); playing with the reader's expectations; appealing, in any case, to the concept of intertextuality (Jiménez-Marín & Elías, 2013).
- **Fragment of the Book:** There are also book trailers that select a fragment of the book to exhibit, with a musical background, a piece of flat animation, attentive to the aesthetics of the book and sufficiently representative of the discourse being promoted.
- **Mini Stories:** They are those book trailers that are constructed as small stories based on the original book. The fundamental strategy is ellipsis, so that the book trailer can function as a finished story in itself.

Likewise, we can make a categorisation according to other aspects, such as authorship. In this sense, Grøn (2014) or Ehret, Hollett & Jocius (2016) point out three different types of book trailers:

1. **By Readers:** Those produced by readers, primarily as a pedagogical and creative tool.
2. **By Authors:** Those produced by the authors of the works themselves, as an attempt at self-promotion of their publications or possible contact with interested publishers.
3. **By Professionals:** Those produced by book trailer professionals, either at the request of the authors or of the publishers in charge of the distribution of the work. At this point, it would be important to point out who is the promoter of the creation, that is, at the request of whom the book trailer

is made, referring to a possible self-promotion of the writer or to an attempt to increase sales and make the work known by the publisher or the distributor (as in Amazon's case).

In addition to these two classifications, and after the work has been carried out, we propose our own classification. Thus, we find, depending on its aesthetics and production style:

1. **Still Image:** This is a montage based on photographs, sound effects, music and credit titles; images related to the plot of the book on which texts are superimposed or, in some cases, voice-overs which, in turn, are accompanied by sound effects and music that contribute to creating a suitable environment.
2. **Animated Graphic Design:** This is an evolution of the previous one. These are still images or photographs to which camera movements are added to give a sensation of dynamism and to which, in the same way, sound effects, music, voice-overs and moving photographs are added.
3. **Cinematographic:** These are the most similar to the cinematographic trailers created for the promotion of films. It is, without doubt, the promotional tool closest to the film trailer. It is a very short film that brings forward the exposition of the story. Music, words, oral and written, and even movement are the focus of this type of presentation. Really, this kind of book trailer could be defined as a micro-story. Finally, within this category we find:
 - a. **Pure Cinema:** They are composed of real images with high definition, sequences recorded with actors, dialogues, sound effects, music or voice-overs, photography, graphism and credits, all of it managed in a process of edition and postproduction.
 - b. **Testimonial:** These are recordings that include, as a short documentary or mockumentary, readers' testimonies, interviews with the authors, recordings of related events, etc.
 - c. **3D Animation:** This category is a mixture of the two previous ones: it works with script and characters, but it is created from 3D animation, including graphics, sound effects and music.

SITUATION IN SPAIN

In 2006, the first book trailer arrived in Spain, although it was not until 2011 that its use began to spread, gradually, among Spanish publishers (Ayén, 2013). After a long development through all these years, today the most interesting situation is in Great Britain, Holland and USA, as Trabalzi (2008) states.

It was in that year, 2006, when the SM publishing house launched its first book trailer to promote Santiago García-Clairac's trilogy *The Black Army*. The film campaign, made up of teasers, framed an entire deployment that included a bus touring Spain with presentations in different cities.

A year later, in 2007, Seix Barral, an editorial that frequently uses this tool, would create a promotional video for *Firmin* by Sam Savage, whose final objective was to appear on television, with the aim of obtaining, in the words of Nahir Gutiérrez, director of communication, "the maximum possible repercussion". This video was something so new that it ended up being part of the TVE report that explained what a book trailer was and its journey in Spain.

In these book trailers, we can observe many differences with respect to the current book trailers. These are much longer videos, more than two- and even almost five-minutes long, in which the summary of the plot is mixed with testimonies of other writers and professionals, giving it more the look of a mini report than an advertising format to use, to facilitate its appearance on television.

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Since then, there has been a proliferation of both publishers who at one time or another have opted for the tool, and those who have done so continuously. Thus, publishers such as Seix Barral, Jané or Planeta continually use book trailers to promote their books.

On the other hand, certain companies specialised in the conceptualisation and production of book trailers have also emerged, in many cases linked to desktop publishing services, such as MundoPalabras. Or full-service companies for independent publishers and authors, such as VissualBooks or Literaria Film. Also, in this path, production companies specialised in book trailers and specific editorial advertising are emerging, as well as production companies that include the book trailer among their usual working formats, such as the Spanish Artica Films.

The Spanish Reader

As indicated in the Barometer of Reading and Book Buying Habits of the Federation of Publishers' Guilds of Spain (FGE) (2018), 65.8% of the Spanish population over 14 years of age reads books, which is an increase of 2.8 points, although 40.4% of citizens never or almost never read for leisure. Similarly, the study shows that 59.7% of Spaniards read in their free time.

So, total book reading continues to rise: Book reading for leisure time has increased. And, after the increase observed in recent years, the percentage of readers who read books for work or study purposes has remained stable, in addition to the increase in the reading of websites, blogs and online forums, although the reading of newspapers and magazines has fallen again, showing a downward trend in recent years.

31.2% of Spaniards claim to have visited a library during 2018, a percentage in line with those registered in previous years. And, in this regard, it is interesting to note that currently only 2.5% of the population aged 14 years or over listen to audiobooks at least quarterly. 1.1% do so frequently, on a weekly basis. This shows the preferences of the Spanish reader for new techniques and tools to approach reading.

On the other hand, reading in Spain is perceived as an activity that contributes to open-mindedness and tolerance. Thus, women perceive reading to a greater extent than men as an exciting and stimulating activity, while there is a greater proportion of men than women who think that there are other reading activities more entertaining leisure activities than reading.

This also makes it necessary to highlight that, according to the Barometer (2018), the majority of readers think that in the future paper books will coexist with digital ones, while 31.7% believe that in the future most books will be digital. This figure is especially interesting insofar as it links new technologies and formats (booktrailer, among others) with the reading habit in Spain.

The Spanish Target

The book trailer in Spain had a golden age that today is in decline. By 2012, there were dozens of contests that are now extinct: Moby Awards, Fotogramas Booktrailer Festival, Festival del Booktrailer de Cans or the Booktrailer Film Festival, among others. Today, and despite being a relatively efficient and quite cheap format, it must be said that, following on from Ruiz (2014), the format, at least in Spain, is in decline—but not in other countries such as Chile or Mexico, where the Penguin Random House group remains the leader in the sector in Spanish. According to statistics, one out of every two readers is informed about their future titles on the Internet, and that one out of every three of those queries ends up in a video.

And how is the target audience of book trailers in Spain perceived by potential readers? According to Elías (2018), knowledge about book trailers, in general, is quite low, being a tool that, despite being more and more introduced, is still a fairly unknown tool for the public. Moreover, says the author, there is a percentage of close to 10% of the public who, despite being readers, have never seen a book trailer. Recent studies expose the need for new literacies in a multimodal environment to satisfy new reading needs (Sánchez-Claros, 2016), including the concept of visual competence developed by Müller (2008).

Elías (2018) also states that as the age of the target audience decreases, knowledge of the format increases, with the highest levels of knowledge in the 10-34 age group; while as the age of those surveyed increases, positive knowledge of the tool decreases.

Knowledge of the format is largely driven by prescriptions and viral marketing. Thus, this author points out that the recommendations of friends and family continue to be the main source that drives book purchases. However, it is worth noting that internet searches, with a percentage close to 20%, are more influential when buying books than media reviews, which until now were one of the traditional pillars of editorial advertising.

Most regular readers, as well as followers and connoisseurs of book trailers, reaffirm that the platforms YouTube or Vimeo are the most suitable for the emission of book trailers and, in this sense, YouTube is the preferred one. However, in addition, other private platforms (although not necessarily with restricted access) such as RTVE a la carte, Antena3.com or Movistar Plus are also shown. That being said, it is not unimportant that a third of the target group should consider the possibility of book trailers also being broadcast on television, though this would lead to an increase in costs that the publishing sector would hardly be able to bear.

Therefore, it can be observed that the use of the book trailer in Spain, despite the technological possibilities, is decreasing and readers' perceptions of them are worsening. In spite of the increasing knowledge of the format, readers do not establish this as a priority when it comes to familiarising themselves with titles for their purchases or readings.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen that the tool can be, and is, professionally categorised according to the most representative audiovisual characteristics, so we can speak of categories of book trailers that not only are an entity in themselves but are also suitable for the product they intend to advertise, in addition to the audiovisual current in which the environment is at that time.

The book trailer is a tool with great advertising potential that could help both authors and distributors in the development of their activity, but its use must be improved through more effective campaigns and its insertion in new offline sites.

However, it is not being received particularly well in the Spanish market. Despite its high profitability (mainly due to low production costs), low knowledge, low effectiveness and, above all, its low power of persuasion in the target, the format is not developing with all the potential it could have.

Much more traditional formats, such as press advertising, book promotion through author interviews or public presentations, or even more innovative ones, such as the introduction of hook paragraphs in social networks or viral marketing, continue to be presented as the fundamental bases of editorial marketing.

Many authors (Ruiz, 2014; Sánchez-Claros, 2016; Elías, 2018) speak of the death of the book trailer in the first quarter of the 21st century in favour of other formats sponsored by social networks: booktuber?

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Chapter 12

The Role of Prosumers in the Interactive and Digital Processes of Public Relations: The Organisation of Events and Influencers as the New Emerging Stakeholder

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ABSTRACT

Public relations describe strategic processes of relationship management that organizations that seek excellence promote with their stakeholders. The purpose of these processes is to generate and maintain a dialogic communication system through which to generate a climate of reciprocity based on the search for common interests, agreements, and expectations. Under this approach, this chapter analyzes the figure of the influencer as a new category of emerging stakeholder, an opinion leader 2.0 capable of generating a state of opinion in the digital community that transcends the general traditional public opinion, surpassing the traditional model two-step flow of communication.

INTRODUCTION

Public relations are a planned communication process that focuses on strategically managing (Austin & Pinkleton, 2015) an organisation's relationships with the stakeholder universe that form part of its societal context. The incorporation of new web-based 2.0 technologies into the public-relations process necessarily involves reconceptualising and redefining the traditional structural elements of public relations: the sender, message and publics (Xifra, 2005). Viewing the field through this lens, it is undeniable that the prosumer (McLuhan and Nevitt, 1972) has become one of the key emergent organisational publics of recent times, this being primarily related to the growth in the figure of the influencer. One of the main characteristics of prosumers in the digital age is their capacity not only to consume what they produce,

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but also to make themselves into opinion leaders 2.0, becoming authorities for other users and, most importantly, for other prosumers. This continuous prosumer-user-prosumer feedback loop is capable of constructing a highly persuasive narrative discourse (such discourses being pure public relations) in the digital environment, based on the concept of peer-to-peer recommendation. It thereby promotes the development of horizontal communications structures that are established through constant, one-to-one dialogue (Pulido and Benitez, 2016). Therefore, prosumers' ability to generate a collective opinion in the digital community is remarkable, particularly if we consider how this affects the situation of organisations, whether they are businesses or institutions.

Following on from this, the main objective of this chapter is to observe how, through the organization of specific events, organizations (eminently related to the young public) try to positively influence traditional public opinion using influencers, in order to generate a favourable collective opinion about the organisation and its services or products. This gives rise to a three-step flow of communication which goes beyond the communication structures traditionally used to interact with public opinion. Although the findings of recent public-relations research applied to the organisation of acts establish clear differences between acts and events, the organisation of events focused on these endorsers 2.0 is what has dominated the public-relations strategies of many companies recently, the benefit of which takes the form of digital narrative structures. These can be audiovisual or visual, are generated and (largely) consumed in the societal context itself and have a high level of credibility, particularly among social-network users, for whom these influencers have become veritable (and highly trustworthy) opinion leaders 2.0.

In order to work towards this main objective, it will be necessary to achieve each of the following secondary objectives:

- OS1:** Construct a concise, syncretic theoretical framework on public relations as a strategic process for managing relationships.
- OS2:** Conduct a terminological analysis of the key concepts contained in the description of the chapter's main objective.
- OS3:** Determine what the characteristic advantages of special events organised specifically for influencers are, in comparison with other communications techniques that have traditionally been used for managing organisations' relationships with their publics.
- OS4:** On the basis of OS3, identify an efficient bidirectional (dialogic) communications model for organisations to use in the organisation of events for influencers.

INTERACTIVE AND DIGITAL PROCESSES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Around the first decade of the 21st century, there was a veritable boom in the academic study of public relations in the new digital context, which was seen as a genuine scientific and professional revolution in the discipline that focuses on relationship management. Among these first studies concerned with the new web-based technologies, it is worth highlighting: the work of Johnson (1997) on the public-relations paradigm in the digital era and the new information society; that of Newland, Hill and White (2000) and Porter and Sallot (2003) on the corporate website as a tool for professional communications management; Porter, Sweetser and Chung (2009)'s research on the professional uses of blogs in public relations; Ye and Ki (2012)'s review of research into online public relations, and the work of Taylor

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and Kent (2009) as well as Lee, Sha, Dozier and Sargent (2015) regarding the role of social media in managing public relations in organisations.

It was in this context that talk of public relations 2.0 began in the professional and academic environment. It was frequently considered a new discipline, with its origin in traditional public relations, whose emergence was based on the use of web 2.0 technologies to increase the organisations' opportunities to interact with their publics, thereby generating efficient spaces of dialogic communication (Kane, Fichman, Gallagher y Glaser, 2009; Solis y Breakenridge, 2009; Weisgerber, 2009; Sancar, 2013; Ramos, 2012; Ponti y Domingo, 2014; Wichels, 2014; Castillo, Fernández y Castellero, 2015).

One of the fundamental aspects of this public-relations process is that the organisation (the primary sender and source of the bidirectional-communication system that public relations implies) needs to be capable of generating a climate of mutual understanding with its stakeholders by establishing a constant dialogue that enables all of the parties involved in the process to express, as equals, what their expectations are regarding said organisation-public relationship.

For Grunig (2009), the new digital media have significant dialogic, interactive, relational and global properties that make them ideal when it comes to the strategic management of public relations. Nevertheless, following this argument through, he notes that digital media:

- May be involved in all phases of the process of strategically managing public relations, providing the necessary tools for public-relations professionals to effectively participate in the strategic decision-making processes of the organisations they are working for.
- They could revolutionise public relations, but only if they help professionals and academics transcend the symbolic and interpretative paradigms of public relations, in order to institutionalise such digital media in organisations through employing a strategic and behavioural focus, thereby facilitating bidirectional communication that is used to:
 - Give a voice to publics in decision-making processes, and
 - Facilitate dialogue between the organisation and its publics.

ORGANISING EVENTS FOR INFLUENCERS. STRATEGICALLY MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH PUBLICS.

The Public Relations Process and its Impact on Public Opinion

Public relations can be defined as a series of organised modal interaction processes (communication processes whose purpose is to achieve and maintain the cohesion of the group) that are integrated into society (Caldevilla, 2007, p. 22). For Otero and Pulido (2018, p. 121), public relations may be seen as a management function that, with a strategic focus, enables organisations to achieve their objectives of adapting to their publics through communication processes. The process of establishing strategies is an important organisational component that increases the efficiency of public relations, given that it enables the desired corporate future to be established and delineated in terms of goals and objectives, calculating the amounts of work required and establishing a plan to achieve them.

These processes, which constitute and define public-relations activity, are necessarily based on establishing mechanisms designed to create and maintain effective, bidirectional communication systems which are able to generate a state of constant organisation-society dialogue, the purpose of which is

managing the relationships of the organisation: the primary sender and source of the message, with its map of publics. Many authors have constructed theoretical-practical models to explain public-relations processes. Most of these models explain public relations as a strategic process that consists of four stages: research and analysis; programming; execution or communication, and monitoring or evaluation (Marston, 1979; Cutlip and Center, 2001; Xifra, 2005).

In contrast, Wilcox, Cameron and Xifra (2009, p. 12) describe it as a two-stage process:

Stage 1

Information from a range of sources

Analysis of this information and recommendations for the leadership team

Decisions on policy and actions

Stage 2

Execution of the programme

Evaluation of its efficiency

Seen from this perspective, this procedural conceptualisation of public relations necessarily implies considering certain consequences which, in positive terms, lead to organisations' increased efficiency in securing a place for persuasive, corporate and institutional messages within public opinion. In other words, these public-relations processes take the form of public-relations campaigns, and such campaigns are of a clearly persuasive (if not propagandistic) nature (Xifra, 2010, p. 19).

One of the decisive factors that helps explain the persuasive capability of public relations when understood as a process is, precisely, its ability to secure a place for legitimising, strategically designed messages within relevant public opinion. Exploring this issue provides us with the opportunity to reflect upon the concept of public opinion. As Otero (2000, pp. 298-299) explains, while there are references in Egyptian poems, classical Greece and the Roman world that take its origins back to antiquity, the concept of public opinion was first used to refer to the opinion of the people at large by the enlightened thinkers of 18th century France. However, from the perspective of contemporary public relations, its most relevant antecedents can be found around the time of the publication of *Public Opinion* by Walter Lippmann in 1922 and *Crystallizing Public Opinion* by Edward Bernays in 1923.

In these early works, both Lippman and Bernays underline the same idea: we must understand the mechanisms that articulate the phenomenon of public opinion to be capable of working with it. In Lippman's view, it is physically impossible to deal with all existing knowledge and information, meaning that humans living in society form opinions by distilling information in our minds as images and stereotypes, in an attempt to understand our surroundings. In this sense, Lippmann says (2003, p. 81):

Of the most transcendental public events, we only see in the best of cases a phase and an aspect, just like its eminent protagonists, who "from within" are responsible for drafting treaties, preparing laws and issuing orders. However, nothing can prevent our opinions from covering more space, time, and things that we can observe directly. Therefore, our opinions are the reconstruction of what others have narrated and we have imagined.

For his part, to Bernays (1998, p. 47) public opinion is a vague and misunderstood material that: It describes a poorly defined, variable and unstable group of individual judgments. Public opinion is a final aggregate of individual opinions—well uniform, or conflicting—of the men and women who

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constitute a society or a social group. To understand public opinion, we have to examine the individual who is part of the group.

Therefore, as we can observe, the concept of public opinion transcends the simple idea of the opinion of the people. In other words, “it is not necessarily the result of individual opinions, or even the majority of them, in relation to a certain topic” (Sauvy, 1970, p. 7).

Further, in mass society, the formation of public opinion is closely related to the intermediation of the media and the leaders who have the ability to shape that opinion. According to González (2005, p. 37) “public opinion is a generic expression that affects mass behaviour and the instrumental interpretations that appear in the media”.

In this context, it is worth recalling that Lesly (1981, p. 47-48) already analysed how to influence behaviour through efficient communication, by observing the flow of influence that establishes the relationship between organisations, the mass media, opinion leaders and the general public (the Lazarsfield, Berelson and Gaudet’s two-step flow of communication) and, from this, identifying the flow of existing communications about a topic of interest. The study thereby identified three primary actors in forming public opinion: oral activists, opinion leaders and power leaders.

- Oral activists: those who propose a cause.
- Opinion leaders: the mass media and key educators.
- Power leaders: legislators, civil servants, judges, etc., who have the power to perform actions that affect organisations and society in general.

For Rojo (2018, p. 198-199), these marshals of specific opinion flows are grouped according to three types of leadership that are able to exercise legitimate influence: charismatic leaders; bureaucratic, normative or legal leaders; and patriarchal leaders, based on custom (Max Weber).

- **Charismatic Leadership:** the purest, most natural type of leadership. It is the kind possessed by those people with a special something, a *je ne sais quoi* that makes them interesting, credible sources of information. Their influential capability is also reinforced by an innate ability to empathise with their publics.
- **Normative Leadership:** the inferred leadership of those people in positions of great responsibility, such as public authorities or business leaders. It is a category that has significant similarities with the power leader put forward by Lesly at an earlier date.
- **Patriarchal Leadership:** that attributed to certain people due to their know-how, career or experience and their social recognition.

Having reached this point, it seems clear that strategic public-relations processes require leaders to be identified, in order to channel organisational messages (of a persuasive nature), whether these are institutional or corporate, towards public opinion. For a study such as this one, focused on the organisation of events aimed at influencers, the importance of events in forming public opinion is of particular relevance. This is underlined by Wilcox, Cameron and Xifra (2010, p. 223):

- Opinion is very sensitive to events that have an impact on the public in general or on a specific segment thereof.
- Public opinion never foreshadows events. It only reacts to them.

- Events are the trigger that leads public opinion to be formed. Unless people are aware of an issue, it is unusual for them to be concerned or to express an opinion about it. Awareness-raising and discussion lead to opinions taking a definite shape and often to consensus among the public.
- Large-scale events usually make public opinion temporarily swing from one extreme to the other. Opinion does not stabilise until a degree of perspective has been gained on the implications of the event.

Publics, Stakeholders and Influencers

Publics

The term 'public opinion' rests upon the concept of 'public'. From a public-relations perspective, the term 'public' traditionally alludes to those sectors within the organisation's societal context with whom the organisation maintains reciprocal relationships, in connection to the pursuit of expectations, interests, desires and demands that are shared or based on mutual interest. For Míguez (2010, p. 23):

Understood as a group, the public has a moderate organisational capacity for dealing with the issues that affect it and that act as links between its members. Through the fusion of distinct publics, it may come to form a larger collective, which is termed a community.

Finally, the acts and expressions of the public are characterised by the application of critical thinking and rational discussion as a means to reach an agreement. For this reason, and based on the synthesis of all the perspectives described, we may conclude that the public is the only collective able to build a consensual, reasoned opinion that acts as the basis of public opinion.

Perhaps the most relevant and revolutionary theory on public relations is the situational theory of publics developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984), who identify four key classes of publics, according to the extent to which they recognise the organisation-public consequences. Using this approach, Grunig and Hunt (2000, p. 238) establish the following terms: the non-public (when there are no organisation-group consequences); the latent public (when a group faces a similar problem but does not detect the problem); the informed public (when the group recognises the problem) and the active public (when the public gets organised in order to discuss and do something about the problem).

Stakeholders

Although the concepts of stakeholder and public have traditionally been understood as synonyms, Grunig (2009: 14) clearly differentiates between them and states:

Although most writers about public relations tend to use the terms 'stakeholders' and 'publics' interchangeably, I distinguish between the two. I use the term stakeholder to define a broad group of people with similar stakes in the organisation, such as employees, customers, or community members. Stakeholders can be defined as anyone who has a similar risk resulting from a relationship with an organisation (Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). Not every member of a stakeholder group is a member of the

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same public, however; and (...) several different kinds of publics can be found within each stakeholder category. These publics can range from activist to active, passive, and non-publics.

As Phillips and Young (2009) have noted, it is important to segment stakeholders and publics to understand their differing relationships with an organisation and to be able to communicate with them about their problems and interests using the new media. I segment stakeholders by identifying the impact of consequences or potential consequences of management decisions on groups such as employees, customers, or shareholders. I then further segment publics from these stakeholder groups using my situational theory of publics (e.g., Grunig, 1997; Kim & Grunig, in press). This theory segments publics using the concepts of problem recognition, constraint recognition, and involvement recognition.

In fact, Grunig (2009, p. 12) define stakeholders “as broad categories of people who might be affected by management decisions or who might affect those decisions”.

Influencers

The concept of the influencer has made a dramatic entrance into the academic and professional public-relations fields in recent years, due to the extensive development and expansion of social media. This has resulted primarily from the extensive scientific and technological development that has enabled new, web-based technologies to be applied to mobile devices, most of these being smartphones, through forms of entertainment that have attractive interfaces and are easily accessible.

As noted by McCorkindale and DiStaso (2014, p. 2), most existing theories on social networks focus on four defining variables: engagement and dialogue, transparency, authenticity and influence.

- **Engagement and Dialogue:** social networks promote organisation-stakeholder exchanges of content, in order to establish and maintain relationships through dialogue.
- **Transparency:** social networks provide the necessary mechanisms for organisations to meet their transparency objectives in relation to three main principles: being open and honest; communicating the bad as well as the good, and providing information in a timely manner.
- **Authenticity:** organisations are obliged to abandon their sterile, institutional tone on social networks, in order to provide information in a more personal, human way.
- **Influence:** The importance that influencers have on social networks (and public relations in general) is indisputable, given their ability to disseminate corporate and institutional messages either positively or negatively.

As a term, we understand influencer to describe a phenomenon which, having certain inherent advantageous characteristics, is located at the intersection generated between the concepts of public, stakeholder and opinion leader. In the English-speaking world, influencer has often been used as a synonym for opinion leader to describe a “person who is regarded by a group, or by other people, as having expertise and knowledge on a particular subject” (Eliashberg y Shugan, 1997, p. 71).

However, in Spanish, the concept of influencer has been restricted to those opinion leaders who, from one or several of the existing social-network platforms, exercise a generally strong and extensive influence on their groups of followers, for whom they are reliable experts on certain areas of interest that are usually connected to a young public (travel, fashion, cosmetics, family life, etc.). Such is the

phenomenon that there may be different typologies of influencers, depending on the name of the digital platform they select to exercise their influence (so, those who use Instagram are instagramers; those who use YouTube, are called youtubers, and those who use blogs, are called bloggers) or the thematic area in which they work (as in the case of videogamers or gamers). Influencers may therefore be considered new opinion leaders 2.0 with a great degree of persuasive power, derived from the high level of credibility granted to them by their followers, who are additionally characterised by enviable levels of loyalty and follow-through. This makes influencers of great interest to organisations, which increasingly see them as attractive opinion leaders who guarantee bidirectionality and efficiency in channelling the persuasive messages that they are keen to get into digital public opinion and also, in many cases, into general public opinion.

Organisation of Acts and Events

The findings of strategic research show that, in order to guarantee the implementation of these bidirectional communication systems, the public-relations process must identify, in the planning stage, a wide range of communication techniques on the basis of the stakeholders and publics that have been identified and segmented in advance. With this in mind, Xifra (2007 and 2011) has produced one of the most interesting typologies of communication techniques applied to public-relations processes. He identifies four types of techniques: internal-public-relations techniques, including suggestion boxes, intranets, internal newsletters, announcement boards, welcome procedures and meetings or seminars, among other techniques; media-relations techniques, among which he identifies press releases, press conferences and other encounters with the press, such as working breakfasts and press trips or visits, etc.; cross-cutting techniques, among which he cites speeches in forums of interest, the organisation's documentation and its visual identity; and community-relations techniques, including participation in fairs, patronage and those most firmly within the focus of this chapter: event organisation and relationships with virtual communities through social networks. Whereas, regarding social networks, he highlights the multifunctionality of microblogging or nanoblogging, the figure of the community manager (as manager of organisations' online reputation) and the relationship with bloggers (through a version 2.0 of conventional advertising); he draws attention to the organisation of special events as a genuine public-relations technique. For Xifra (2011, p. 259), a special event or occasion is any activity focused on managing the relationships of the organiser with its direct publics (attendees and media) and, through its intermediation, with the organiser's indirect publics (the community in a broad sense), all of which has the purpose of influencing the public perception of the organiser (the primary sender of the persuasive communication process).

It is worth mentioning at this point that act and event do not refer to the same phenomenon. Acts are institutional or corporate communication techniques, while the concept of events alludes to organised special occasions or shows. While there is no theoretical consensus about the criteria for differentiating between these terms (Pulido, 2016; Sánchez 2016), within the scope of this study, we may define event organisation as a technique for managing publics with a persuasive intentionality that is reinforced - drawing on insights into non-verbal communication - by a *mise en scène* which, focusing directly on the intangible elements of emotions and feelings, "facilitates immediate perception by the public, making it more efficient than oral or written rhetoric" (Otero, 2009, p. 23-24).

As Jiménez and Panizo (2017, p. 20-22) point out, the growing interest in event management is due to its strategic value when it comes to efficiently transmitting the intangible values associated with organisations and brands. It provides a range of benefits, the most noteworthy of which include its ability to:

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- Reach specific publics through concrete actions
- Create a strategy that achieves differentiation
- Consolidate the brand image
- Generate significant benefits in terms of visibility on a modest budget
- Provide experiences for publics that will influence brand perception
- Increase the sense of belonging among internal publics
- Raise awareness of the company or institution in other countries
- Support advertising strategies.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking previous research as a reference point, we can conclude that exclusive events for influencers are a genuine public-relations technique that is efficient and growing in popularity. They make it possible to establish a dialogic communications system that has the distinguishing features detailed in the following sections.

The Primary Sender or Source of the Message

The primary senders are mainly business organisations and brands, most of which are connected to the fashion and accessories, travel, alcoholic and soft drinks, cosmetics, technology and video-game sectors. They need to make a young public aware of their brands, products or services in an alternative way to that traditionally used and also pass on the inherent connotations that influencers, whose followers are their target audience, attach to the message when they prosume it.

Official institutions belonging to the public sector usually organise official public acts as public-relations techniques, in order to secure a place for their strategically designed institutional messages in public opinion. There is no relevant evidence connecting official institutions to the organisation of this type of special event or occasion for social-network influencers.

Channel

As demonstrated in this chapter, the channel for this dialogic communication system is the special event or occasion for influencers. Through the various sequences and activities that make up the planned event, the primary sender reveals its intention to directly transmit certain corporate, brand or product values to a specific target audience: the influencer. While it may seem, at first, that organising this type of event for influencers cannot be that different to organising events with similar characteristics aimed at traditional media, this is not the case. All that is involved in an event for influencers focuses specifically on generating real-time, interactive communication, in which there is a four-stage flow of information: stage 1: company > influencer; stage 2: influencer > follower; stage 3: follower > digital community; stage 4: digital community > general public opinion.

In other words, absolutely everything that occurs in an event is capable of generating a real-time collective opinion: from the moment the influencer receives the invitation, until he or she gets home after the event.

Message

As in every public-relations communication system, the message is linked to the pursuit of shared, organisation-public demands, interests and expectations. The singular nature of the messages created for this type of event for influencers is directly related to two variables: the form and the content. When it comes to form, what stands out is the freshness, naturalness, spontaneity and honesty with which the message should be designed, to adapt to the distinctive narrative structures generated by the influencers we have selected as receivers. When it comes to content, the message should draw out accurate and verifiable features that are related to the company, brand or product characteristics that are under review, and which the sender is trying to identify within public opinion as favourable features.

However, the main characteristic is that the message that benefits the sender must be generated in the third person. This means that, although it is promoted by the sender, it must also be generated and issued by the influencer himself or herself. This follows from a basic principle of public-relations management: what others say about us naturally has more credibility than what we say about ourselves, because it is presumed to have been verified by a range of different people from an objective position.

Target Audience

Taken as target audiences, influencers are important prosumers who generate opinions within their communities, in the digital community as a whole, and in the offline or traditional community. They are characterised by:

- A great degree of independence from the company, brand, product or service, which is translated into a high level of objectivity and credibility.
- They receive a high level of loyalty.
- They provide constant freshness and interactivity to communication, adapting very well to a young public.
- They are usually attractive and charismatic: characteristics which increase their persuasive capacity.
- They generate their own narrative content on social networks which, due to its specificity and creativity, occasionally reaches the traditional media and society in general.
- Through the know-how contained in this content, they gain the position of veritable opinion leaders 2.0, who are able to organise their followers and create a current of opinion that aligns with their interests.
- They are easy to identify, enable audiences to be segmented using simple criteria and are the ideal interlocutors for capitalising on peer-to-peer communicative structures.
- Thanks to all of these features, they are an emergent stakeholder of great value for both business and institutional organisations.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It is our view that, within the field of public-relations research, there are multiple lines of future research of academic interest centred on the role of the influencer: as a category that falls between the concepts

of prosumer and (digital) opinion leader, and in terms of its relationship to the growth of new forms of communication, such as event organisation, which are specifically and unequivocally aimed at certain digital communities.

The figure of the influencer not only enables us to channel organisational messages towards the creation of dialogic spaces linking the organisation and public opinion, it also allows audiences to be segmented on the basis of a rich variety of criteria and variables (thematic areas, social networks used, number of followers, etc.), and provides added value which is occasionally translated into increased levels of public recognition and perception that reach beyond the community 2.0 to society as a whole.

From a scientific perspective, pursuing further study of managing communities through new web-based tools validates the initial ideas that linked adoption of these new digital tools to a paradigmatic change in public relations. It is therefore worth reflecting on whether the adoption of these web 2.0 and web 3.0 technologies has genuinely revolutionised the paradigmatic foundations of the public-relations discipline, or whether such technologies simply enrich the discipline through their implementation in high-value techniques, related to the promotion of interactive and bidirectional processes that are fundamental for managing organisation-public relations.

CONCLUSION

The organisation of special events and occasions for influencers is a growing trend that must be taken into account in the strategic management of public relations. The hybrid nature of this emergent stakeholder of our times - half prosumer, half opinion leader - makes it one of the most desirable iconic publics for organisations, most of which are businesses, looking to secure a place for their corporate messages within the digital community and general public opinion.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Ceremonial Act: Sober, formal performance organised by companies and institutions in order to transmit their organisational values.

Event: Spectacle that is generally linked to the business field and related to the positioning of the company's brands, products and services.

Influencer: 2.0 opinion leaders.

Opinion Leader: A person to whom the community around them attributes a high level of knowledge on a specific thematic area.

Public Relations: A management function within organisations, responsible for managing relationships between the organisation and the publics in its societal context.

Publics: Groups from the societal context upon which the organisation depends for its survival.

Strategic Planning: A management process based on establishing desired goals and objectives and designing changes and tools to achieve them.

Chapter 13

Lux Radio Theatre: Radio, Film, and Advertising – A Fortunate Encounter

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ABSTRACT

Lux Radio Theatre was a radio program that remained on the air in the United States of America for more than twenty years (1934-1955). It aired radio plays which were adaptations of hit movies. Dozens of Hollywood movie stars were involved in the program, which was created by an advertiser and its agency, at the service of a sole product: Lux toilet soap. This chapter provides a discussion about the complex and costly, in terms of production, mode of advertising that were these radio plays, a unique encounter between Hollywood and advertising.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of advertising, movie stars have been widely used to sell products. The use of celebrities has proven to be a successful advertising model and continues to be used to this day. Of all the celebrities who are famous for either their social, political or cultural roles, Hollywood stars are the leading roles of this advertising formula, followed by models and singers. It is a symbiotic relationship that benefits the stars as well as the product that is being “advertised.”

Although this is nothing new, the multiple ways in which this practice can unfold manifests itself in an ample range. This chapter discusses the complex and costly, in terms of production, mode of advertising that was the radio play. The change in current publicity models makes the case of the radio play created solely for the purpose of advertising a product a rare bird indeed. As it is not something that is very common today, this makes it worthy of a historical examination; radio and cinema’s past in advertising created a triangle of media and modes which reached its golden age in the era of the radiophonic experience of the Lux Radio Theatre program.

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In 1924 the British manufacturing company Lever Brothers introduced a new product: Lux toilet soap. The product was released one year later in the United States of America; for the purpose of promoting the soap, the company hired the services of the most experienced and prestigious advertising firm of the time, J. Walter Thompson, which was founded in 1864. For the first three years, the brand's advertising was centred on the attributes of the product, but at the beginning of 1928, the agency began a new tactic, which is still used today: product placement in the world of cinema, in general, and in the beauty and glamour of actresses, in particular.

In that era, Hollywood had become the metonym of the United States film industry. Hollywood stars were venerated idols for millions of spectators who flocked to the cinemas to worship their icons and even though using actors and actresses in advertising was nothing new, the Lux advertisements was a whole new dimension and reached a relevance that had not been seen before.

Husband and wife team Stanley B. Resor and Helen Lansdowne Resor played an important role in this new positioning. They bought the agency in 1916, with other partners. Helen Lansdowne Resor began to work at the agency in 1908 and her creative work was key. Today she is recognized as one of the most important women in the history of advertising.

May McAvoy was the star of the first advertisement using the new strategy, which illustrated the model that would be repeated in dozens of commercials for decades to come and that at the same time embodied the aspirations millions of consumers yearned for. She was a young, beautiful actress, at the top of her career starring in silent films like *Lady Windemere's Fan* (Lubitsch, 1925), *Ben Hur* (Niblo, 1925) and *The Jazz Singer* (Crosland, 1927) with Al Jolson. This explains why the brand chose her for the first advertisement, in which the actress testifies: "A smooth skin –studio skin- is one of the most important assets a screen star has –like every woman and ever more than most women, I have to guard my skin -I always use Lux Toilet Soap- a lovely soap it keeps my skin exquisitely smooth".

Even though it's only May McAvoy's image that appears in that ad, she is not the only person from the world of film that was included. We also find John M. Stahl's testimony, who at the time was a famous producer for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and later a prestigious director. One of the many things he did was discover new talent, and his opinion became a powerful enticement at the service of Lux soap: "Tremendous Allure in lovely smooth skin. Few people can resist smooth exquisite skin. Studio skin, we call it –that skin of rare, lovely smoothness, which defies the cruel, blazing lights of the close-up. Such a skin can't be faked even with the cleverest make-up. It must be genuine. This perfection of skin is one of the greatest holds a star has on her public".

Lux's commitment to Hollywood and its young actresses was made plain in an advertisement that appeared in April 1928 which states in writing: "The 13 Wampas baby stars all use Lux Toilet Soap for their Lovely skin". The Western Association of Motion Pictures Advertisers (WAMPA) was a group of film advertisers who, starting in 1922, selected a group of 13 young starlets every year, and awarded them with a prize and a gala. It became a media event, which also promoted the actresses' popularity, films and the studios they worked for. In 1928, the advertisements featured the 13 vedettes, their studios and their testimonies about Lux soap. Lupe Vélez (Pathé DeMille) said: "the lights of the close-up mean you must have smooth skin. Lux Toilet Soap certainly keeps mine like velvet". Molly O'Day (First National) said: "Lux Toilet Soap is the perfect soap to keep my skin always at its best". The other burgeoning stars claimed much the same; Sue Carol (Independent), Lina Basquette (Pathé DeMille), Audrey Ferris (Warner Bros), Sally Eilers (Sennett Pathé DeMille), June Collier (Fox), Ann Christy (Paramount-Harold Lloyd Productions), Ruth Taylor (Paramount), Dorothy Gulliver (Universal), Gwen Lee (MGM), Alice Day (Independent) and Flora Bramley (Independent). Although curiously none of the young promises reached

stardom, all of them did manage to develop (irrelevant) careers in film. It fitting to wonder if WAMPA and Lux's decision was not a mistake. In the first case, it is clear that WAMPA was not correct about the evolution of the baby stars, but Lux's case must be analysed from a different perspective: advertising is an in-the-moment affair, an ephemeral message — the 13 promises — is made compatible with a timeless discourse — beauty and success. In 1928 the celebrity of these actresses justified their inclusion in the brand's advertising. Audrey Ferris debuted in eight films. Both Sally Eilers and Sue Carol appeared in seven, additionally the actresses showed up in reports and interviews in newspapers, magazines, radio programmes and newsreels. In short, these actresses were very popular in the late 1920s. Months later, they would disappear from the advertising campaign, to be replaced by other young promises. Years later these first WAMPA babies fell into oblivion.

Additionally, in April 1928, a very significant advertisement was released in which the brand declared: "Following their stars' example the great film companies have made Lux Toilet Soap the official soap in their studio dressing rooms". A month later we find the first appearances of the famous slogan that would be associated with the product in dozens of ads for many years to come: "9 out of 10 screen stars use Lux Toilet Soap". This ad is historical not only for the reasons stated before, but also because it included images of the twenty-six most famous and popular actresses of the 1920s: Clara Bow, Janet Gaynor (the first actress to win an Oscar, in 1928), Mary Astor, Marion Davis, Bebe Daniels, Corinne Griffith, Anna Q. Nilsson, Lois Moran, Eleanor Boardman, Renée Adorée, Phillis Haver, Louise Brooks, Dorothy Mackaill, Greta Nissen, Mary Philbin, Blanche Sweet, May McAvoy, Mary Brian, Esther Ralston, Laura La Plante, Joan Crawford, Olive Borden, Doris Kenyon, Maria Korda and Merna Kennedy. At the end of the 1920s and towards the beginning of the 1930s, the majority of these actresses continued to appear, either individually or collectively in Lux's advertising campaigns.

In the middle of 1928, Lux released an ad that claimed "96% of the lovely complexions you see on the screen are cared for by Lux Toilet Soap... There are in Hollywood 433 important screen actresses, including all stars. 417 of these use Lux Toilet Soap to keep their lovely skin soft and smooth".

More than forty actresses appear in this advertisement. This is the largest number we have found for this study (July 1928). Months later, in the spring of 1929, another advertisement was coming out with new figures: "442 of the 451 important actresses in Hollywood use this soap for lovely smooth skin. It is also official soap for the dressing rooms of all the great studios". To illustrate this officially, several advertisements can be found which include images of the actresses in the intimacy of their dressing rooms using the product; we see Renée Adorée, Janet Gaynor and Mary Astor next to the text "in the luxurious bathrooms of great stars and in the dressing rooms of all the big film studios this soap cares for the skin of most beautiful women in the world" (June 1928). Some weeks later we find nine other actresses in their "luxurious bathrooms", including Clara Bow, Joan Crawford and Myrna Loy.

In these first advertisements, the interest the brand expresses in statistics and figures is remarkable. The ad campaign managers were also aware of the importance of the directors' testimony and were sure to include statements such as "37 Hollywood Directors say: "Smooth exquisite skin is a woman's most alluring charm" and "For loveliness that thrills, a girl must have exquisite skin, say 39 Hollywood directors" and "Lovely skin is the most appealing charm a girl can have, say 39 leading Hollywood directors", even though there is never a specific quote from any directors in particular.

Gradually the ads featuring the actresses collectively are replaced by ads where fewer than five actresses are featured and these are alternated with ads featuring individuals. Initially the advertising featured forty, thirty-two, twenty-four and thirteen actresses. These kinds of advertisements were preva-

lent in the 1930s and became the norm. Later the advertisements featuring several actresses at the same time gradually disappears.

We find the same structure repeated in the ads that feature individual actresses: the stylised image of a star with her name, signature and testimony; the studio she belongs to and the latest film she was in. For example:

Colleen Moore, who was the actress in *Happiness Ahead* (Seiter, 1928), states that “for anyone who wants to keep a perfect complexion, Lux Toilet Soap is splendid”. This ad includes the name of the director of the film, William A. Seiter and his testimony: “Nothing is more important than alluring smooth skin” (1928).

Barbara Stanwyck, in *The Woman in Red* (Florey, 1935), affirms “of course I use cosmetics, but I never worry about cosmetic skin, I use Lux Toilet Soap regularly”.

Mae West, star of *Go west young man* (Hathaway, 1936), promoted the slogan “Go west young lady for a tip of complexion care!” (1936).

Bette Davis, star of *Jezabel*, said “Bette Davis tells you how to protect daintiness” (1938).

Despite all, this wasn’t enough for Lux and that’s how Lux Radio Theatre began.

In this context, and given the repercussions, originality and complexity of the formula that Lux developed early on, the objectives of this paper are the following:

- Giving an unrecognised part of advertising visible.
- Rescuing and compiling a corpus of work for future study.
- Analysing the framework of the fusion of the three types of media involved: cinema, radio and advertising.
- Bring to light the importance and modernity of this fact as an influential milestone in the making of popular culture.

BACKGROUND

As Fernández Poyatos asserts (2013), the lack of studies on the history of advertising impedes the existence of a specific methodology for its investigation. In this sense, the methodology we used for this study has also been used in film history studies (Ansola 2005) and also consists of a review of the bibliography on central and collateral themes, in addition to the collection and organization of data from original sources, we also look at casting and classification of the leading roles in the adaptations through content analysis, and to the creation of databases in order to interpret and measure them.

We have worked with a total of 926 radio adaptations, which correspond to the 22 broadcast seasons of the program we analysed.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

As part of its advertising strategy, Lux soap began broadcasting the Lux Radio Theatre program in 1934. Created by J. Walter Thompson’s radio department, the weekly program featured hour-long radio adaptations of successful films, and the acting of popular actors and actresses. The broadcast lasted until the advent of television which replaced the radio as the media of choice. Lux Radio Theatre was

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not the first program to adapt films, but contrary to others, it was conceived and controlled by an advertising agency, in the service of a brand and a product. Its objective was not to promote cinema, but to use cinema as part of a publicity strategy. This statement is demonstrated by an obvious fact; of the hundreds of films that were adapted, the great majority were films that had already reached the end of their commercial success. They were old films which had debuted many years previously (some as many as ten to fifteen years previously) before they were recast as radio programs. The program's objective was not to introduce the public to new films, but rather to take advantage of the film's success and the public's memory of them to get them to tune in and thereby widen the audience for the brand. There is another fact that confirms this hypothesis: as a general rule, the actors and actresses that gave voice to the adaptations did not coincide with those who originally starred in the films. However, there were many combinations. There were cases where the stars did coincide, but there were many more where they did not. Many of the broadcasts featured different artists, sometimes the masculine lead in the adaptation was the same as in the original, but the female lead was different and vice versa. There were even cases where there was more than one radio program of the same film featuring different actors and actresses in each adaptation. The important thing was that at the time of the broadcast, the actors and actresses who participated, enjoyed a high level of popularity which would assure a large audience.

Everyone involved in the program made a profit. The studios—from the majors to the minors—lent their stars for the broadcasts because it gave them publicity. For this same reason, the performers were also interested in the radio program; plus, they were highly remunerated for their participation, making up to five thousand dollars per show. Additionally, the brand achieved its goals by positioning itself in the movies and associating its product with the admired female stars.

Lux Radio Theatre began broadcasting at the beginning of each summer and ended at the beginning of the following summer. It ran for a total of twenty-one seasons, to which a summer season between June and August has to be added in 1953. During the first two seasons, the program was broadcast from New York and because of this the adaptations used were versions of Broadway plays, which in their entirety were later adapted for the cinema. The first broadcast was *7th Heaven* (October 14, 1934), which was on Broadway from 1922 to 1924 and was made into a film by Twentieth Century Fox in 1927, with Frank Borzage as the director, and Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell in the lead roles, although Miriam Hopkins and Charles Farrell performed in the radio version, which was the first of four.

In June 1936, Lux Radio Theatre relocated to Hollywood. This move was dictated by logistical issues; it's where the stars lived and worked, but it was also a question of advertising strategy: if the brand's objective was to be associated with the movies, the program had to be broadcast from the epicenter of the movie world.

There were also important celebrity directors and organisers. One particular example is the participation of the legend and pioneer Cecil B. DeMille, who was the host, director, producer and conductor of the program from June 1936 to January 1945, a role for which he was paid a salary of one hundred thousand dollars a year. Other renowned participants include Edward G. Robinson, Walter Huston, the Barrymore brothers Lionel and John, Mitchell Leisen and Preston Sturges.

The last program was broadcast on June 7, 1955, with the voices of Walter Pidgeon and Frances Robinson, performing a version of the film *Edward, My Son*. The original film was directed by George Cukor in 1949, and starred Spencer Tracy and Deborah Kerr. Between the first program and the last, 926 episodes were broadcast and hundreds of artists participated, who in one way or another were part of the "dream factory". There were stars that reached legendary status in film history, starlets who started their

careers and in some cases managed to reach the top, and others who were less successful than expected. All of the actors and actresses served the brand and the product.

In the following lines we are going to reflect on the most prominent actresses and their roles in the program, keeping in mind that Lux toilet soap was a product originally targeted at women. The proposed role models for these women were the actresses. All of the stars we mention in the following (with the exception of Ingrid Bergman and Katharine Hepburn) also appeared in print ads for Lux soap, which were placed in women's magazines and publications centred on the movies. The actresses' participation in the program obeyed the marketing strategy of the brand.

Actresses with a high number of performances (more than fifteen):

Loretta Young did more Lux Radio Theatre performances than anyone else. In all, she performed in a total of twenty-six broadcasts. Today her name doesn't appear at the same level as other stars who stayed in the collective memory of the star-system like Bette Davis, Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Katharine Hepburn, but between the end of the twenties and the following decades, she had a brilliant career which won her the Oscar in 1947 for her performance in *The Farmer's Daughter* (Potter, 1947). The same as other stars, when her career began to wane in Hollywood, she hosted her own television program, *The Loretta Young Show*, which was on the air for 8 years and won 3 Emmys. She first appeared on Lux Radio Theatre in its premier season (June 16, 1935), when *The Patsy* was aired. She worked with the actor Eric Dressler. *The Patsy* was a film by King Vidor from 1928. Of all of her performances, the following stand out: *Jezabel*, in the program she performed alongside Brian Donlevy (25 November 1940), giving voice to the role Bette Davis had played two years previously; *Philadelphia Stories* (14 June 1943), alongside Robert Taylor, a version of the famous George Cukor film in 1940; the adaptation of the mythical Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (5 June 1944), along with Orson Welles, who had participated in the film version with Joan Fontaine, some months before. In January 1948 she performed in the adaptation of the film for which she had won the Oscar a year before, *The Farmer's Daughter*. She appeared with her co-star from the film, Joseph Cotten. On January 15, 1951 they both participated in the same radio broadcast version of the film again.

On October 11, 1937 Barbara Stanwyck played *Stella Dallas* in a Lux Radio Theatre adaptation. Stanwyck won an Oscar for the role a few months previously and it launched her career. This was her second performance on the program. In total she did twenty-three shows. She debuted with Fred MacMurray in *Main Street* August 3, 1936, the same actor with whom she performed in the American Noir genre *Double Indemnity* (1944), by Billy Wilder; and together they performed in the radio adaptation of the film on October 10, 1950. Both actors also participated in cinematic and radio versions of *Remember the Night* (March 25, 1940) and *Ball of Fire* (June 1, 1942), in which she acted with Gary Cooper. The payroll of male actors whose voices appeared with Barbara Stanwyck comprises a good part of the pantheon of Hollywood's golden age: Errol Flynn, Robert Taylor, Tyrone Power, Burt Lancaster, Stewart Granger, Melvin Douglas, Ray Milland, and the before-mentioned Fred MacMurray and Gary Cooper.

In 1934 Claudette Colbert starred in two films as an antagonistic character. These roles demonstrated her versatility and strength as an actress, in addition to giving her the right to occupy the most glorious pages of film history: Fran Capra's comedy *It Happened One Night*, for which she won the Oscar, and the drama *Imitation of Life* by John M. Stahl. She worked with Cecil B. DeMille in *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) and *Cleopatra* (1934), which more than sufficiently guaranteed Colbert's reputation leading to the legendary director choosing her for twenty-three appearances on Radio Lux Theatre. One of the adaptations that stands out is *It Happened One Night* (March 20, 1939) which Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert performed five years after its successful release as a film. Other programs based on her

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successful films were: *The Gilded Lily* (January 1, 1937), alongside Fred MacMurray; *Midnight* (May 20, 1940), with Don Ameche; and *Without Reservations* (August 26, 1946), with Robert Cummings. Colbert's performance in other adaptations were remarkable as well, even when she was in a role that was originally played with other actresses in the film versions, such as Katharine Hepburn (*Alice Adams*, January 3, 1938); Carole Lombard (*Hands Across the Table*, May 3, 1937); and Bette Davis (*The Corn is Green*, May 17, 1954).

Olivia de Havilland will always be remembered in her role as Melanie Hamilton in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), which eclipsed the rest of her career and led her to win two Oscars in 1947 for her role in *To Each His Own*, by Mitchell Leisen, and in 1949 for *The Heiress*, by William Wyler. Besides accompanying Errol Flynn in some of the most important work in adventure and western films such as *Captain Blood* (Curtiz, 1935), *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Curtiz, 1938) and *They Died with Their Boots On* (Walsh, 1941), Melanie Hamilton also participated in nineteen different Lux programs. Of these programs, as is logical, she coincided with her usual partner in recreating adaptations of the cited successes.

In 1931, Irene Dunne was nominated to the Oscar for her role in *Cimarron* (Ruggles, 1931), the first of a total of five nominations, which indicated that she was an admired and popular actress. Her great success was *The Awful Truth* (1937), a comedy by Leo McCarey which she performed with Cary Grant. She also made the radio version on January 18, 1955. In addition to this, she also participated in *Theodora Goes Wild* (June 13, 1938) and *Mr. Blanding Builds His Dream House* (October 10, 1949). She performed in the film *Love Affair* (McCarey, 1939) with Charles Boyer, which was adapted for radio twice. Irene Dunne participated in both adaptations, although with a different counterpart each time. In the first adaptation, she worked with William Powell (April 1, 1940), and the second with Charles Boyer (July 6, 1942).

Even though in popular memory Ginger Rogers is associated with musicals and with Fred Astaire, her film career actually spans more than one hundred and fifty films, only ten of which were with Fred Astaire. Ginger Rogers performed fourteen times for Lux but she never did so with Fred Astaire. We have confirmed that the reason for this is because Fred Astaire is one of the few actors who was part of the small coterie of stars that did not participate in the radio adaptations. Of all of Ginger Rogers's broadcasts, the one that stands out is *Kitty Folie* (May 5, 1941), the film version for which she won her only Oscar. Another of her great successes that was not a musical, was her performance alongside Ray Milland, in Billy Wilders's debut as a director, *The Major and the Minor* (1942). A year later both actors starred in the radio adaptation of the film (May 31, 1943).

Ida Lupino was one of the actresses who participated most in the program, yet she was one of the most unknown, or forgotten actresses, although she worked with famous directors such as Raoul Walsh, Rouben Mamoulian, Henry Hathaway and Michael Curtiz. Her trajectory was altered when two unusual events occurred, which demonstrated her strong personality, contrasting with her delicate physique. She was one of the first actresses (along with Olivia de Havilland) to openly challenge the draconian conditions of the contracts issued by the larger studios. This led to her being boycotted by these same studios. Additionally, she embarked on a career in production and directing. Her films were not very relevant, but her participation in Lux Radio was. She made fifteen programs, demonstrating her talent as an actress. In *Wurthing Heights* (November 4, 1940) she performed alongside Basil Rathbone; in *Rebecca* (March 3, 1941) she worked with Ronald Colman, and she performed in *All about Eve* (November 23, 1954) with Ann Blyth.

Actresses and their average number of performances (14-8):

When Bette Davis appeared for the first time on March 30, 1936 in the *The Lion and the Mouse*, she was already one of the most famous and renowned actresses. A year before she had won an Oscar for her role in *Dangerous* (Green, 1935). She was nominated in 1934 for *Of Human Bondage* (Cromwell, 1934), which was only the beginning of one of the most successful careers in Hollywood. She participated thirteen times, and two adaptations of one of her more famous films *The Letter* (Wyler, 1940) particularly stands out. On both occasions the star of the original film, Herbert Marshall, intervened (April 21, 1941 and March 6, 1944). In her last program she lent her voice to another one of the characters that marked her career, Margo in *All about Eve* (October 1, 1951).

The first time Joan Fontaine was involved with the program she did so with an adaptation of the film for which she won her only Oscar, Alfred Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941), even though the masculine lead was played by her husband Brian Aherne and not the original star Gary Cooper (May 4, 1942). Her career was conditioned by the success of the films *Suspicion* and *Rebecca* (1940), both of which were directed by Hitchcock, and although she later worked with directors like Mitchell Leisen, Billy Wilder, Nicholas Ray and Orson Welles, her roles never had the same repercussions as when she worked with the master of suspense. She participated in the program twelve times, of which the following performances stand out: *You Gotta Stay Happy* (January 17, 1949) alongside James Stewart, the same actor with whom she made the film; *The President's Lady* (September 28, 1953), with Charlton Heston and Susan Hayward; and *Undercurrent* (November 30, 1953), with Mel Ferrer, giving voice to the characters that she'd played on screen with Katharine Hepburn and Robert Taylor.

The film that launched Rosalind Russell to stardom, after many years of minor roles, was the famous Howard Hawks satire, *His Girl Friday* (1940), even though the only time this film was adapted for the radio it was Claudette Colbert who gave voice to the starring role. Russell did play a role in the adaptation of *My Sister Eileen* (July 7, 1943) for which she'd won the Oscar a year before, and she also participated twice in one of the most popular comedies she made *What a woman* (1943); on both occasions she acted with Robert Cummings (March 14, 1949 and May 31, 1954). In total, she participated in the program a dozen times.

Greer Garson's Hollywood debut was a dream come true for any actress: she was the star of a film that made cinematic history, received very good reviews, was a success with the public and got her seven nominations for the Oscar, one of which was best actress. *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (Wood, 1939) only received one award — best actor Robert Donat — in 1940, but three years later Garson was awarded the Oscar for her role in *Mrs. Miniver* (Wyler, 1942), which made her one of the best actresses of the decade. Garson co-starred in this film with Walter Pidgeon, and they developed a good part of their careers together and as a logical consequence, the managers at Lux Radio took advantage of their popularity. Together they intervened in the radio adaptations of some of their most successful films: *Blossoms in the Dust* (February 16, 1942), *Mrs. Miniver* (December 6, 1943), *Madame Curie* (September 16, 1946), *Mrs. Parkington* (November 25, 1946), and *That Forsyte Woman* (November 5, 1951). Garson took part in eleven programs and in her last appearance (December 15, 1952) she played Katharine Hepburn's role in *The Queen of Africa* (1951).

When Maureen O'Hara participated in the Lux Radio program for the first time in 1943, she was one of the most popular and prestigious actresses for her role in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Dieterle, 1939), with Charles Laughton and for the mythical John Ford's film *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), but her first radio adaptation was not of one of her own films but the version of *Heaven Can Wait* (October 11, 1943), taking on the role originally played by Gene Tierney. She participated in eleven broadcasts,

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of which *The Fallen Sparrow* (February 14, 1944), *Do You Love Me?* (December 23, 1946) and *The Foxes of Harrow* (6-12-1948) stand out, and in which she also starred in the original cinematic version.

In the 1940s, the brilliant, German American film director Fritz Lang fused the codes of film noir which until then Hollywood had relied on European expressionism. Joan Bennet participated in those productions as an “all-terrain” actress, who had portrayed many different roles in the 1930s and worked with prestigious directors such as Frank Borzage, Raoul Walsh and George Cukor. Her meeting with Lang and the actor Edward G. Robinson—another film noir icon— delivered titles like *Scarlet Street* (1945) and *The Woman in the Window* (1944). Joan Bennett starred in the radio adaptation of *The Woman in the Window* (June 25, 1945). Of the ten broadcasts she performed with Henry Fonda in *I Met My Love Again* (May 30, 1938), with Errol Flynn in *Trade Wings* (March 4, 1940), and with Gary Cooper in *Casanova Brown* (December 11, 1944).

Merle Oberon’s last appearance on Lux Radio was the night of September 14, 1954, playing a role she’d done fifteen years before as Cathy in *Wuthering Heights*. William Wyler’s epic film took her to stardom along with Laurence Olivier and David Niven. Previously she had participated in seven other adaptations, of which some of her film successes stand out: *The Dark Angel* (June 22, 1936), *Till We Meet Again* (June 10, 1940) and *The Cowboy and the Lady* (January 20, 1941).

In the golden age of Hollywood, when producers were very powerful and the star system dominated, Europe became a recruiting ground for artists and films that crossed the Atlantic and were adapted to the Hollywood style. This was the case with Ingrid Bergman, a Swedish actress who had acted in *Intermezzo* (Molander, 1936) in her home country, which three years later she would play the same role in the United States, alongside one of the masculine stars of the era, Leslie Howard. She made her radio debut in an adaptation of this film (January 29, 1940), which she would do again five years later (June 4, 1945). In 1944 she won the Oscar for her role in *Gaslight* (Cukor), which was adapted for the radio with its two stars, Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer (April 29, 1946). In total she made 8 appearances on Radio Lux Theatre.

Miriam Hopkins was the first actress to appear on Lux Radio Theatre. She played Janet Gaynor’s role in the radio version of *7th Heaven* (October 14, 1934). Gaynor won the Oscar for best actress in the first awards ceremony celebrated in May 1929. It was the first of a total of eight performances, among which she played the same roles as in some of her cinematic successes such as *The Old Maid* (October 30, 1939) and *Old Acquaintance* (May 29, 1944).

Actresses with a low number of performances (7-2):

Obviously most artists would fall into this category, so it would be impossible to reference all of them. Therefore, we will highlight the most famous actresses and make a brief note on their performances.

In film history, the name Gene Tierney will always be linked to the film *Laura*, which was directed by Otto Preminger in 1944, in which she starred alongside Dana Andrews which gave them both worldwide fame. Both actresses participated in the first radio adaptation of the film (February 5, 1945), and nine years later Gene Tierney changed partners and acted in the second version with Victor Mature (February 1, 1954). She lent her voice to seven programs.

Only two of the six programs Lana Turner did were adaptations of films she had acted in herself: *Slightly Dangerous* (October 25, 1943) and *Green Dolphin Street* (September 19, 1949). In the other radio adaptations, Turner played characters previously interpreted by Ann Sheridan, Jean Arthur, Hedy Lamarr and Lila Lee.

Of the five radio versions Rita Hayworth participated in, only one program corresponded to a role she’d played in a film: *Strawberry Blonde* (February 23, 1942). In the others, she played roles previously

interpreted by Myrna Loy in *Test Pilot* (May 25, 1942), Paulette Godard in *The Lady Has Plans* (April 26, 1943), Katharine Hepburn in *Break of Hearts* (September 11, 1944) and Merle Oberon in *This Love of Ours* (February 4, 1946).

It's obvious that Marlene Dietrich, with her personality, would only accept radio adaptations of roles she'd actually played herself in the movies. She did five radio plays, of which the first two stand out, *The Legionnaire and the Lady* (filmed as *Morocco*, by von Sternberg, 1930) (June 1, 1936) and *Desire* (March 15, 1937). The film versions of these radio plays made Dietrich a legend.

At the end of the 1920s and towards the beginning of the 1930s, Joan Crawford was a regular in Lux's print advertisements. However, her performances on the radio program were few. She only did five shows in total and these were concentrated in the first broadcasts. One of the more remarkable broadcasts was *Chained* (July 27, 1936), in which she'd co-starred with Clark Gable in the film; and the other was *Anna Christie* (February 7, 1938), in a role originally played by Greta Garbo.

Shirley Temple appeared the first time on Lux Radio in 1940, when she was twelve years old. Her career had already begun to decline. She participated in a total of four broadcasts. Hollywood's most famous and profitable child prodigy made her Lux Radio Theatre debut in a role that she'd played herself in the cinema, *The Littlest Rebel* (October 14, 1940). In 1949 she retired from the movies and played her last role, a radio adaptation of one of her latest films: *The Bachelor and the Bobby-soxer* (June 13, 1949).

Elizabeth Taylor only did two broadcasts, which coincided in the same session. The first was with Mickey Rooney in an adaptation of *National Velvet* (February 3, 1947). Taylor and Rooney had co-starred in the movie three years before. She also did *Cynthia* (June 23, 1947), which was a minor film in her long list of film credits.

Ava Gardner made two programs, based on films she'd acted in. The first was *Singapore* (November 3, 1947) and the second *Show Boat* (November 11, 1952).

A lot of Katharine Hepburn's films were adapted for the radio, but she only acted in two of them. The first was a special program, broadcast outside of the regular season and its objective was to raise money for the army. She acted with Cary Grant and James Stewart in *Philadelphia Stories* (July 20, 1942). The first and last time was a version of another of her films, *Undercurrent* (June 10, 1947).

To conclude this section, we will name other actresses that performed in the program and were very popular in their day, but their names are not known outside of film-buff circles. These women are at best, distant memories. They are Jeanette MacDonald, Marion Davies, Fay Wray, Dorothy Lamour, Paulette Goddard, Claire Trevor, Veronica Lake, Betty Grable, Sylvia Sydney, Donna Reed, Jean Peters, Piper Laurie and Eleanor Parker, among many others. Present your perspective on the issues, controversies, problems, etc., as they relate to theme and arguments supporting your position. Compare and contrast with what has been, or is currently being done as it relates to the chapter's specific topic and the main theme of the book.

CONCLUSION

A good many of the stars only appeared on the program once. There are cases where the testimonial intervention motive was more obvious, for example, in the case of Jean Harlow, "the platinum blonde", whose premature death in 1937 at age twenty-seven cut her career short. Harlow participated in *Madame Sans-Gene* (December 14, 1936) six months before her death. Other cases, however, are more difficult to explain. Some of the celebrities who stand out the most, are Jennifer Jones (*7th Heaven*, October 16,

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1944), Grace Kelly (*Anchors Away*, December 29, 1947), Jean Simmons (*Adam and Evelyne*, September 29, 1952); Lauren Bacall (*To Have and Have Not*, October 14, 1946); and Vivian Leigh (*Rebecca*, November 6, 1950).

One can only speculate about the absence of some of the most famous Hollywood stars in the Lux Radio Theatre broadcasts. It could have been because of economic questions, “fear” of live broadcasts, pressure from the studios, disagreements about the film chosen for adaptation or co-stars, et cetera. Whatever the reasons, Mae West, Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn and Greta Garbo never performed on Lux Radio Theatre. The case of Greta Garbo is remarkable because although Mae West, Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn all appeared in print ads for Lux soap, we have not been able to find any advertising of the brand with the image of Greta Garbo. And what is even more surprising still, during the documentation process for the elaboration of this project, we were not able to find any advertisements of any kind featuring Greta Garbo (except for posters promoting her films, which is logical).

In Hollywood, it was widely rumoured that Olivia de Havilland and Joan Fontaine were sisters and that furthermore they hated each other. One of the most violent episodes in the long-lived enmity was during the Oscar ceremony of 1941. The two sisters were nominated for the same award, Olivia de Havilland for *Hold Back the Night* (Leisen, 1941) and Joan Fontaine for *Suspicion* (Hitchcock, 1941). Fontaine won in the end. The following year she interpreted her role in the radio adaptation (May 4, 1942). What was remarkable about the rebroadcast on the night of September 18, 1944 was that on this occasion the voice of the leading actress was Fontaine’s sister and eternal nemesis, Olivia de Havilland.

The program managers knew that audiences were interested in the private lives of the stars, especially their romantic lives. The big studios also knew to play on this when they promoted their films. This practice was definitely something they used to increase their audiences. Thus, many famous couples acted together in the broadcasts. In the only performances they made, Lauren Bacall, Jean Simmons and Vivian Leigh starred with their husbands, Humphrey Bogart, Stewart Granger and Laurence Olivier, respectively. Other cases were: Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth in *Break of Hearts* (September 11, 1944), Carole Lombard and William Powell in *My Man Godfrey* (May 9, 1938), Tyrone Power and Linda Christian in *Mississippi Gambler* (March 1, 1954) Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester in *The Sidewalks of London* (February 12, 1940). Ronald Reagan participated on the program on six occasions, the first time alongside his first wife, Jane Wyman in *Nobody Lives Forever* (November 17, 1947).

Judy Garland participated in the radio adaptation of the film *A Star Is Born* (February 28, 1942). The original film was directed by William A. Wellman in 1937, starring Janet Gaynor and Fredric March. At that time, Garland was twenty years old, and she was a star, at the top of her career. However, at the end of the decade she was a broken toy, consumed by drugs and psychologically damaged. She was fired because of her inability to face the cameras and perform her scenes. After several years of treatment, she returned to the movies in 1954, and was well-received by critics and the public alike. A new version of *A Star Is Born* was directed by George Cukor. We could say that with the radio version in 1942, and the film in 1954, represented the ascent, fall and resurrection of Judy Garland.

Some Hollywood stars intervened in several programs in the earlier years. The Gish sisters, Lillian and Dorothy, gave voice to two of the roles in *Little Women* (April 21, 1935); Gloria Swanson played the role that made her famous in the cinema *Sunset Boulevard* (September 17, 1951); Tallulah Bankhead, one of the most fascinating actresses from the silent film era, interpreted a version of *Let Us Be Gay* (December 2, 1934); Norma Shearer, the most important female lead at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in the 1920s and part of the 1930s participated in *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* (November 5, 1942).

We don't want to end without mentioning the male performers. The draw these programs held over the female consumer audience was that the actresses served as a behavioural model for women listeners, but the male performers also had a role to play, contributing to the positioning of the brand with movie audiences. The actor who appeared in the most programs was Fred MacMurray, who performed twenty-seven times. He was an extraordinary actor with an extensive and brilliant film career, but he never reached the caliber of other stars. Of his performances *Double Indemnity* stands out (October 30, 1950). Other actors that trail him in number of performances include: Cary Grant, twenty-four shows, including *Strangers on a Train* (September 21, 1953); William Holden, fifteen broadcasts *Sunset Boulevard* (September 17, 1951); Robert Taylor acted in thirteen broadcasts, *Magnificent Obsession* (April 26, 1937); James Stewart, twelve times, *What a Wonderful Life!* (March 10, 1947); Gary Cooper, 10 broadcasts, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (February 12, 1945); Alan Ladd, ten times, *Casablanca* (January 24, 1944); Errol Flynn, nine programs, *Captain Blood* (February 22, 1937); Edward G. Robinson, nine times, *The Maltese Falcon* (February 8, 1943); Clark Gable, six times, *It Happened One Night* (March 20, 1939); Spencer Tracy, six programs, *Bitter Victory* (January 8, 1940); Tyrone Power, six times, *Blood and Sand* (October 20, 1941). Other actors that lent their voice to Lux Radio Theatre were: Leslie Howard, David Niven, Rock Hudson, Burt Lancaster, James Cagney, James Mason, Kirk Douglas, Charlton Heston, John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Gregory Peck, and a long list of lesser-known celebrities.

All of the actors and actresses contributed to the formation of the identity of the Lux product, which used the potential of the movies to generate a popular identity, as argued by McDonald (2005).

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Advertising: A professional form of persuasive communication that aims to promote products, services or ideas.

Lux Radio Theatre: Classic radio anthology program that was broadcasted in United States since 1934 to 1955 sponsored by Lux toilet soap.

Star System: Method of creating and promoting stars in the so-called golden age of Hollywood.

Chapter 14

360° Video as an Opportunity for the Inclusion of Product Placement

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on 360 ° video in the context of product placement. At the beginning, a description of advertising related to profitability as an important factor for organizations' success is given, and the need is exposed for effective advertising approaches. This is followed by a description of 360° video, including all relevant theoretical concepts. The latter serves for placing the modality of the medium between traditional video and virtual reality. The following section focuses on the essential aspects of product placement characteristics for studying in terms of 360° video. Finally, the topics are linked by examining the correlation between concepts and analyzing existing videos across certain platforms intended for immersive story-telling. 360° video is identified as an immersive medium with potential for the inclusion of product placement. At the end, there is a discussion including theoretical implications, future directions, and limitations are exposed, and a conclusion is reached.

INTRODUCTION

360° video is attracting increasing interest as a relatively new immersive medium in the digital world. Users of the medium can watch video content from one point of view to all directions, and engage in the meaning making process. In comparison with the conventional video, 360° video provides a more immersive experience, and viewers may sense the so-called feeling of “being there”. In terms of Virtual Reality, the concepts immersion and presence are generally understood to mean the perception of being

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physically present in a virtual world, and are becoming an important part of an interactive storytelling content in the frame of digital marketing strategy.

This opens opportunities and challenging issues, not only for video producers, but also for companies and advertising agencies willing to incorporate branded products into the modality of the mentioned medium. Such mode of advertising brands is called product placement. It affects consumers' unconsciousness, which has a significant impact on advertising efficiency. Nevertheless, there has been little discussion on this type of advertising in 360° video, hence, the aim of this chapter is to examine thoroughly the theoretical aspects of the mentioned areas and the correlations between them. This is achieved by providing necessary interdisciplinary knowledge for anyone in contact with, or interested in, the constantly changing digital technology surrounding Virtual Reality, by providing strong theoretical frameworks in both areas. It provides academics and employees in media and the advertising industry an in-depth understanding of this special immersive storytelling video in relation to product placement, and shows several unique features that characterize and objectivize the picture of new digital technology and new marketing strategies. Accordingly, the interest of the study is to encourage further research on this topic, and to provide key insights for all experts wanting to keep in contact with new media technology trends.

This chapter is organized as follows. The topic is divided into four main sections, called (1) Advertising and Profitability, (2) 360° Video, (3) Product Placement, (4) Product Placement in 360° Video and (5) Discussion and Conclusion. Firstly, the context of advertising and profitability is presented as an introduction to the need for effective advertising channels by using different advertising approaches. Then, 360° video and key VR terminology are described. This leads to identifying essential concepts, like presence, and immersion, which add value to this kind of medium compared to more traditional forms.

Furthermore, product placement is defined and characterized with a focus on the psychological aspect, level of involvement and legislative regulations. Besides, important measurable variables and concepts are outlined regarding the placement. Lastly, the explored theoretical concepts are related together by providing a modest number of existing studies. Furthermore, empirical studies of three different storytelling websites and their 360° videos are analyzed and compared according to predetermined specifications by using descriptive methodology. The study is concluded by providing key takeaways and summarizing the outcomes. In addition, implications and future directions, including limitations for researchers, producers and users, are offered towards the end of the chapter.

ADVERTISING AND PROFITABILITY

Advertising efficiency, or the ratio of advertising inputs to outputs (Pergelova et al., 2010), can have an important effect on a firm's overall success (Vardanyan and Tremblay, 2006). More specifically, advertising has a positive impact on profitability (Comanor & Wilson, 1974), which is important to consider, since the core aim of companies and their functioning is to maximize profit (Tomkiewicz, 2017).

Notta and Oustapassidis (2001) researched 350 firms in Greece and examined the effects of television, radio, newspaper and magazine advertising on firms' profitability, where it turned out that only television advertising increases profitability. Chen and Waters (2017, p. 240) examined advertising expenditures and production efficiency, and claimed that the advertising expenditures are directly related to industries' profitability. Moreover, they stated that: "firms with an advantage in productive efficiency, advertise more and have higher profits if advertising is sufficiently cost effective." A similar relation was exposed by Rahman et al. (2019), who pointed out a positive correlation between direct to end-user

advertising efficiency and firm profitability. On the other hand, companies mustn't only measure their success through financial performance (e. g., profits or return on investment), but also consider their impact on the wider economy, and general society. Companies are also held responsible for their social effects on society (Zentes et al., 2017).

The findings of the study by Cheong et al. (2014) indicated an overall increase in the advertising inefficiency of U.S. advertisers between 1985 and 2012. Since effective advertising plays an important role in marketing success, it is essential to test and choose a suitable form of an advertisement according to a media channel (Cymbala & Owczarcuk, 2011). In addition, SuperData research (2015) expected brand owners and advertisers to adapt to emergent forms of entertainment. Thus, marketing professionals are looking for effective advertising channels by using different strategies (Peng et al., 2014), which also applies to the content of this chapter.

The issues of advertising have arisen since consumers skip and consciously ignore the ads. A suitable example of this is shown in the results of the Page Fair research (2017), which found out that 600 million devices were running adblock software globally in 2016. Given these changes, classic advertising becomes less and less effective and, moreover, does so because of excessive advertising. Advertisers, therefore, seek all possible means to achieve previously set goals in order to achieve the highest effect. Due to consumers' control over the ads and the effective communication process, they do not consciously detect the content's commercial purpose (Tomažič, 2016). Therefore, organizations tend to use product placement as an alternative form to traditional advertising (Coker & Altobello, 2018), or, as Gillespie et al. (2018, p. 100) claimed: "Marketers have sought the use of media-based product placements, through which brands are placed in narrative with the intent of gaining brand awareness and generating favorable brand attitudes."

In terms of 360° video, results in the IAB (2018) survey show that 43% of respondents working in the advertising industry are planning to invest in VR video. The statistics indicate the medium as a potential environment for the purposes of advertising and product placement. Before defining the product placement more precisely, the following chapter contains fundamental characteristics of 360° video and its related theoretical concepts that provide an understanding of this relatively new media format as an opportunity for the inclusion of product placement.

360° VIDEO

The Cisco Visual Networking Index (2019) shows that video will take 82% of all IP traffic by 2022. According to the research, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), in general, will increase 12-fold between 2017 and 2022. Among the above mentioned is also the 360° video, as a part of Virtual Reality which has become more popular since 2012 after the development of a device called Oculus Rift by Palmer Luckey as one of the most successful Kickstarter projects (Somrak et al., 2019). The virtual reality content and 360° videos have spread rapidly across different platforms and services, such as NBC, CNN and the New York Times (Afzal et al. 2017). One of the most widely used social media sites, Facebook, (Pew Research Center, 2019) has its own Facebook 360 community, intended for content creators to share their immersive stories (Facebook 360, 2019). As of July 2019, the Virtual Reality channel on YouTube has more than 3 million subscribers. There are also other video platforms that are specially intended for, or at least provide, VR and 360 video content, such as Within, which provides watching various 360° stories according to different film genres.

When considering the 360° video, also known as VR video (Wang & Chen, 2019), it is important to distinguish between theoretical concepts of AR, VR and its subset 360° video. While VR refers to a user's immersion within a virtual synthetic environment without the possibility to see the real-world surroundings, AR supplements reality by superimposing virtual objects "upon or composited with the real world" (Azuma, 1997). In comparison to 360° video, Fraustino et al. (2018) explain that VR is fully interactive, and allows users to move in all directions within a 3-dimensional space, whereas 360° video allows viewers to observe captured action from a stationary position. The first allows 6 Degrees Of Freedom (DOF) and the second only 3 DOF. Even so, the camera can move, but viewers' interaction is limited to choosing only a perspective rather than directions of camera movement.

Flavián et al. (2019) propose a new taxonomy of technology, or so-called "EPI Cube", based on integration of three human-technology interaction (HTI) related factors: Technological (embodiment), psychological (presence), and behavioral (interactivity) perspectives. The recommended EPI Cube rates HMD 360° video relatively high according to the perceptual presence and technological embodiment. On the other hand, it is quite behind the 6 Degrees Of Freedom in a computer-generated virtual environment. All the mentioned concepts, classification and identification of the 360° video within the boundaries between different realities are explained further in the subsection "EPI Cube."

As opposed to conventional digital camera, a 360° video camera differs mostly in stitching two 180° angles of view, supporting monoscopic or stereoscopic format, and usually has higher resolution (e. g. from HD 1920x1080 to 8K 7689 × 3840). 360° video can be watched by using Head-Mounted Displays (HMDs) Nevertheless, an HMD is not the only option to play the content. The 360° video is a panoramic view captured from one camera position to all directions. This means consumers can choose a perspective on their own by moving their head while wearing the HMD, dragging a computer mouse, or swiping on a tablet or phone. The authors point out the mentioned pervasiveness across platforms and contexts as an important perspective of the medium (Azuma, 1997 & Fraustino et al., 2018).

Presence and Immersion

Wang and Chen (2019) explain an example of watching a 360° captured concert, where an advantage of the media is shown in a perceived experience of the event without being physically present in the environment. Therefore, 360° videos differ from different media, such as traditional films, websites and digital games. The advantage reflects in a so-called immersive experience with perceived presence, which enables viewers a feeling of being physically present in a given environment (Rupp et al., 2016). Fraustino et al. (2018) explain that respondents detect spatial presence as significantly more obvious when watching 360° video content versus the traditional one. In addition, their findings confirm 360° video content as credibly helpful and impactful in a disaster communication context.

In terms of Virtual Reality and 360° video, both the presence and immersion play an important role. The presence evokes the previously mentioned feeling of "being there" that misleads the user to forget about his real-world surroundings (Lombard & Ditton, 1997). From the psychological perspective, the term means a perception of being at a specified or understood place (Kim & Biocca, 1997). Fraustino et al. (2018) stated spatial presence and telepresence, which are generally understood as the same. The term telepresence allows the user to see and feel what is happening in a different location (Minsky, 1980 & Lombard et al., 2006). Moreover, it means being present in a mediated virtual environment (Sheridan, 1992; Kim & Biocca, 1997; Steuer, 1995). In this chapter, the concept is referred to as the generic term "presence."

Presence is a subjective feeling that depends on an individual, while immersion is an objective feature of technology. Immersion refers to involvement in something while being in action, and several types are defined, such as physical, mental, active and passive immersion, described in detail by Muhanna (2015). In general terms, VR systems vary in their immersion level, while users' experience with the same VR system varies in a presence level (Bowman & McMahan, 2007; Vettehen et al., 2019). When determining a level of visual immersion, Bowman and McMahan (2007) state that the following factors play an important role: Field Of View (FOV), field of regard (the total size of the visual field), display size, display resolution, stereoscopy (different images to each eye), head-based rendering, realism of lighting, frame rate and refresh rate.

Nevertheless, presence and immersion depend on many more factors, such as video quality and resolution, users' experiences of using the technology, visual discomfort and the distance between viewers and the action. Sheikh et al. (2016) conducted tests, and confirmed that distance affected the participants' enjoyment of the clip and their feeling of being there.

Interactivity

Steuer (1992, p. 80) defined interactivity as “the degree to which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environment”). Another definition explains interactivity as a mediated environment responding according to participants' actions (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Interactivity as such is, nowadays, considered as an important aspect of Virtual Reality. According to Carrozzino and Bergamasco, (2010, p. 453) interaction refers to “the user's capability of modifying the environment and receiving a feedback to his/her actions.”. To this matter, VR refers to a complex technology for immersive interactive digital environment.

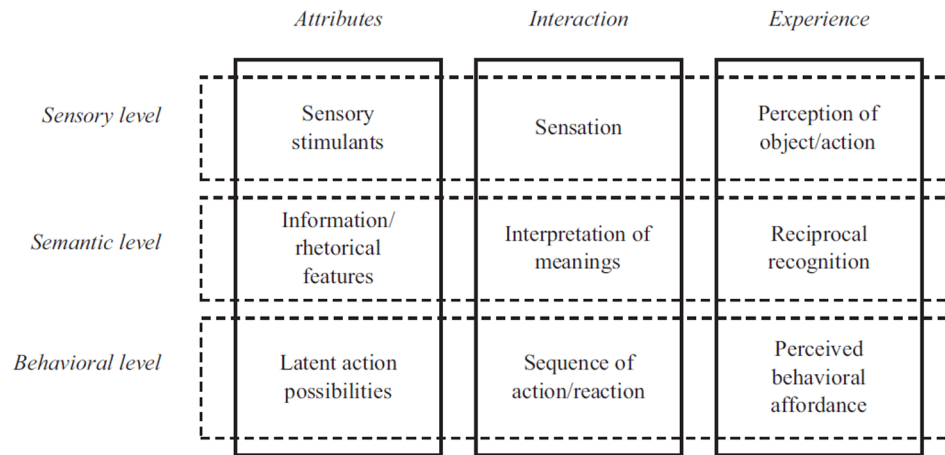
A general structure of perceived interactivity is provided by Sohn (2011), who explains interaction experience through sensory, semantic and behavioral dimensions. The latter help researchers to understand differences and similarities among various modes of interaction, as can be seen in Figure 1. Each person first perceives information from interaction through sensory organs (sensory level), then he or she tries to interpret the meaning (semantic level) and decides about taking actions (behavioral level). The interaction is, thus, correlated with the degree of stimulated senses at the sensory level, interpretation of meanings in a semantic level and the possible actions at a behavioral level.

Sohn (2011) further points out an example of broadcast radio and television, which can have more perceived interaction at the sensory level (auditory and visual stimulants), whereas personalized magazines may be more interactive at the semantic level. On the other hand, there are less possible actions with television than the Internet on a behavioral level. The study predicts interaction of all three dimensions combined to an optimal level in immersive experience. In recent years, growing usage of VR technologies has probably fulfilled the author's expectations.

In terms of the broad concept of Virtual Reality, interactions vary according to the type of technology and medium, which is explained further for the example of 360° video in the subsection “The EPI Cube”.

Figure 1. Syntactic model of interaction

Source: Sohn (2011)



Media Richness Theory

The media richness theory is another important theoretical aspect of Virtual Reality and video 360°. It reflects in a medium ability to convey more sensory detail and experience (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Trevino et al., 1990). This follows from the information richness concept, which is defined as the potential information carrying capacity of data (Daft & Lengel, 1984). One of the important variables regarding the media richness theory is the so-called vividness, which means “the representational richness of a mediated environment” (Steuer, 1992, p. 81). In addition, among other contributing factors to vividness, the author discuss two generalized variables, namely (1) Sensory breadth, referring to “the number of sensory dimensions presented simultaneously” and (2) Sensory depth, referring to “the resolution within each of these perceptual channels”. Perceptual systems are identified as the basic orienting system, auditory, haptic, taste-smell and visual systems (Gibson 1966). Steuer (1992) indicates traditional media (e. g. print, telephone, television and film) as “relatively low in breadth, relying primarily on the visual and auditory channels.” (Steuer, 1992, p. 81).

Klein (2003) highlights a positive correlation between media richness and the creation of presence, which had an important impact on persuasion in the context of marketing communication and product experience. Sukoco and Wu (2011) confirm that interactivity and media richness enhance the feeling of “being there” in the case of interactive websites, and indicate that a greater level of media richness increased affective responses. Nevertheless, Alamäki et al. (2019) show that the media richness alone is not the only important factor for triggering behavioral changes, and points out the importance of liking the video, reaching the right audience with the right storyline, and understanding the phase of the purchasing process. They indicate increased interactivity in terms of 360° video virtual reality as an important attribute of the media richness theory which should be considered in further studies. This is agreed by the authors of the current chapter, with the addition of considering the technical aspect, such as video resolution, which might decrease or increase the feeling of presence.

Embodiment

Finally, yet importantly, the technology embodiment is an essential concept regarding the definition of virtual reality technology and its content. A good practical explanation of the concept embodiment is given by an example of parallel car parking: “When well embodied, one feels rather than sees the distance between cars and curbone’s bodily sense is ‘extended’ to the parameters of the driver-car ‘body.’” Ihde (1990, p. 74). To this regard, embodiment refers to the technological extension of the human body. Longo et al. (2008) represents a systematic attempt to measure embodiment, and characterizes the experience of embodiment. On average, participants involved in the research perceived the object as a part of their body. External objects were, therefore, identified as a part of or a substitute for the body.

The concept of embodiment is also reflected in terms of virtual reality, since the users sense the VR components as a part of their bodies. Moreover: “Embodied experiences create the sensation of personally having experiences in VR. Users that embody their avatars show a tendency to perceive avatar actions as their own.” (Shin, 2017, p. 1831). The high degree of technological embodiment in VR is reflected in the integration of new technologies into the human body (for example HMD), which generates greater closeness with the human senses and increases the immersive experience (Flavián et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the degree of embodiment is intertwined with the concepts of presence and interactivity. The combination of the latter is described in the following subsection, which helps to narrow the classification toward the 360° video.

The EPI Cube

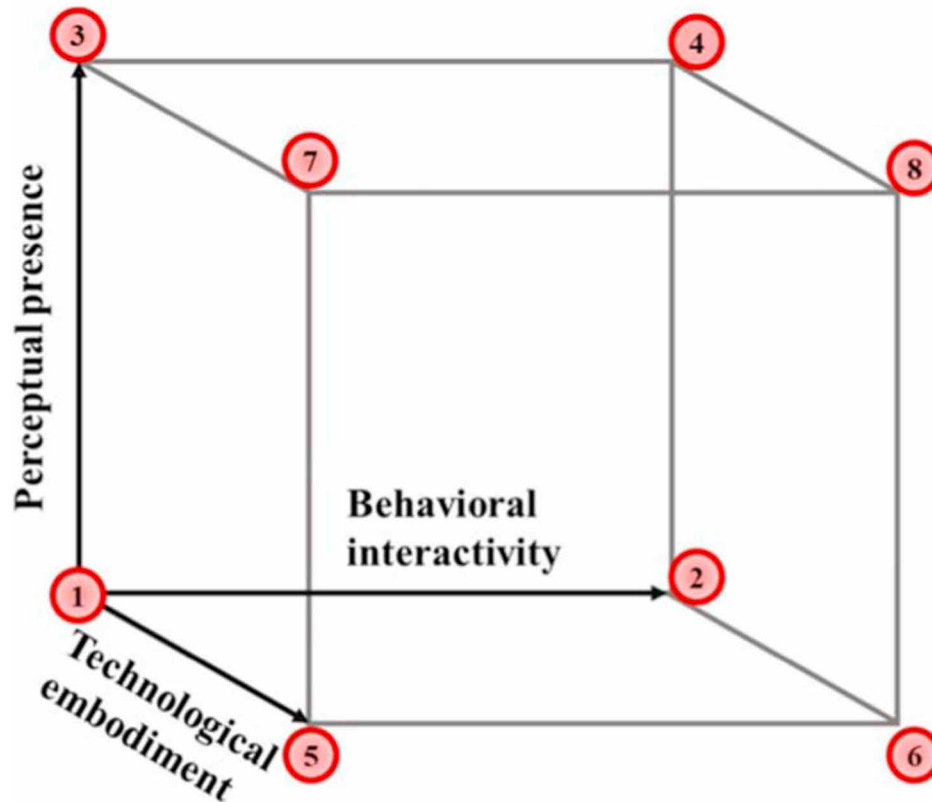
The EPI cube was proposed in 2019 by Flavián et al., and helps academics and practitioners to classify the reality-virtuality technologies to increase the understanding of the concepts regarding the technologies and consumer experience, and to choose the most appropriate technologies in a certain context.

The definition of different realities starts by differentiating two extremes – the real environment with elements of the real world and the virtual environment with a completely computer-generated environment and virtual elements. Between the extremes are different physical and virtual worlds integrated at different levels (Milgram & Kishino, 1994; Flavián et al., 2019).

The EPI cube helps academics and practitioners to classify the reality-virtuality technologies, increase the understanding of the concepts regarding the technologies and user experience, and choose the most appropriate technologies in a certain context. The model is visible in Figure 2, where it is possible to place different technologies according to the concepts` perceptual presence, behavioral interactivity and technological embodiment.

Table 1 shows roughly classified examples of technologies, which can take place between vertices according to their features and the degrees of previously mentioned concepts. Computer Web 1.0 is an example of technology that is low in all degrees, since it is not integrated into the body, users do not feel like being elsewhere, and they cannot modify the content as a part of behavioral interactivity. The latter is higher in an example of website online simulators that are placed on vertex 2. Video Walls and Virtual Worlds both have a high degree of presence, but the former does not allow modifying the content.

Figure 2. The EPI Cube
Source: Flavián et al. (2019)



360° HMD videos are placed somewhere between vertices 7 and 8, where users feel like they are elsewhere and can control the content, while they are limited on 3 DOF and cannot modify the form and position of elements. This means that the 360° video has a high degree of presence and technological embodiment on one hand, and less interactivity than a computer generated 6 DOF environment on the other. Nevertheless, playing 360° video content on computers or mobile phones is ranked lower, since it does not provide the same level of presence and embodiment. It seems like this is also related to a level of immersion, which is higher for HMD 360° video than 360° mobile video and 360° desktop video. An example of vertex 8, which is the highest in all the factors, is using VR HMD to move through the computer-generated virtual location and modify the digital objects. It has the highest levels of interactivity, presence and embodiment.

Table 1. Radical examples of technologies according to the EPI cube

Vertex	Radical examples of technologies
1	Computer Web 1.0.
2	Website online simulators
3	Video Wall
4	Virtual Worlds (e. g. Second Life)
5	Augmented Reality glasses
6	Mixer reality glasses (Holographic devices)
7	360-degree video HMD (fixed position)
8	Virtual Reality HMD with haptic devices

Source: Flavián et al. (2019)

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

360° video is in a phase of establishing itself across various distribution platforms. As mentioned in the opening chapters, the advertising industry shows an interest in this special video format. In addition, as can be read more precisely in the last section of this chapter, the experience of the described variables in previous sections can have an impact on product placement and advertising outcomes, such as brand recall. This section outlines the fundamental definitions of product placement and its related concepts relevant to discussing product placement within the context of 360° video.

Balasubramanian (1994) explains product placement as a type of hybrid message. Basic understanding starts in the distinction between advertising and publicity. An example of the latter is a media story on a brand without its identification. The key advantage of such publicity can be perceived as a more credible and objective message. On the other hand, it is not controlled fully by a sponsor. The European Commission (2010) defined product placement as “any form of audiovisual commercial communication consisting of the inclusion of or reference to a product, a service, or the trade mark thereof, so that it is featured within a program, in return for payment or for similar consideration.” However, it can cause drawbacks as well, since one is not able to distinguish between advertising and programming (Law & Braun, 2000). Product placement is, therefore, a disguised form of advertising: “The promotional message will melt into non-promotional plot lines, props, and dialogue, enabling advertisers to build brand equity without interrupting the narrative flow of programming.” (Tomažič et al., 2014, p. 108).

Product placement has started establishing as a form of placing paid branded product in movies in order to influence their viewers. It can be also defined as a relationship between a filmmaker and a product sponsor (Balasubramanian, 1994). It differs from advertising in a way that commercial content and program content are not strictly separated. In addition, product placement makes a message less commercial and more credible (Balasubramanian et al., 2014), and marketers tend to place brands in narrative formats in order to gain brand awareness and favorable brand attitudes (Gillespie et al., 2018). Despite the variety of academic interest in product placement, Balasubramanian (2006) stated that it can be very restricted concerning the methodological obstacles. The issue arises in the (in)ability to replicate the movie-watching experience and measuring the recall. Due to the movie’s length, the mentioned variables are hardly obtainable, and cannot be experienced in the same way as other media (e. g. print ads).

Balasubramanian (2006) proposed a conceptual model of product placement, which can help researchers and others in contact with product placement to understand the placement as comprehensively as possible. The model advances our understanding of product placement, and is a result of integrated findings from available placement literature. It consists of four main components: (1) Execution Factors (e.g. program type, placement modality & priming), (2) Individual-Difference Factors (e.g. brand familiarity, attitudes toward placement), (3) Processing Type/Context/Settings (degree of conscious processing) and (4) Effect(s) from placement (message outcome). The purpose of the model is to help researchers identify the gaps in further studies. The model and Tables, including all variables, can serve as an outset to understand the relevant concepts of product placement and their role in research settings thoroughly.

A deeper understanding of product placement, its effects and all above-stated variables reflect in the psychological aspect of the area. It has a lot to do with a human's mental processes, including the unconscious mind. More information on mental processes is described in the following subsection.

Psychological Aspect

Various schools and researchers have explored cognition, affection and conation as the threefold division of mental activities (Hilgard, 1980). Balasubramanian et al. (2006) identified cognition, affection and conation as memory-related measures, attitudes and behavior, respectively. In terms of effects from product placement, the authors classify variables such as brand typicality, placement recognition, brand salience and placement recall under the cognition category, while brand portrayal rating, identification with story character / brand and brand attitude belong to the class affection. In this respect, conation covers variables such as purchase intention, brand choice and brand usage behavior. According to studies reviewed by Balasubramanian et al. (2006), most product placement studies are focused mainly on cognitive outcomes rather than affective or conative.

The authors (Balasubramanian et al., 2006) of above-mentioned model consolidated the knowledge of how placement works by describing the correlations between different concepts, such as unconscious processing of placements, which has a greater impact on affective and conative outcomes than on cognitive outcomes. On the contrary, conscious processing of placement increases cognitive outcomes. Sponsors, however, face challenges to achieve multiple outcomes with certain strategies, since a given strategy may perform well on one outcome variable while underperforming on others.

Several researchers emphasize greater efficiency of product placement in terms of the unconscious mind, or when people are not aware of advertising (Laroche et al., 1996; Law & Braun, 2000; Shapiro, 2002; Auty & Lewis, 2004; Cowley & Barron, 2008; Tessitore & Geuens, 2019). To understand consumers' unconscious or conscious choices and reactions on product placement, it is firstly essential to consider their memorizing process. Although consumers consume information intentionally and consciously, preoccupation with a primary task can lead to remembering the brand on an unconscious level. It was confirmed that unconsciousness can influence consumers' responses, and the inclusion of products in a consideration set (Shapiro, 2002), defined as "the set of brands brought to mind on a particular choice occasion." (Nedungadi, 2002, p. 264).

Once the brand choice is memory-based, Nedugandi (2002) emphasized the important role of brand accessibility, that affects the choice in the consideration set. The author examined how brand accessibility, a brand organization in memory, and external brand primes influence memory, and found out that "probability of brand choice was a function not only of brand evaluation, but also of the accessibilities

of the brand and its subcategory.” (Nedungadi, 20002, p. 274.). Moreover, brand cues of one target brand can have positive effects on considering other competitors.

Level of Involvement

Level of involvement is the next aspect that is very important to consider, since it refers to a relationship between an individual and a message content or a product itself. Greenwald and Leavitt (1984) pointed out a consensus that involvement refers to personal relevance or importance, which can be influenced by communication. They identified four levels of involvement from the lowest to the highest level in the following order: Preattention, focal attention, comprehension and elaboration. The levels are in the same order in regard to the capacity, referring to a limited resource used to focus on a specific task. To this end, the focal attention contains a modest capacity to decode content meaning, while the elaboration can lead to integrating content with individual existing knowledge (Greenwald and Leavitt, 1984). Hopkins and Raymond (2004, p. 142) summarized claims of various researchers, who agree that level of involvement refers to “the degree of personal relevance or importance of the message to an individual.”

According to a variety of theorists, Greenwald and Leavitt (1984, p. 91), after a precise and complex review of the concept, defined audience involvement as: “The allocation of attentional capacity to a message source as needed, to analyze the message at one of a series of increasingly abstract representational levels. Low levels use little capacity, and extract information that is first used to determine whether a higher level will be invoked, and, if so, as raw material for analysis by the next higher level. Higher levels require greater capacity, and result in increasingly durable cognitive and attitudinal effects.”

Viewers’ involvement with content has an impact on the effects of the product placement (Bhatnagar et al., 2004). However, there is a difference between an advertisement and product placement. When viewers are highly involved in the program, they allocate less attention to interrupting advertisements (Newell et al., 2001). This may have a negative impact on brand recall. On the other hand, higher levels of involvement are likely to increase brand recall of embedded brands (Balasubramanian et al., 2006).

There is also a correlation between the effects of perceived presence and the level of involvement. Hopkins et al. (2004) stated that involvement moderates these effects under high and low-involvement conditions. The effects of perceived presence are larger in low involvement. The same correlation between presence and involvement is also confirmed by Fraustino et al. (2018), who identified greater presence in a low level of involvement. The best author’s explanation of the latter might be that those who have not been highly involved with media coverage of a certain content have not faced the intensity and feel more drawn into the content.

Regulations

There are various Regulations on product placement across different States. Taking into account the European countries, each has different rules, and there is no one model fits all. Due to the diversity, this subsection does not deepen into the topic, but rather offers a short, yet important overview of Regulations based on Europe and the USA.

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive in Europe advises allowing product placement under certain rules and circumstances, unless a Member State decides otherwise. A Member State can adapt stricter rules. According to the Directive, it is not allowed to place tobacco products or medicinal products for prescription under any circumstances. The paid product placement is prohibited in children’s

programs, while free of charge is allowed in all programs. The product placement should be identified appropriately so that viewers are informed about it (Audiovisual and Media Services Policy, 2018). If the product placement is not identified, it is called covert advertising. It refers to an unethical way of advertising with merely the commercial benefits. Taking Slovenia for an example, covert advertising is prohibited, directly or indirectly, by the Media Act, the Consumer Protection Act, and the Law on the Protection of Competition (Tomažič, 2016).

Each European country applies the Directive slightly differently. The UK, for example, has banned the placement of alcohol, food and drink high in fat/salt/sugar, and gambling. The Netherlands restricts alcohol between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., whereas France does not allow placement of alcohol, firearms and infant formulae. Germany makes a distinction between public services and commercial broadcasters, where the former allows only placements that have not produced the program (Morris, 2011). Brand placement disclosures appear in different ways, and they differ between the Member States. For example, the UK, France and Belgium use PP logos (Boerman et al. 2015). Tessitore and Geuens (2013) examined the effectiveness of the European 'PP' symbol, and found out that the majority of consumers do not notice the symbol and it is not as effective as a warning of product placement. According to Boerman et al. (2015), a combination of text and PP logo turned out to be the most effective for recognition of advertising, while the logo alone was the least effective.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the USA consider product placement as “embedded advertising”, and defines restrictions regarding the matter. Stemming from the rights for the public to know about paid material aired by a TV or radio station, the placement deal must be disclosed on-air. All the product placement deals that are not disclosed violate the FCC’s sponsorship identification rule (Cicelski, 2010). On the other hand, The Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) Endorsement Guides (2017) does not require disclosure of product placement. However, if someone endorses the product, it is defined as more than product placement, and should be disclosed according to the FTC as well, which refers to a disclosing connection between an endorser and the marketer. The Guides apply in all media, and inconsistent practices can result in giving up the received money without “fines” for violations.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN 360° VIDEOS

In their research discussion, Balasubramanian et al. (2006) mentioned that new digital communication technologies are likely to raise the acceptance of product placement. The given findings are a good indicator to explore the concepts of product placement in the 360° videos, and are relevant in respect to this chapter content, where, namely, 360° videos open new possibilities for inclusion of product placement. Moreover, Manis and Choi (2019) justify a strong importance for marketing managers to invest in VR content, and encourage investigations of different areas with the possibility of including VR. Considering the 360° video as a subset of VR content, the purpose of this section is to highlight the opportunities by connecting previously described theoretical concepts of 360° video and product placement.

As, to our knowledge, there is a lack of studies regarding the two fields, this section starts by exposing a relationship between theoretical concepts based on studies from other contexts. Furthermore, empirical studies of three different storytelling websites and their 360° videos are analyzed and compared, according to predetermined specifications by using descriptive methodology. This provides an overview on the basic features of this format, and an estimation of the possible integration of product placement.

According to the given theoretical concepts and variables in the previous sections, 360° video opens numerous opportunities for incorporating the product placement, either in research or practice. Among all the perceptual systems pointed out by Gibson (1966), the basic orienting system, the auditory system and the visual system seem like the most considerable in terms of 360° video. In this respect, this medium conveys more systems than text, a static website, or even traditional video. In other words, and related to the media richness theory, 360° video is identified as richer than conventional video, which, consequently, led to the creation of greater presence.

The term presence has been considered as significantly important in relation to advertising. Hopkins et al. (2004) explored perceived presence in the online advertising context, and found a significant correlation between the presence and consumer responses (attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, purchase intention), moderated by level of involvement. The authors further point out a positive correlation between media richness and level of perceived presence, which can have a direct effect on brand attitude. To this end, increased feeling of “being there” in 360° videos can be correlated positively, not only with the cognitive, but also with the affective and conative outcomes, by taking the assumption that increased presence affects the consumers’ attitudes towards placement and purchase intentions positively.

In terms of 360° and product placement, Wang and Chen (2019) focus primarily on interactivity and dialogic engagement as a collaborative meaning-making process. They point out the importance of the latter concept in the context of VR and 360° video production, since it differs from the traditional film in the interactivity and dialogic engagement. They find the theory as applicable, due to a strong theoretical origin in visual communication, where dialogue and making meaning is not limited only to the text. In 360° videos, dialogic engagement enables viewers to choose different perspectives and, thus, collaborate in the meaning-making process. Regarding the product placement, the results of the study state that the dialogic engagement has better co-creating experiences and greater impact on the brand recall, but does not change brand perception.

Comparing Analysis of 360° Videos

In this subsection, real examples of websites and 360° videos are outlined, according to predetermined parameters. Among the rapidly-growing number of distribution platforms for VR and 360° video, this comparison is focused narrowly on 3 websites that are recognizable as storytelling platforms. The chosen websites are described briefly below. More precise comparison is visible in Table 2, which provides some general specifications and comparison between the platforms. In addition, Table 3 shows the latest 3 videos from each website, that are chosen for further analysis of 360° video content and appearing branded products or brand identifiers within those video cases.

Within

Within is a destination for story-based virtual and Augmented Reality immersive experiences. They strive to show the best immersive experiences within different film genres and categories, from imagination to informative documentaries. Besides VR, it is also focused on AR distributions (Within, 2019).

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VR Gorilla

VR Gorilla is declared as an award-winning VR production studio, which aims to create an experience with a positive impact on the world by distributing 360° video stories. The creators point out their film-making background experiences, breathtaking VR films and inspirational stories (VR Gorilla, 2019).

The Daily 360

A feature by the New York Times provides the audience a new way to experience the journalism through 360° videos on different devices. Each day a new video is published by different journalists around the world (New York Times, 2016). In one year, the project gathered 200 different time journalists, 94 million views on Facebook and 2 million views on YouTube (Willens, 2017).

Table 2. Comparison of the platforms

	WITHIN	VR GORILLA	THE DAILY 360
Year	2014	2015	2016
Content creators	World's finest VR creators	VR Gorilla production company	Ney York Times journalists
Goal	Expanding the potential of immersive storytelling	Creating experiences that have a positive impact on the world.	Making 360 video a part of daily news reports / experiencing the journalism through 360° videos on different devices
Genre	Animated, music, documentary, horror, experimental	VR film experiences	360° immersive video stories / news
Max resolution	Max 4K resolution;	Max 8K resolution; Video player linked to YouTube and embedded to the website.	HD

Short descriptions at the beginning of this subsection reveal that all the chosen 360 video storytelling websites mention the term “experience”. This is in line with the advantages of 360° video, which, compared to the conventional form, increases the immersive experience with perceived presence. Creators of platforms obviously found it important to point out the unique feature that makes them different from conventional video websites.

The websites are compared more manageably in Table 2, which shows comparisons according to predetermined specifications. All the analyzed platforms were founded after the HMD Oculus Rift was developed in 2012, which could be due to the increased popularity of VR after the successful Kickstarter project. Among the three examples, Within turned out to have the most strictly categorized genre of films by offering five different types. The other two include different stories, with a focus on immersive video experiences without clear distinction. Concluding from a subjective point of view, categorization seems reasonable in a case of film-oriented production.

In terms of the technical aspect, the highest resolution (8K) is provided by VR Gorilla, with the consideration that it includes the YouTube service. However, the highest resolution is not necessarily a

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prerequisite for a better visual quality, since it also depends on bitrate settings, video coding standard, bandwidth capacity (lagging) and other factors.

Table 3. Comparison of 360° videos (latest 3 from each platform)

ID	Video	Motion (1-3)	a) Duration (s) b) Shots (number) c) R (duration / shots)	Inclusion of additional graphical elements.	Branded products or brand identifiers.
1	CNN: Toro Bravo <i>Within</i> (CNN, 2019a)	2	a) 619 b) 32 c) 19	Two-sided text and motion graphic design.	Logos and texts of different companies appear on the square and along the street.
2	The Spacewalker <i>Within</i> (CGF STUDIO, 2019)	4	a) 262 b) 4 c) 66	Many sided text and motion graphic design.	Russian abbreviation for Soviet Union on the astronauts' shoulders and helmets.
3	CNN: Iceland is Melting <i>Within</i> (CNN, 2019b)	4	a) 246 b) 12 c) 20	Two-sided text.	Not noted.
4	The Forgotten: Refugees in DRC Congo <i>VR Gorilla</i> (VR Gorilla, 2018a)	2	a) 240 b) 14 c) 17	/	One of many tent covers includes logo and text of a company.
5	Sereya: A New Maasai Way <i>VR Gorilla</i> (VR Gorilla, 2018b)	2	a) 501 b) 21 c) 24	Many-sided text.	Not noted.
6	Nespresso: Discover The Origin Of Javanese Coffee <i>VR Gorilla</i> (VR Gorilla, 2017)	2	a) 105 b) 5 c) 21	/	Not noted .
7	Vows: A Wedding Amid Strand's Rare Books <i>The Daily 360</i> (Shastri et al., 2017)	2	a) 131 b) 7 c) 19	Two-sided text.	Logo of the library well visible above people.
8	Behind the Scenes at the Natural History Museum <i>The Daily 360</i> (Mullin et al., 2017)	2	a) 98 b) 8 c) 12	Two-sided text.	Not noted.
9	Coping With Alzheimer's, Together and Apart <i>The Daily 360</i> (Towey et al., 2017)	2	a) 281 b) 14 c) 20	Two-sided text.	Not noted.

Three latest videos were analyzed from each website (Table 3) to detect the branded products or brand identifiers. Among the latter, motion, duration and inclusion of graphical elements were observed, with the purpose to review possible unique features of the videos. Although the concepts like immersion and presence are identified as the largest added value of the medium for the immersive experience, they were not included in the empirical study due to the issue of subjective observation.

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The motion was analyzed according to three predetermined levels:

- 1 – static camera with minimal motion within a frame (e. g. flying insects, moving grass);
- 2 – static camera with motion within a frame (moving subjects);
- 3 – camera movement with minimal motion within a frame;
- 4 – camera movement with motion within a frame;

The level of motion was determined according to the motion which occurred in most shots within one video. In 7 out of 9 cases, videos were produced by using a static camera with motion within a frame. The outcome concerns the modality of 360° videos, and is related to its special characteristics mentioned in the first section. Since 3 DOF allows viewers to observe produced action from a stationary position, consumers cannot move within the environment. Hence, the most naturally perceived 360° videos are those with a static camera, as a camera movement can make consumers uncomfortable by the feeling of being there and moving against their will.

By analyzing the number of shots, it was discovered that 360° video contains less frequent switching of shots than can be seen in traditional videos. This finding is best explained by considering that 360° video shows more information and, therefore, the viewer needs more time to consume the content. In addition, people who are not yet skilled in VR need more time to become accustomed to the technology. In order to compare the frequency of switching shots, the time of each video was divided by the number of shots, resulting in the so-called value of R. A smaller value of R means more frequent shot changes, and vice versa. Most static camera cases were found to rank higher in terms of the mentioned frequency. This means that filmmakers broke the monotony of static shots by switching them faster. This practice is probably applied due to the reason that viewers consume information of static videos faster than those with the camera movement, where a new scene is uncovered by moving the camera. On the other hand, frequently occurring cuts from one shot to another can cause negative effects on users, as their experience of being there is suddenly interrupted, and they are forced to face another scene or environment.

Another analyzed specification is the inclusion of graphical elements. As might be expected, most graphical elements are texts, and occur at the beginning and at the end of videos. 7 videos out of 9 include graphical elements, and all the texts are placed on two or more sides. The latter relates to different points of view or perspectives, that depend on each individual and its observation in a given moment. Since filmmakers cannot force viewers to look at specific elements as in conventional video production, they can put more cloned elements across different perspectives or parts of the 360° scene. This practice increases the likelihood that the viewer will see the desired item.

Finally, the inclusion was analyzed of branded products and brand identifiers. Here, it is essential to stress the importance of two aspects. First, disclosures, such as PP logos of product placement, were not found in any of the examples. The possible interpretations are that the branded products and brand identifiers were not a result of product placement and appeared by chance, that Regulations and Directives do not follow the new media trends, or that they were placed against the rules as covert advertising. The second important aspect of analyzing the inclusion of product placement concerns a subjective evaluation. Since a deeper knowledge about the video cases analyzed is needed to find out about the real presence of product placement, only the branded products and brand identifiers were noted. It remains unknown if this was actual product placement, but it does open up possibilities for such a practice.

Table 3 shows that 4 videos out of 9 included at least one branded product or brand identifier. All the 4 cases included some kinds of identifications of brands. Video 1 presents events of bullfighting, and

is filmed across the streets and arenas. There are many posters and other types of product ads with well visible brands along the street. Although some of them are likely placed as an advertisement on the event itself, they could also appear as a product placement, since all the items are very recognizable without any post-production censoring. The same applies to video 7, where the logo of the library is clearly visible above the people gathered at the wedding there. It seems very reasonable that video 4 includes the identification of a company by chance, as one must be very exploratory to notice the item. On the contrary, video 2 is ranged the highest according to the possible interpretation of product placement, since the animated short film was created especially for the 360° viewing experience. Besides, the signs on the astronauts' shoulders are very recognizable and visible. Although it is impossible to observe and define the items as a result of product placement, the mentioned branded products or brand identifiers have a possibility for inclusion of a paid relationship between video producers and a product sponsor.

No branded products or brand identifiers were noted in the rest of the videos. Nevertheless, there is a possibility of not noticing a given item in videos, as the environment can be observed from many different points of view. A similar issue was pointed out regarding the text. The matter relates to the issue of viewers' visual attention, and filmmakers should apply different techniques to orient the viewer towards the desired item. As the viewer selects part of the scene in a 360-degree video, different approaches emerge to explore and direct the view. The researchers (Lo et al., 2017, Piumsomboon et al., 2017, Yucheng et al., 2018) thus present possibilities for analyzing information using appropriate technologies for tracking head and eye movements. Sheikh et al. (2016) mentioned basic methods for directing attention, such as intra-scene shifts, sound and light cues, and experimentally considering the effectiveness of eight different approaches on seven participants.

CONCLUSION

The chapter combines important concepts in the areas of 360° video and product placement by defining their relationships and pointing out the potential of merging the areas in both practical and academical terms.

The strong interdisciplinary theoretical framework of this study consists of definitions from both areas. The chapter content started with an important aspect of correlation between advertising and profitability, which serves as a basis for the meaning of product placement and its examination within new media trends and storytelling formats, such as 360° video. The given definition of 360° video was provided to help academics and practitioners to understand the main differences between VR and conventional video, which was further strengthened by defining the concepts' variables of presence, immersion, interactivity, embodiment and media richness. In terms of different media and technology types, defining the 360° video in a wide spectrum between the real and the virtual environment was an important aspect for understanding its unique features that distinguish the format from other media content. The second part of the theoretical framework was focused on product placement and its differences compared to advertising. Among the differences regarding this form of commercial communications, it was described that the level of involvement plays different roles in advertising and product placement. The complex conceptual model of product placement and the importance of psychological background were identified as important aspects to understand the placement, including consumers' conscious and unconscious mental processing and reactions.

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Based on the relationships of explored theoretical concepts, 360° video was identified as an immersive medium with a potential for the inclusion of product placement. It was further confirmed in the empirical part of the chapter, where 4 out of 9 analyzed videos included at least one branded product or brand identifier. Nevertheless, the observation itself was not enough to identify them as placed products with a financial relationship between filmmaker and sponsor, but gave some important directions for considering the opportunity for it. The reasons concerning the product placement detection are related to the lack of universally defined regulations and rules, subjective judgments of product placement, and development of new media trends and storytelling formats that are still in the process of being established.

The main outcome of this chapter represents 360° video as a new media trend which should be taken into account by advertising companies that want to pursue the use of the unique characteristics of the medium in order to gain an optimal effect. Product placement in 360° video turned out to be a suitable approach for advertising companies. Despite the stressed importance of profitability in the classic advertising context, there is a lack of studies concerning the valuation of the product placement techniques regarding the profitable and advertising goals. As far as 360° video is concerned, there has been a growing interest in research regarding the medium in different contexts, but there is a lack of research concerning the product placement in 360° video. Yet, other studies show opportunities to connect the mentioned fields.

For example, Vettehen et al. (2019) explored 360° video in the context of immersion journalism and found that the format enhances the sense of presence, pleasure and credibility. In addition, it affects the memory and understanding of the news positively. Another study (Fraustino et al., 2018) investigated the difference between conventional and 360° video and their effects on attitudes toward disaster communication. The results in favor of 360° identify enhanced presence and attitudes toward the video content as credibly helpful/impactful. Another relevant study (Sukoco & Wu, 2011) is in regard to advergames, confirming that interactive websites enhance a participant's experience of presence and cognitive responses. Moreover, they confirmed a positive correlation between media richness and affective responses of participants. The methodologies of given studies have a potential to be slightly modified and explored in the context of 360° videos and product placement, as they are connected to the described theoretical concepts and characteristics in the first two chapters. Moreover, taking into account that product placement makes a message more credible, and considering the findings of the abovementioned studies, placing a product in 360° video may improve its credibility significantly.

Limitations

There are plenty of different possibilities to compare 360° videos with the traditional form of videos. The VR video is considered as an advanced video format, which has the possibility to improve the consumers' perception, knowledge, attitudes and behavior substantially. Nevertheless, new technologies, distribution platforms and ways of watching the VR content, bring obstacles and disadvantages regarding the user experience and visual discomfort, which were not considered in this chapter.

Another limitation, which was not highlighted in this work, is the technical aspect of 360° video. Besides presence, immersion was defined as an important concept in Virtual Reality, which determines an objective feature of the technology. The latter depends on the technology used for producing and playing the 360° video content. 360° video content available online still faces technical issues regarding the video compression, video quality and bandwidth capacity. Besides, as the resolution is distributed over the entire surface of the visible sphere, even 8K resolution cannot provide enough perceived quality to

get the video equivalent to the real world. These may be important reasons why 360° video do not get enough attention despite providing the many advantages described in this chapter.

Besides consumers, producers might face issues like equipping with suitable hardware and software for producing and consuming Virtual Reality content, which can be more expensive, time-consuming and require new knowledge compared to established traditional video. This also poses a problem for marketers, who have to follow constantly changing digital technology in order to gain profitability and choose the most optimal form of advertising according to the characteristics of the media channel.

Researchers, on the other hand, are offered multiple choices, and their choices depend on a variety of factors, which outline different levels of immersion, presence, interactivity, embodiment, media richness and, in turn, their different correlations with variables in the conceptual model of product placement. In addition, product placement is difficult to measure, since non-universal Regulations and disclosures in the area fail to keep up with new trends and media content, and researchers find it difficult to judge if the product involved is actually a form of product placement or it occurred merely by chance.

Future Directions

Manis and Choi (2019) showed some positive outcomes concerning the Virtual Reality hardware and ease of use in younger generations, which means that younger consumers are becoming more familiar with the technology. This might improve user habits, further increase the use of 360° video, and incorporate it into marketing strategies, specifically in product placement. In order to achieve the most optimal results, video production companies, consumers and academics need to adapt to the emerging trends. Producers should convince companies to place their products into 360° videos by considering academic researches, and stress the importance and advantages of such a practice.

Academics should take into account the theoretical aspects of explored fields in this chapter, and go hand-in-hand with producers and advertisers to apply and consider product placement in 360° videos. In addition, more studies should be conducted concerning the valuation of product placement techniques regarding the profitable and advertising goals. Due to the possibility of overlooking the placed products, further implications arose concerning the viewers' visual attention and different methods for directing attention, such as sound and light cues. It is also expected to reduce visual discomfort as technology evolves, which can further enhance user experience and increase the use of VR technology and the ability to integrate product placement. The question remains how Regulations and laws will monitor it.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

360° Video: A spherical or Virtual Reality video that is captured in all directions and can be watched by wearing Head Mounted Displays.

Advertisement: A commercial message that is compared to product placement fully controlled by a sponsor and is separated from the film content.

Embodiment: A feeling that a certain technology is an extension of a human body.

Immersion: An objective feature of the technology that determines the level of immersion or involvement in something while being in action.

Interactivity: The term refers to users' actions and modifications regarding the mediated environment and receiving a feedback.

Level of Involvement: A relationship between an individual and a message content.

Media Richness Theory: The theory on the number of senses that a medium evokes.

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Presence: In terms of Virtual Reality, presence refers to a subjective feeling of being present in a 360° video or computer-generated environment.


Product Placement: A relationship between a filmmaker and a product of sponsor placed in the film.

Visual Discomfort: Also called motion sickness, which can be caused by VR technology, and has a negative impact on consumers.


Chapter 15

Branded Content: Analysis of Case Studies and Measurement of Its Effectiveness Using Neuromarketing Techniques

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ABSTRACT

Branded content is an advertising format that integrates brand equity with content of interest that engages the audience, and it does so in a natural, emotional, and non-intrusive way. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of branded content versus conventional advertising on young audiences by using neuromarketing techniques. A content analysis of 31 branded content case studies selected by the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA) in Spain was carried out, and the electrodermal activity (EDA) of 70 subjects between 18 and 30 years of age was recorded when they were exposed to branded content stimuli in advertisements. The results confirm a greater impact from the stimuli of branded content, even though there was no significant difference.

INTRODUCTION

The progressive and worrisome loss of advertising effectiveness through conventional adverts has been an unceasing topic of research over the last two decades. The breakthrough of Internet, the saturation

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of advertising, and the dispersion of media and audiences are some of the reasons why the problem has been exacerbated (Baraybar-Fernandez et al., 2017), and the sector has responded by developing new forms of advertising (Méndiz-Noguera, 2007).

Although a link between advertising and sales has been confirmed, only occasionally has a positive relationship been seen between advertising and brand equity (McAlister et al., 2016), which highlights the shortcomings of conventional advertising in terms of the transmission of brand messages. The emergence of Internet brought forth a new age in which engagement with the public (Costa-Sánchez, 2014), the search for brand experiences (Kotler et al., 2009), and emotional messages (Roberts, 2005) were the way forward. Of all the new forms of advertising, the most effective vehicle has been adverts embedded within content, especially in online media (De-Haan, Wiesel, & Pauwels, 2016).

At first, customization of traditional advertising to the online environment brought with it the added problem of being perceived as intrusive and impersonal (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2018). For this reason, the development of native online advertising appeared with the aim of having features somewhat similar to journalistic content (Schauster, Ferruci, & Neill, 2016). The objective was to overcome the ease of omitting the viewing of advertisements that technology had already made possible, specifically with the uses of ad blockers, by capturing the interest of the audience (Baek & Morimoto, 2012).

Internet has made it easier for organisations to disseminate their own content created in-house in order to interact with their audience, with the most important advertising innovations being branded content and native advertising (Watson et al., 2018).

Branded content can be defined as the development of content that is produced, or at least fostered, by the brand in order to engage the audience (Del-Pino-Romero, & Reinales-Lara, 2013). They do this by blending entertainment and advertising without the possibility of disassociation (Caro-Almela, 2013).

Branded content is that which is of interest to the audience, and it integrates the brand in a more natural (Lehu, 2009) and sometimes more educational way. The product promoted is no longer the main factor (Miotti & Payne, 2019) in creating dynamic, bi-directional content based on public opinion gathered mainly from the participation of users on social media (Castelló-Martínez, Del-Pino-Romero, & Ramos-Soler, 2014). Brands thereby achieve greater segmentation with a more integrated presence and the target audience finds content that is closer to its interests, tastes and preferences.

The origins of branded content can be traced back to the link between spinach and the character of Popeye, reaching its greatest impact in 2012 with the jump of 'bird man' Felix Baumgartner, promoted by Red Bull, with an audience of 170 million live viewers and 300 million views on YouTube in the days that followed (Regueira, 2015). Another global brand that has created value through branded content in recent years is Victoria's Secret, mainly through content generated in relation to its annual Fashion Show (Mañas-Viniegra, 2018). In all of these cases, branded content is more oriented to storytelling than advertising persuasion (Tur-Viñes & Segarra-Saavedra, 2014), as products and brands become the content itself (Arbaiza-Rodríguez & Huertas-García, 2018).

There has been a debate over the last decade regarding the intrusive and only slightly identifiable features that product placement introduced into advertising through the occasionally forced inclusion of products and commercial brands into audio-visual content on television dayparting. In spite of this situation, the eruption of branded content allowed for this content to be generated from the brand itself, thus reaching the public in a more natural way that was detached from competitors in a context of advertising saturation.

Branded Content

When branded content is oriented toward entertainment, the advertainment format appears, and as such, the advertiser becomes the producer of its own content in which it includes its organisational values (Ramos, 2006). Advertainment is a type of branded content based on an entertainment format, which also allows for the embedding of intangible brand equity in spite of needing a product as the basis for the entertainment that the content aims to provide (Pineda, Pérez-de-Algaba-Chicano, & Hernández-Santaolalla, 2013). The history of advertainment attained its highest peak in 2001 with the beginning of short films promoted by BMW with the title, *The Hire*, which highlighted the future corporate values of the brand using a narrative starring the action of its vehicles (Del-Pino-Romero, & Olivares, 2007).

Videogames are also one of the formats in which branded content has been included, either with advergames created by brands, or by advertisers integrating their content into the games, known as in-game advertising (Selva-Ruiz, 2009).

Branded content has evolved from mere entertainment to awareness, but in any case, it is linked to stories that communicate experiences. In 2016, the Cannes International Creativity Festival renamed the category formerly known as 'Branded Content & Entertainment' to simply 'Entertainment' (Sánchez-Cobarro, 2018), thus enhancing the amusement feature that is more conducive to sharing brand experiences than might be found in other areas. The convergence of entertainment and other sectors (Gambetti & Grafigna, 2010), as well as the confluence of new genres and formats available in multiple transmedia supports, has allowed the audience to become the protagonists, or at least privileged participants (Jenkins, 2006; Scolari, 2009).

The development of these new formats of branded content that are increasingly interactive has led to a daily transmedia reality that is more prevalent, broadening the conversation spaces between brands and users in different conventional and non-conventional media (Del-Pino-Romero, & Castelló-Martínez, 2014), which in short communicates narratives that offer value that complement the user's consumer experience (Castelló-Martínez, Del-Pino-Romero, & Tur-Viñes, 2015), either through informative or entertainment content related to the brand (Castelló-Martínez, & Del-Pino-Romero, 2019).

The ability to tell stories must be added to the list of essential characteristics of branded content campaigns of any kind, along with the virality of the content, transmediality as multichannel diffusion, and the emotionality and empathic nature of a brand that is close to the public, all of which are a result of proper market research (Del-Pino-Romero & Castelló-Martínez, 2015).

Branded content is currently an essential format for the construction of brand image due to its mostly emotional aspect that serves to transmit corporate values (Formoso-Barro, Sanjuán-Pérez, & Martínez-Costa, 2016). This is in a context where audiences increasingly demand more content that is consumed essentially through mobile devices with the risk that this high level of production might imply a loss of identity of the brand's own personality, and that the brand might become somewhat disconnected from the branded content that intends to promote the brand but may unintentionally redirect the focus away from it to other aspects within the content (Grocki, 2014).

Analysis of the interaction between audiences and branded content is also growing. Moreover, in the digital environment the use of images and video increases the impact of publications on social networks (Sabaté et al., 2014), as well as the publication of branded content that involves the audience (Lemoine, Sastre, & Hormaeche, 2016), all for the purpose of achieving engagement (Lei, Pratt, & Wang, 2017). Content delivered by brands is increasing, as they have incorporated user-generated content on social networks, content sponsorship, and other methods that have greater effectiveness when the content is organic and unpaid (Kim & Song, 2018).

Consumers now receive unique content that is carefully produced and entertaining (Rappaport, 2007). Hence, they interact with this content, and the result has been improved relationships and experiences with brands, as evidenced by the fact that 72% of social network users in Spain, for example, follow brands on social networks (IAB, 2019).

In this way, the audience voluntarily accesses branded content, decides to follow it, and shares it (Mayar & Ramsey, 2011). In order to make this happen, it was necessary for content creators to have previously started combining commercial and non-commercial messages in order to provide this non-intrusive branding experience in a process of hybridization (Balasubramanian, 1994). The formats included in this category beyond branded content are in a state of constant growth: content marketing –branded content that is news related or educational in the online media; advergaming –content integrated into videogames; and advertainment– content related to entertainment (De-Aguilera-Moyano, Baños-González, & Ramírez-Perdiguero, 2015). These are types of brand content that the brand produces itself (Asmussen et al., 2016).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives

The main objective of this research is to evaluate and analyze the emotional impact on young people of some audiovisual elements of Branded Content as opposed to traditional advertisements by studying conscious and unconscious reactions.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To identify the elements present in the branded content format through a descriptive analysis of the content of 31 case studies.
- To point out the impact on users of the content and the stimulus.
- To search for and determine what parts of the audiovisual material connect better with the participants.
- To identify the different aspects and elements to be improved.

Participants

In order to evaluate the emotional impact generated and the attention paid to the 31 stimuli of branded content as opposed to traditional advertising, 70 Spanish young people between the ages of 18 and 30 with gender parity willingly took part in the study. This was done by gathering unconscious –reactions that are not reported voluntarily by the subjects and are recorded in the neuro-marketing units– reactions that were complemented with conscious results.

The selection of the sample was incidental and non-probabilistic, since the profile of the audience had previously been established by age. In recent years, young people under the age of 30 have been in contact with campaigns by brands in the form of branded content, so they were able to differentiate this type of tactic as opposed to traditional advertising and to the content of the audio-visual fiction in which they were inserted.

Branded Content

The fieldwork was carried out in May of 2018 in a well-equipped space in the Faculty of Information Sciences of Complutense University of Madrid (Spain), with the technological and logistical support of Sociograph Neuromarketing Consulting, which collaborated with the aim of supporting university research without receiving any economic compensation.

Research Instrument, Sample and Data Collection

The Spanish section of the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA Spain) carried out a selection of 31 branded content campaigns as case studies based on the criterion of the advertising effectiveness they had previously possessed. The 31 branded content stimuli were presented to the participants randomly along with advertisements and other innocuous stimuli, all embedded in fictional series that made up a broader investigation than the one herein described. Other research has shown that people exposed to audio-visual and advertising stimuli develop expectations about the stimuli that follow from those already seen, so the order of appearance was relevant in order to ensure the quality of the results obtained (Greiger & Reeves, 1993). The total session length, including breaks, was three hours. The stimuli evaluated in this research (Table 1) were branded content campaigns within an advertising context.

In the first phase of the study, a descriptive analysis of the content within the branded content advertisements was carried out. The evolution of brand communication from advertising to branded content was analysed, breaking down the variables that transform these success stories into more natural communication, less intrusive, and more integrated into the audience's leisure time, simultaneously improving the quality and interest of their content in the different media and supports through which they are disseminated, both online and offline.

In the second phase, the reactions of attention and emotional intensity to the stimuli were analysed. Cognitive neuroscience techniques have been established as a useful tool for evaluating strategies transmitted through audio-visual formats (Prieto-Pinto et al., 2019), as in the case of advertisements. Neuroscience applied to these audio-visual and advertising formats has specifically been named neurocommunication (Cuesta-Cambra, Niño-González, & Rodríguez-Terceño, 2017), or in a more consumer-oriented way, neuromarketing (Morin, 2011). The methodology of this concept fuses Psychology, Neuroscience and Economics (Madan, 2010).

This overcomes the barriers that prevent subjects from consciously giving information (Ariely & Berns, 2010) with regard to the psychic processes of attention, emotion and memory through traditional research based on surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews (Fisher, Chin, & Klitzman, 2010). Although its most common use is for the assessment of advertising effectiveness and the psychology of consumer behaviour (Lee, Broderick, & Chamberlain, 2007; Plassmann, Ramsoy, & Milosavljevic, 2012), its scope is being increasingly extended into new fields of research within the area of brand management. Even though neuromarketing techniques are still in their infancy, they have gained credibility in less than two decades and are commonly used in studies related to cognitive perception (Morin, 2011).

The electrodermal activity (EDA) that serves as the neuroscientific basis for this research is classified into three categories (Beer & Lombard, 2007): electrodermal level (EDL), electrodermal response (EDR) and non-specific activity (NSA).

The electrodermal level (EDL) reflects the attention level of participants, so the lower the number of KOhms. ($K\Omega$) recorded, the greater the attention shown by the subject. Awareness collected by EDL, when connected to emotional intensity, initiates cognitive processing of the stimulus by the subject, which

should conclude with influence being exerted on the audience or consumer when the advertising of brands has been effective (Bornstein, & D’Agostino, 1992; Pieters, Warlop, & Wedel, 2002; Goodrich, 2011).

Table 1. Branded content stimuli selected by BCMA Spain for the study

Advertiser	Campaign
Fenty Beauty	Fenty face
Merk	Azul o rosa
Solán de Cabras	Gotas de solidaridad
Banco Santander	Cuánto: más allá del dinero
GALP	Día de la energía positiva
Land Rover	SpaceGate
Gallina Blanca	La resopa
Editorial Planeta	No estamos locos
Hendrick’s Gin	Enajenatorium
BMW	The scape trailer
Smart	Electric love
Vichy Catalan	Mensajes en una botella
Amstel	El pelotari y la fallera
Ecovidrio	Reciclando versos
Coca-Cola	Proyecto Gira
Gas Natural	Cinergia
Ballantine’s	Plan B de Carlos Jean
Dollar Shave Club	Our Blades Are F***ing Great
ACNUR	#MiÚltimaComida
FNAC	El friki
Mitsubishi	Vuelve a hablar de deporte
Ballantine’s	B-Music
Ballantine’s	Premios 40 Principales-Batalla de tweets
Bezoya	Bebé a bordo
Santa Teresa	Proyecto Alcatraz
Seagram’s Gin	American Portraits
Movistar +	Enjuto Mojamuto
Mixta	Debatex Mixta
Movistar +	La peste
Chubbies Shorts	Man model search
Verti	Desconciertos
Chubbies	Chubbies Shorts Swim promo

Source: Created by the authors

Branded Content

The emotional reaction of the subjects to the stimuli was measured through the recording of the electrodermal response (EDR), which implies that the greater the number of $K\Omega$ recorded, the greater the intensity of emotion, which can be positive or negative. The response of the sweat glands to a stimulus produces an alteration of the electrical properties of the skin, which are recorded by the galvanometer thanks to the electrodes placed on the distal phalanges of the second and third fingers of the non-dominant hand (Benedek & Kaernbach, 2010). The galvanometer collects the phasic changes that take place with sympathetic neuronal activity resulting from changes in the electrical conductance of the skin, and collects the changes that take place in the emotional arousal states (Critchley, 2002). The study was carried out using Sociograph Neuromarketing's patented technology No. 9902767 with a wireless wristband that each participant wore in order to obtain objective data of the non-conscious reactions.

The results of this second phase of the study were complemented with a questionnaire given to the subjects after visualization of the stimuli. The questions were related to their experience, the brand, and other aspects of interest regarding the conscious reaction of the consumer.

In the third phase of the study, a statistical analysis was carried out using R software. The variables analysed were as follows:

- **Questionnaires:** The opinion data was obtained from the average calculated from the questions within the questionnaire. To do this, a scale from 0 to 10 was used where 0 represents the most negative and 10 the most positive.
- **Engagement:** This value was calculated from the electrodermal response (EDR); quick changes on the resistance related to the engagement. Thus, the higher the EDR, the higher the level of engagement. This variable reflects the quantity of the engagement, not quality (referring to a positive or negative connection).
- **Attention:** This value refers to the attractiveness level evoked by a stimulus. It is calculated based on the increase in the EDL level (electrodermal level); the absolute level of the tonic activity related to the attention levels. The greater the attention, the better the willingness or attractiveness to receive, analyze and respond to information.
- **Percentage (%) of Unconscious Impact:** This is the combination of both the engagement and attention variables. This percentage is calculated from a key performance indicator (KPI) based on an algorithm that correlates the data of the attention levels and engagement evoked by the stimuli together with the Big Data analyzed by the company. According to the nature of the stimuli, each one has its own performance index (benchmark), encrypted as a percentage, to compare it to other similar stimuli. This indicator takes values between 0 and 100, with 0 being the worst impact index, and 100 being the maximum. Those around 50 will be considered the average of the products tested by Sociograph.

Ethical Considerations

All participants gave informed consent in writing in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The subjects were informed of their voluntary involvement and anonymous contribution, as well as the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time without reason. The study was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Applied Communication Sciences of the Faculty of Information Sciences at Complutense University of Madrid (UCM).

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis of the Case Studies

Fenty Beauty: Fenty face

Robin Rihanna Fenty is a musical star and a fashion icon. In collaboration with Kendo Brands, the singer launched her own make-up brand called Fenty Beauty in an attempt to find products that work on all skin types and tones, advocating diversity and inclusion through her products. The brand is audacious and feminine, and it allows the entire world to see Rihanna's method for achieving her famous splendour, the 'Fenty Face.' In 2018, Fenty Beauty consolidated its position as one of the most influential online brands. In addition, it has a strong presence in the beauty sector and on social networks as well. To this end, she launched an online inclusive community to promote dialogue regarding the need for greater diversity among brands in the sector. Her strategy has been to produce authentic and entertaining content, memes, tutorials and viral video adverts starring not only herself, Rihanna, but also some of the main beauty influencers, other celebrities, and anonymous people of different races, religions, sexual identity, sexual orientation, and skin tones, who have aligned themselves with what is considered an inclusive makeup Brand.

Merck: Blue or Pink

'Blue or pink: A Journey to Fertility' is a documentary made for YouTube composed of micro episodes of 5 minutes in length that address assisted reproduction in an empathetic and humane way, giving voice to different people and their experiences. The scientific company known as Merck, which operates in the field of fertility as well as several others, has chosen Lorena Gonzalvo, a 39-year-old woman from Zaragoza (Spain), who began her journey toward fertility in 2014. Lorena is the guiding link of the entire documentary. The project introduces, among others, the vision of two lesbian mothers, a single mother, a doctor specialising in assisted reproduction, and a woman who decided to abandon the idea of motherhood after several failed attempts. This project approaches assisted reproduction with empathy, far from technical issues, and with an emotional appeal through an anonymous prescriber who tries to position Merck in the digital field as a benchmark in assisted reproduction procedures. First, the blog 'Blue or Pink' was created, and a new episode was published every fortnight. Facebook and Twitter were the channels chosen so that Lorena could give direct support to her followers.

Solán de Cabras: Drops of Solidarity

The company re-launched its pink water bottle for the third consecutive year to demonstrate its deep commitment to women suffering from breast cancer. Through the social networks Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and through the hashtag #GotasDeSolidaridad, this initiative made its consumers aware of their social commitment to the cause and to the Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC). The initiative also made a commitment to provide 20,000 minutes of personalized psychological care to patients and their families through the AECC's specialized toll-free number. For every tweet that mentioned the hashtag, the brand donated an additional minute to the AECC psychological helpline, up to a maximum of 4,000 minutes.

Branded Content

Santander: How much. Beyond Money

Santander bank launched the '1/2/3 Smart Account', which was targeted at young people between 18 and 31 years of age through its presentation of the short film 'How much. Beyond Money', an 18-minute short film directed by filmmaker Kike Maíllo that premiered at Callao Cinemas in Madrid to give it the appearance of being an authentic film production. This science fiction thriller starring actress Adriana Ugarte tells the story of Lucia, a woman who decides to sell some of her life experiences as well as her more personal occurrences to earn money. Surrounded by luxuries, Lucía soon discovers where her own personal balance lies after selling some highly prized memories. Millennials generally do not trust of banks and criticize them strongly, but Banco Santander invites them to question the value of money through a futuristic story in which they can buy and sell experiences.

GALP: Positive Energy Day

Galp FM was the first online radio station created entirely by a brand with its own content. 'Positive Energy Day' consisted of four original daily programmes produced and presented by leading musical journalists, and it offered a premium selection of different musical styles (pop, rock, indie, etc.) that amounted to more than 3,000 hours of selected music and more than 700 hours of original programmes with famous guests. After the first year of broadcasting, the results showed the total audience to be more than 80,000 people with 22,000 apps installed.

Land Rover: SpaceGate

Discovery MAX's Mago Pop was the star of Land Rover Spain's campaign to communicate the launch of the new Discovery Sport. An online contest made it possible to win tickets to go into space. They tried to position the new Land Rover as the car that comes from space and can take you to the cosmos through magic. The magic trick carried out for el Mago Pop made a Land Rover disappear through a SpaceGate, or a type of magic door, which allows for crossing over into another dimension.

Gallina Blanca: 'La resopa'

Coinciding with the launch of the '*Caldo de Pollo Receta Mejorada*', (Improved Chicken Bouillon Recipe), Gallina Blanca presented '*La Resopa de Gallina Blanca*', a contest consisting of 16 one-minute daily television programmes with a feeling of fun. The main characters were the children and the soup. Four pairs of children had to respond spontaneously to 15 questions related to the world of soup; only one pair could win. The public selected their favourite team through online voting.

Editorial Planeta: We're Not Crazy

This publisher announced the launch of Gran Wyoming's new book 'We're Not Crazy', by creating a fictitious political party, 'the WORST Party' led by the book's author. Content creation revolved around the slogan, 'Why should we do things wrong if we can make them even worse'; included were videos, downloadable graphics and memes, original music, direct marketing campaigns, a political event, and so on, all of which were broadcast on social networks.

Hendrick's Gin: Enajenatorium

Characterized by experimentation and its premium positioning, this brand developed a play called, Enajenatorium Theatre Show, with a script that reflected the spirit of the brand. For two months, 72 shows took place in Madrid and Barcelona. After disseminating videos to introduce the characters, 1,650 tickets were sold.

BMW: The Scape Trailer

Since 2000, BMW has been producing short films known as The Hire using the talents of prestigious directors. The films recount the adventures of The Driver (Clive Owen) who is always encountering problems behind the wheel of a BMW (highlighting the performance aspects of the vehicle). Fifteen years later, BMW made a new series of short films entitled, The Scape, with Clive Owen once again playing the lead role behind the wheel of a BMW 5 Series.

Smart: Electric Love

Smart launched the new electric Smart car by composing the song Electric Love that represented the experience of falling in love. In the video clip, a love story is narrated full of encounters and mismatches between the owners of two Smart cars. In social networks, they managed to introduce the words 'electric' and 'electric drive' into conversation with their fans. Smart's order volume increased by 69% during the campaign.

Vichy Catalan: Messages in a Bottle

This brand commissioned the production of an 8-minute short film about branded content from a 22-year-old student, showing its commitment to supporting young talent. The short film entitled, 'Vichy Catalan: Messages in a bottle', was publicised on TV3 before its premiere on the brand's You Tube channel.

Amstel: 'El pelotari' and 'la fallera'

This short film tells the love story between two 'gastronomically incompatible' chefs who decide to undertake a journey from the Basque Country to the Valencia Region where their main target is located.

They also made a special edition of the bottles with designs based on *El Pelotari* and *La Fallera*.

Ecovidrio: Recycling Verses

The campaign known as 'Ecovidrio: Recycling verses' offered young Andalusians an experience alongside the best freestylers in their community, including the current world champion, Skone. They encouraged young people to participate in the competition by sending awareness messages through the superrecicladores.com website and Twitter.

Branded Content

Coca-Cola: Gira Project

Coca-Cola auditioned more than 1,300 young people with few economic resources who had failed at school, and selected the six leading members to be part of the Gira Project, giving them the opportunity to finish their studies and enter the job market through music, sport or the hotel industry. Social networks, a documentary, and a 6-episode docuseries for public television were the components of the campaign.

Gas Natural: 'Cinergía'

Filmmaking was the key content in this campaign to generate awareness about poor habits in the use and consumption of energy. After several short films, Gas Natural produced the first branded content feature film in Spain, which was divided into four parts, each with its own trailer, 'making of' footage, and a poster, in order to generate expectation on social networks.

Ballantine's: Carlos Jean's Plan B

Faced with the legal restrictions inherent in advertising alcoholic beverages, Ballantine's decided to find an association with music to revitalize its brand. The decision was made to create 'Ballantine's: Carlos Jean's Plan B'. Ballantine's worked with music producer Carlos Jean to achieve an innovative process of collective creation of online songs. The producer uploaded a rhythmic base to Internet and received contributions from anonymous musicians. Then he used these offerings to create the final song. The project achieved four number one hits on iTunes and two number ones on *Los 40 Principales*.

Dollar Shave Club: Our Blades Are F*ing Great**

Cheap razors and other grooming products were the basis of a 90-second YouTube promotional video on absurd situations that became viral for their humour. Now the company is known as the 'billion dollar company' after being acquired by Unilever for this amount.

ACNUR: #MiÚltimaComida

This documentary highlighted the trip undertaken by chefs Paco Roncero and Susi Díaz (TV programme Top Chef) and journalist Jalis de la Serna (TV program *En Tierra Hostil*) to the Ampain refugee camp in Ghana. There they met several refugee families, cooked meals with them, and witnessed what may be the last distribution of food among the thousands of refugees living in the camp.

FNAC: The Freak

Based on the shopping experience of those who enter shops and spend hours looking at everything, they gave the opportunity to a customer called 'the freak' to stay in the shop for 10 days after the shopper was chosen in a contest in which 5,000 people registered over a period of three days to participate in the event.

Mitsubishi: Talk About Sport Again

Paratriathlete Dani Molina was ambassador of the Outlander model in the campaign entitled, 'Talk about sport again', which launched the vehicle. The brand produced a feature divided into several episodes about stories of overcoming in sport. To do this, it organised a road trip through Spain, travelling the highways in a Mitsubishi Outlander.

Ballantine's: B-Music

Ballantine's created a site (www.b-music.es) with the first algorithm connected to the most influential music streaming platforms in the world. It offered the most listened to and the most 'instagrammed' songs. The list was generated in real time and the user could segment it by country with additional news reports written daily by B-Music in a jovial tone. B-Music has now been transformed into a means of communication for musical events.

Ballantine's: Top 40 Awards-Battle of the Tweets

Ballantine's wanted to increase its brand sponsorship of *Los Premios 40 Principales* (Top 40 Awards) and promote brand association with this music by rewarding the artist who achieved the highest level of engagement on social networks. The audience set the rules of the game and Ballantine's adapted itself to them. An algorithm measured the feeling of sociability experienced by fans toward their performer and the number of interactions with the artist.

Bezoya: Baby on Board

Baby on Board was a television program broadcast on Divinity that sought to position the water brand as the best for babies, and to increase water consumption by small children in their homes. The project had a digital ecosystem structured around counselling and additional information relevant to mothers.

Santa Teresa: Alcatraz Project

The Venezuelan rum brand wanted to move away from Caribbean clichés in a context where rum consumers have switched to other types of beverages. The history of the Vollmer family's struggle in producing rum for generations in one of the most crime-ridden areas of the planet has been described in many media sources as a story of overcoming based on rugby and its values.

Seagram's Gin: American Portraits

Based on the concept of American Originality, this brand of gin has revealed through films and reports the history of some of the 'Original Americans' who shaped the contemporary world during the 1950s. Some examples include Diana Vreeland, Charles & Ray Eames, Frank Lloyd Wright and Raymond Loewy.

Branded Content

Movistar +: Enjuto Mojamuto

In a 56-episode online series, Movistar associated the advantages of mobile internet connection with *Enjuto Mojamuto*, a character who had never before left home because he was hooked on internet. They decided to take him out of his room thanks to the USB mobile broadband. The series episodes went viral and moved from YouTube to television.

Mixta: Debatex Mixta

Mixta initiated absurd and irreverent debates between two celebrities on social networks, yet the debates gave the appearance of being serious and the contrast created humorous situations. They had the collaboration of 24 personalities with great media influence, reaching 19 million impressions.

Movistar +: The Plague TV Series

The Plague is a TV series produced by Movistar with a transmedia strategy that has created more than 350 minutes of audio visual content including interactive documentaries, sound fiction, collaborative websites, geolocalized routes (*La Ruta Dorada de La Peste*), cooking shows, you tubers, and ‘making of’ footage. One month before the launch of the TV series, it had already obtained 90,399 views.

Chubbies Shorts: Man Model Search

The Chubbies Shorts brand thought that men, just like women, were overwhelmed by images of perfection and beauty, so they looked for real men to convert them into the image of the brand, resulting in a lot of User-Generated Content. Chubbies offered a two-year modelling contract to the 10 winners.

Verti: The Disconcerted

Verti is a native digital insurance company that organized a tour of five concerts in Spain with pop and rock bands that performed their own songs, as well as unpublished tunes, rehearsed jointly with pairs of groups called The Disconcerted. All of the artists were involved in the diffusion of the content through videos they recorded themselves.

Analysis of Electrodermal Activity

Electrodermal activity demonstrated the high level of efficiency attained by branded content actions in attracting the attention of the audience, despite the fact that the results of emotion did not stand out to the same extent.

The figure was 32.3% of the branded content stimuli that obtained attention above 80%; 58.1% registered attention above 50%; and 16.2% was below 20% (Table 2). As for emotion, 12.9% was above 80%, 32.3% above 50%, and 38.7% below 20%. With regard to impact, 29.0% was above 80%, 54.8% above 50%, and 16.1% was below 20%.

The percentage of attention obtained by the branded content campaigns was very similar to the impact it attained, especially in the case of those that achieved the best and the worst impact, since both data

were almost identical, despite not being correlative in the total stimuli. With some specific stimuli, attention was substantially greater than the impact, such as with *Plan B de Carlos Jean* (51.8% attention vs. 45.5% impact). In others, attention was less than the impact, such as B-Music (21.4% attention vs. 28.2% impact).

The analysis of emotion as the basis of engagement is the aspect in which branded content stimuli showed the greatest weakness, as it highlights the attention and impact obtained with an ability to arouse emotion in the audience that is significantly lower in nearly all of the stimuli. In any case, the fact that the brands in the branded content seemed blurred within this content resulted in the participants showing greater emotion when other types of features appeared in the stimuli that are closely related to their personal life. An example is the case of B-Music. After having obtained an attention of only 21.4%, it registered emotional intensity of 96.3%.

Quite to the contrary, the stories from which subjects are more culturally distant recorded lower levels of emotion, as in the case of *Proyecto Alcatraz*, with 3.6% emotion compared to the already reduced attention of 29.8% it had received.

The peculiarity of the characters from which branded content is developed is also relevant, since *Enjuto Mojamuto*, which had registered only 24.6% of attention, increased that figure to 68.0% of emotion experienced by the subjects.

Conscious recall of the stimuli logged by subjects in the questionnaire they had to answer was similar to the percentage of attention shown, with small increases or decreases of less than 10% in all cases, so that adverts obtaining higher levels of attention were those that also attained the highest level of conscious recall.

In Figure 1, the results of attention and emotion-engagement are shown on a positioning map to make comparison of the main stimuli easier for the reader.

The average impact recorded by advertisements shown in the most extensive research, in which the one presented here is included, was 49% compared to 52% obtained by the stimuli of branded content. The average attention to the total stimuli of branded content was also higher: 54% compared to 48% obtained by advertisements.

Regarding branded content campaigns, 29.0% of them had an impact (Figure 2) that was higher than 80%: Fenty face (94.7%), *Azul o rosa* (91.0%), *Gotas de solidaridad* (89.5%), *Cuánto: Más allá del dinero* (88.4%), *Día de la energía positiva* (87.9%), SpaceGate (87.4%), *La resopa* (86.3%), *No estamos locos* (84.8%), and *Enajenatorium* (83.2%).

Quite to the contrary, only 16.1% of the campaigns reached an impact less than 20%: *Debatex Mixta* (16.2%), *Bebé a bordo* (9.9%), *La peste* (5.7%), Man model search (4.7%) and *Desconciertos* (4.3%). No differences were found between the campaigns presented in English and in the native language of the participants, since SpaceGate obtained the sixth highest impact and Man model search attained the next to last position, while the remaining campaigns in English were found in various positions interspersed with the branded content campaigns in Spanish.

The results confirm greater impact and attention from branded content stimuli compared to conventional advertising, highlighted by Rihanna's Fenty Beauty campaign (Figure 3) with an impact of 94%, attention of 94%, and a stated conscious recall of 97%. Just as in successful advertisements, attention grows as the story unfolds in branded content, and the peaks of emotion occur in a timely manner in relation to specific actions performed by the leading actress, in this case Rihanna.

Branded Content

Table 2. Attention, emotion and the impact of the branded content stimuli

Advertisement	(%) Attention	(%) Emotion	(%) Impact
Fenty face	94.7	50.7	94.7
Azul o rosa	90.5	65.4	91.0
Gotas de solidaridad	90.0	58.6	89.5
Cuánto: más allá del dinero	86.9	91.0	88.4
Día de la energía positiva	86.3	86.9	87.9
SpaceGate	89.5	22.5	87.4
La resopa	85.8	49.7	86.3
No estamos locos	83.2	82.1	84.8
Enajenatorium	87.4	15.7	83.2
The scape trailer	83.7	45.0	79.5
Electric love	77.4	70.1	77.4
Mensajes en una botella	76.4	16.7	72.2
Premios 40 Principales	74.3	25.1	71.7
El pelotari y la fallera	69.6	15.7	68.0
Reciclando versos	67.5	33.5	65.4
Proyecto Gira	65.9	5.7	60.7
Cinergía	53.4	34.0	51.8
Plan B de Carlos Jean	51.8	3.5	45.5
Our Blades Are F***ing Great	40.3	50.7	41.3
#MiÚltimaComida	45.0	3.5	39.7
El friki	39.2	13.6	36.6
Vuelve a hablar de deporte	39.7	3.6	35.6
B-Music	21.4	96.3	28.2
Enjuto Mojamuto	24.6	68.0	27.7
Proyecto Alcatraz	29.8	3.6	24.0
American Portraits	25.1	3.0	20.4
Debatex Mixta	19.8	9.4	16.2
Bebé a bordo	10.9	12.5	9.9
La peste	5.7	18.8	5.7
Man model search	4.7	4.7	4.7
Desconciertos	4.0	13.6	4.3

Source: Created by the authors

Figure 1. Map of the positioning of stimuli according to attention and emotion
Source: Created by the authors

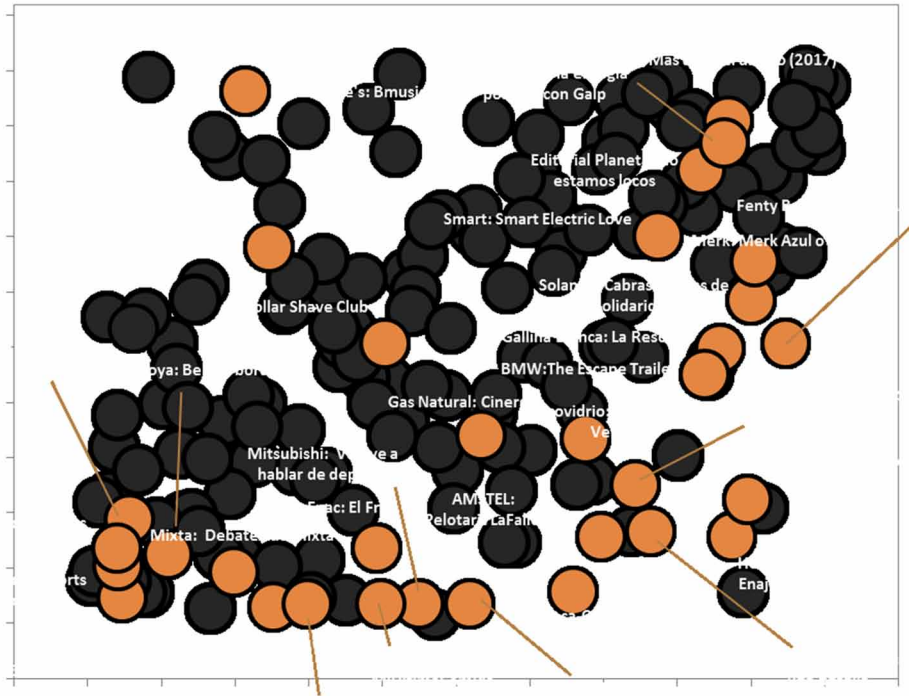
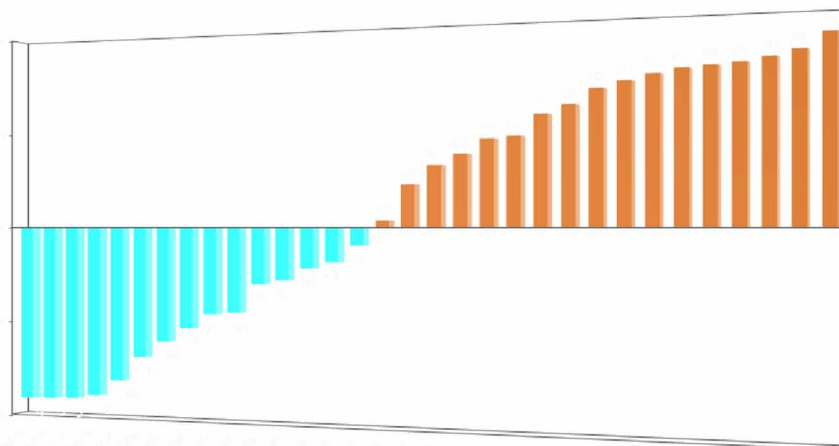


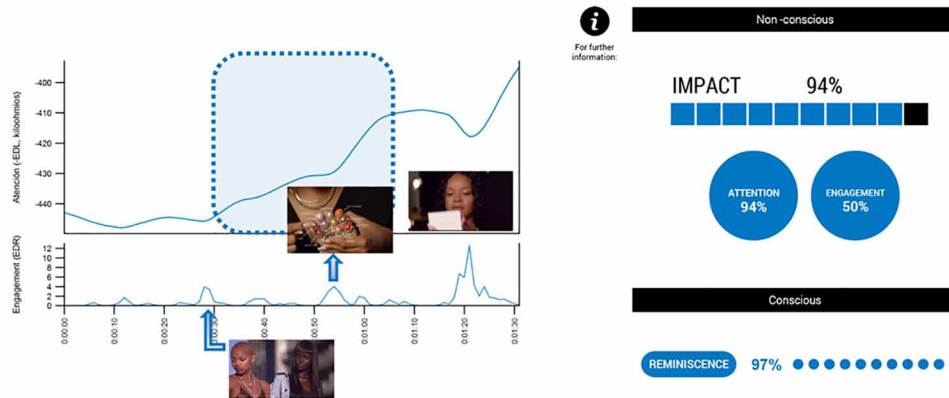
Figure 2. Ranking of stimuli according to their impact
Source: Created by the authors



Branded Content

Figure 3. Fenty face stimulus outcomes

Source: Created by the authors



CONCLUSION

The results seem to confirm that branded content has a stronger impact than traditional advertising (52% vs. 48%), although the difference is still not significant. The greater effectiveness of branded content with regard to conventional advertising has been analysed using descriptive content analysis (Ros, 2014), or at most through surveys and focus groups (Del-Pino-Romero, & Reinares-Lara, 2013; Mañas-Viniegra, 2018). This is the first study carried out using neuromarketing techniques that has gathered the attention and intensity of the emotions of the audience, making it possible to quantify the impact of branded content on the basis of Sociograph®'s patented methodology.

The fact that the registers showed significantly more attention than emotion to the stimuli seems to indicate that narrated stories in this format overcome the problem of advertising saturation. However, their emotional attachment is lower compared to advertisements, which through music, action, shorter duration, and more condensed activity of 20 or 30 seconds, among other variables, still register better results in terms of emotional intensity among target audiences.

These results confirm that hybrid messages are received with greater attention and more receptively than those of a purely commercial nature, as advertisers are not obvious in their attempt to persuade (Balasubramanian, 1994). It is precisely this hybrid character that has led researchers to approach branded content from two perspectives; that is, from both advertising and journalistic points of view (Carvajal & Barinagarrementeria, 2019). The results are also in line with other studies that have previously found that by using eye tracking technology, branded content in television programmes is slightly more effective than product placement in terms of first fixation and total duration of fixations to the areas of interest defined in terms of product and brand (Formoso-Barro, Sanjuán-Pérez, & Martínez-Costa, 2016). Thus, these results respond to the request for improved measurement of brand content effectiveness carried out in previous investigations in which a case study analysis has been performed (Fulgoni, Pettit, & Lipsman, 2016).

With regard to the main limitations of this study, it should be kept in mind that the sample is not representative, despite the fact that the total of 70 subjects is greater in number than the samples of 15 to 60 participants used in similar research on neuromarketing applied to advertising communication

(Vecchiato et al., 2010; Baraybar-Fernández et al., 2017; Cuesta-Cambra, Martínez-Martínez, & Niño-González, 2019; Mañas-Viniegra, Veloso, & Cambra, 2019).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that nearly 40% of branded content stimuli obtained less than 20% in emotion-engagement status makes it necessary to establish as a management recommendation the need to develop in-house storytelling for branded content that clearly differs from that which is used in traditional advertisements, and that allows for a better balance between attention, emotion and impact.

FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

Suggested future lines of research include the need to expand this research with a cross-cultural sample in different countries in order to establish the existing differences in the audience's exposure to branded content, as well as investigations involving deeper content analysis that would allow for identification of the variables that compose those branded content formats that have obtained greater impact.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Advertainment: Branded content that combines advertising and entertainment.

Branded content: Development of non-advertising content produced by an advertiser that promotes its brand values.

Brand equity: Brand value determined by consumer loyalty, their associations, and their brand experiences.

Electrodermal level (EDL): Measurement of the attention directed toward a stimulus in KOhms. (K Ω) by recording electrical changes in skin resistance.

Electrodermal response (EDR): Measurement of the positive or negative emotional reaction to a stimulus in KOhms. (K Ω).


Engagement: Commitment resulting from the interaction between audience and brand.

Transmedia: Narrative in which a story is developed through multiple media channels, platforms and communication formats, relying on the interaction of the audience.

Chapter 16

An Approach to Motivation Research From Advertising Strategy: From Freud to the Iconic Brand

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ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with the influence of Motivation Research from its origins to the present, connecting the psychological school of the deep to the Advertising Strategy. Motivation Research is born closely linked to the advertising industry, a relationship that is maintained today, although in a silent way. The Strategic Advertising Mechanisms that under its influence originate within the advertising agencies will be studied. And with it the storytelling techniques, related directly to these mechanisms. This work is intended to demonstrate the strong presence of the MR in the advertising sector despite the fact that many critics took it as dead in the sixties of the last century. Indeed, in the 21st century, advertising agencies continue to use unconscious motives, emotion, symbols, qualitative techniques or storytelling to develop their campaign strategies.

INTRODUCTION

It's no secret that the evolution of advertising strategy is closely linked to advances in psychology. From the seminal behavioral proposals of John B. Watson (1925)—based in Pavlov's popular conditioned reflex—, to classic cognitive proposals, as the theories on persuasion in which Petty and Cacioppo (1986) coin the central and peripheral routes in the eagerness to find the so longed for advertising effectiveness. This prolific and close theoretical and professional relationship between strategic advertising planning and psychology—an unequal relationship, with a deep vampirism of the former over the latter—has given birth to a number of different schools applied to advertising with varying degrees

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of success and obvious longevity. In this work we will go deeper into Motivational Research, which is born as a response to behavioral postulates and the assumption of the theory of “economic man”. That is, the idea that the consumer makes purchasing decisions in an objective and rational way. Indeed, the Motivation Research (hereinafter referred to as MR) puts the accent on the intimate psychology of the consumer rather than on the generalist behavioral patterns and eminently empirical nature of behavioral approaches. The importance of this psychological current in advertising strategy is crucial; It transformed the advertising industry in the 1950s in the USA; and had a powerful influence in the creation of Story-telling and strategic advertising mechanisms such as Brand Image. The MR has been fundamental for the emergence of mechanisms such as the Star Strategy or Joannis’s Psychological Axis in Europe; even today it is still active through popular and diverse mechanisms such as Lovemarks or Iconic Brands. The main purpose of this work is to explain this continuous return to the unconscious from advertising planning

BACKGROUND

Since 1908, when Walter Dill Scott published what can be considered the first work that rigorously combines psychology and advertising, *The Psychology of Advertising*, to the works of J. B. Watson and, although by opposition, W. McDougall—with the essential works *Behaviorism* (1925) and *The Battle of Behaviorism* (1928)—and the prolific work of B. F. Skinner, especially *About Behaviorism* (1974), a significant amount of the psychological approaches that advertising borrows are of a behavioural nature. Based largely on Pavlov’s conditioned reflexes and relying on some sort of efficiency—finding the right stimuli to obtain the response to the purchase—, this school has enjoyed prolific professional application and a rich academic theorisation in the advertising sector. Under the maxim of stimulus-response that originated at the beginning of the century, numerous brand theories—situated in the paradigm of Product Branding—and, paradoxically, strategic advertising mechanisms with a rationalist approach—Dominant Idea (Finn, 1919), Reason Why (Hopkins, 1923) or the Unique Selling Proposition (Reeves, 1961)—have enjoyed a notoriety and longevity that was unparalleled until well into the 1950s. Names such as Kennedy, Hopkins or Reeves—backed by the quantitative techniques used by researchers such as Politz—, framed in what came to be called “modern advertising”, have been closely linked to this psychological current, reaping success and making it so that this methodology of behaviourist-based work, with its respective strategic mechanisms, received the label of “scientific advertising”.

The cornerstones of behaviourism are the goal of efficiency on the strength of messages that stimulate sales, and therefore the return of investment—originally through the use of sale coupons—along with the development of quantitative research techniques in order to measure such efficiency.

MR was precisely born as a response to behaviourist postulates and the conception of the Economic Man theory, or the idea that the consumer makes purchase decisions in an objective and rational way. In effect, MR—“the second boom”, as Fox calls it (1997, p. 172)—emphasises the intimate psychology of the consumer and not the generalist behaviour patterns of an eminently empirical nature proposed by behaviourist approaches.

“The ad industry began enlisting fairly basic research in the very early days of modern advertising” claims Clark in *The Want Makers* (1989, p. 65). There are data that support this statement: in 1879, the N. W. Ayer agency conducted surveys; in 1908, Harry Dwight Smith demanded “formal research”; or in 1919, Archibald Crossley “conducting formal surveys”. Thus psychology enjoyed its greatest vogue among ad people since the heyday of John B. Watson’s behaviorism in the 1920s” (Fox, 1997, p. 183).

An Approach to Motivation Research From Advertising Strategy

However, “it was not until the mid-1930’s however, that the industry as a whole caught up with the need for such systematized information” (Mayer, 1958, p. 206). The reason had little to do with the advance of advertising science or technique—in fact, in a discipline as functionalist as advertising, research could eliminate the risks of advertising. In 1931, A. C. Nielsen broadened his line of consultancy to include the use of hygiene products, which was not only an unprecedented success for a consultancy firm that was on the verge of collapse due to the effects of the economic depression, but it was also the starting point for the famous *panels* and, with them, the birth of market research with a capital “M”. A few years before this event, there were already people from the field of psychology who had begun to be acknowledged, such as Daniel Starch—father of the concept of *recognition*—, George Gallup—father of the concept of *recall* and creator of the first formal research department at the agency Young & Rubicam—or, although he had a mathematical background, Alfred Politz—a strong advocate of statistics. These people represent what could be called the adult age of research.

“A major shift developed in the 1950’s. Advertising generally was firmly product-orientated until well after World War II, but in the 1950s it began to be directed increasingly towards people’s desires, needs and wants” (Clark, 1989, p. 67). This shift towards brand intangible assets and Personality Branding is based on a new school of psychology: Motivation Research. Supported by psychoanalysis and, above all, by the figure of Freud—although MR also includes Adlerian theories and even other theories from cultural anthropology, since it is a melting pot of theories and techniques—, the emphasis is on the consumer’s depth psychology and his or her “unconscious” desires. In words of Cheskin, one of the MR’s defenders, “[...] is the type of research that seeks to learn what motivates individuals in making choices. It employs techniques designed to reach the unconscious or subconscious mind because preference generally is determined by factors of which the individual is not conscious” (1957, p. 86). From an academic perspective, Smith, in his seminal *Motivation Research in Advertising and Marketing*, explains that MR seeks to answer the question “why?”. Why do people behave as they do in relation to a particular advertising, marketing, or communications problem?” (1954, p. 3). And Samuel, more than fifty years later, in the essential *Freud on Madison Avenue*, affirms in the same way: “Motivation research was devoted almost entirely to the “whys” of consumer behavior, its practitioners digging deep for root causes rather than being satisfied with whatever had risen to the surface” (2010, p. 13).

MR develops in parallel with the advertising industry: “the fad of the industry and the darling of its most “advanced” practitioners” (Mayer, 1958, p. 243). In this sense, communications companies and motivational psychology institutes join forces to make their way in the business world and revolutionise the concept of advertising in the process. In fact, the industry itself subsidises such research, even when reputable psychologists—Gallup, for example (Samuel, 2010, p. 155-156)—or prestigious professionals in the advertising sector—with Reeves at the head (1961, p. 70-74)—harshly criticise the motivational approach. This can be explained by the fact that, whether the application of these theories of depth psychology to communication works, there is no doubt that its pull is undeniable from a commercial point of view. In addition to Ogilvy, Benson & Mather’s well-known commitment to the new motivational approach with their popular Brand Image, other agencies also jumped on the MR bandwagon: Norman, Craig and Kummel spread the Freudian concept of “empathy”, taking it to its final conclusion; or McCann-Erickson, along with Herta Herzog—wife of the illustrious Lazarfeld—, who jumped on the tendency despite not publicly subscribing to any psychological school, “[...] has done far more work than any other agency in Adlerian analysis, with its heavy emphasis on power drives” (Mayer, 1958, p. 72). Herzog, together with Harper and Armstrong, worked on verifying “brand personalities” indicated by clinical tests such as the Rorschach test. Similarly, numerous independent research institutes have

emerged, such as the pioneering Institute for Motivational Research, the Color Research Institute or the Social Research Inc., not to mention the legion of independent consultants, including the controversial James Vicary.

In this context, professionals such as Dichter, Martineau, Cheskin, Gardner or Maslow—even though he did not think of himself as part of the group—, with Freud’s psychoanalytic theories as their antecedent, developed a new school of thought that definitely influences advertising and, by extension, its strategic mechanisms. A school that, in addition to developing a new marketing concept, is also a true billing machine. The eminently commercial nature of motivational studies can be seen in the very words of its top representatives. This is the case of Ernest Dichter, who can be considered the father of motivational psychology. In his book *Handbook of Consumer Motivations. The Psychology of the World of Objects*, Dichter maintains: “The Institute for Motivational Research is an organization for the purpose of finding answers to the “why” of human actions in order to develop appropriate strategy to bring about desired results and goals. The institute, under the guidance of the author, has conducted over 2,500 studies in the United States, Canada, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Australia” (1964, p. vii). The sales spirit portrayed in the books he writes is not something that is specific to just Dichter. Another eminent MR expert, Pierre Martineau, states in *Motivation in Advertising* that “Motivation research is rapidly taking shape as a new tool available to modern advertising in the search for understandings of people” (1957, p. 8). Louis Cheskin, in a line closer to Dichter’s—both represented research institutes that had to advertise—, maintains this promotional spirit in *How to Predict What People Will Buy*, specifically its sixth chapter, in which Robert Stone, Vice President of the National Research Bureau, interviews him; it is a statement of MR’s sales principles (1957, p. 83-109).

The synergies between the advertising industry and MR are such that even the agencies write volumes linking them, in works such as Harry Henry’s (then a McCann-Erickson heavyweight) significant *Motivation Research*, in which he goes so far as to state euphorically that Brand Image: “... is probably the most important concept that has emerged in the whole history of advertising” (1958, p. 89). Similarly, motivational studies were soon echoed by professional associations. From the book that the AMA (American Marketing Association) would commission, *The Techniques of Marketing Research*—in which Lazarsfeld himself was going to participate—, which was intended to include depth psychology, to what Samuel understands as “the definitive indication that motivation research had reached the big time” (2010, p. 38), with the publication of *An Introductory Bibliography of Motivation Research* (1953): a document that compiles almost five hundred titles of books and articles related to the subject.

Not surprisingly, one year earlier, in November 1952, the ARF appointed the Committee on Motivation Research (Newman, 1957, p. 49-50). This Committee persuaded the ARF to publish a second written work which resulted in a comprehensive glossary of motivational terms. *The Language of Dynamic Psychology. As Related to Motivation Research* (1954) is a dictionary of psychoanalytic terms coordinated by Tufts College professors of psychology Joseph Wulfeck and Edward Bennett. It includes all sorts of motivational psychological concepts in order to train advertisers in the then-trendy research approaches: from “Libidinal-object”, to “Adlerian Psychiatry” to “Symbolism” or “Self”. In fact, the Committee on Motivation Research ensures, in the first line of the *Preface*: “The key to success in every sales message is the motivating appeal” (1954, p. 5).

There is more support, as Newman (1957, p. 50) indicates, the ARF also published in 1954: *Directory of Organizations Which Conduct Motivation Research and Directory of Social Scientists Interested in Motivation Research*. And it serves him to sponsor the aforementioned Smith’s *Motivation Research*. In the interesting *Motivation Research and Marketing Management*, Newman describes how, in those years,

it seemed that all professional publications and symposia revolve around MR (1954, p. 50). However, the definitive accolade—and, in a sense, the prologue to its decline, at least publicly—also comes in the form of a book, this time sponsored by the all-powerful AMA (American Marketing Association). *Motivation and Market Behavior* is a collective work coordinated by professors Robert Ferber and Hugh Wales, which compiles texts from leading MR figures such as Dichter, Martineau or Vicary, with other critics, like those penned by Politz and Scriven. The second part of the book is made up of numerous contributions largely provided by academic journals and almost always coming from universities; these address numerous qualitative research techniques. In short, it can be seen that the advertising industry and motivational research feed off each other.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

This work focuses the ways in which the principles of MR have entered the realm of advertising practice; and more particularly with regard to the strategic mechanisms developed by advertising agencies in order to create campaigns. Above all, MR emphasises the emotional message when creating brand semantics, and conceive stories that serves as a link with the individual. The production of brand contents—apart from the product—by means of emotional narrative formats connects MR to storytelling techniques. Thus, brands reveal themselves as semiotic mechanisms that enlarge the personality of the individual. The consumer’s need to express his or her own personality through a product is the spark that ignites the motivation to buy. A strong and attractive brand personality can serve as an important source of differentiation. The reason for this is that consumers see themselves as projected in the brand, which they use to continue building their own identity, their self-concept. This concept, which has a clear Freudian tradition, is one of the main drivers of both MR and Personality Branding, as well as the different strategic mechanisms that are linked to it. It is widely accepted that motivational research is indebted to the theories of Sigmund Freud. This is to the extent that in the chapter “The Freudian Hoax”, in the immortal *Reality in Advertising*, Reeves criticises the Austrian psychoanalyst in order to chastise his motivational research colleagues. More current, Lawrence R. Samuel argues:

Although such a thing [as the repercussion of his theories in advertising] was probably the last thing on Freud’s own mind, the revolutionary form of psychology that had developed in Austria in the late nineteenth century fitted like a glove with American-style marketing some fifty years later. Freud had focused on the self, after all, and what better resource than consumer culture to create a unique personality and stand out from the crowd? (2010, p. 11).

Strictly speaking, one cannot understand motivational research and its influences without commenting on the theory of psychoanalysis as developed by its greatest exponent, Sigmund Freud.

Theoretical Notions about Motivation Research

In 1923, Freud wrote *The Ego and the Id*, a work in which, based on the notions of “consciousness” and “unconscious”, he expands on one of his obsessions: the search for an explanation of the way the mind operates. For this reason, he proposes a structure divided into three parts: the “ego”, the “id” and the “superego”. The “id” represents the primeval drives or impulses, and it is, according to Freud, the motor

of human thought and behaviour. It contains our most primitive desires for gratification. On the other hand, the “superego”, the part that counteracts the “ego”, represents moral and ethical thoughts. It can be understood, in a very simplistic and unorthodox way, as a sort of a more comprehensive and moralistic “Jiminy Cricket”. The “ego” stands between the “id” and the “superego”; it acts by mediating between primitive needs and ethical and moral beliefs. The Freudian idea of the power of the unconscious is one of the main motors of motivational research.

If consumers “identify themselves by the formula: I am what I have and what I consume” and it is symbolic meaning that is used in the ‘search for the meaning of existence’ (Fromm, 1976, p. 36), then we can think of the extraction of symbolic meaning from consumption as a powerful motivational force. Symbolic interpretation is essentially non-rational improvisation that does not obey the codes of language but operates at the unconscious level. (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy y Pervan, 2011, p. 27)

Freudian theories reach Madison Avenue through European immigrants specialised in the field of psychology who begin to collaborate with the advertising industry. Dichter plays a fundamental role among them, as he not only begins motivational research but also disseminates and popularises it in such a way that he is called the father of MR. He is also responsible for the first theoretical approaches in the form of more than a dozen books in which he develops his novel and controversial perspective. Among them, there are works that today are considered classics in advertising, such as *The Strategy of Desire* (1960) or *Handbook of Consumer Motivations* (1964). However, as outlined above, his success is more linked to his professional work in advertising than to his academic or research profile as a psychologist. The basis of Dichter’s work and the main novelty he brings is that, in his opinion, the communication expert “... has to learn to understand the deeper meaning of the products and services he is promoting” (1964, p. v); he must ponder the often subconscious meaning of a hat and its cultural role. *The Strategy of Desire* already lays the foundations of this theory when it states: “Modern psychology has overlooked to a very large extent the real expressive powers that objects have. Objects have a soul. People on the one hand, and products, goods, and commodities on the other, entertain a dynamic relationship of constant interaction” (1960, p. 86). The mere fact of giving products a “soul” shows the link between Dichter’s theories and Personality Branding: “Individuals project themselves into products—say Dichter—. In buying a car they actually buy an extension of their own personality. When they are “loyal” to a commercial brand, they are loyal to themselves” (1960, p. 86-87).

Many consider Pierre Martineau as the best theoretical weapon for MR. He was initially known as the head of market research for *The Chicago Tribune*, and then went down in advertising history as one of the people who introduced the concept of Brand Image. At this point, it should be remembered that Reeves’ severe criticism of Brand Image in *Reality in Advertising* is not directed at the creator (theoretically) of the concept, David Ogilvy, but at Martineau. And as we have seen, Reeves’ anger is relatively understandable, since Martineau, in his most well-known work, *Motivation in advertising. Motives that make people buy*, amply dismantles the Reevesian theory and, in a way, breaks with the whole tradition of behaviourist advertising theory: “The best modern advertising goes for beyond any rudimentary name-and-a-claim approach. Besides the rational advantages, it must create important psychological overtones appealing and acceptable to the consumer’s self-ideal” (1957, p. 82). Strictly speaking, unlike Ogilvy—who only briefly mentions the concept of Brand Image a couple of times in his works and, above all, makes commercial use of this approach—, Martineau’s book is a complete manual in which motivational research is decisively combined with advertising.

An Approach to Motivation Research From Advertising Strategy

There are other people, such as Louis Cheskin, president of the Color Research Institute, a motivational research institute specialising in packaging and has published several texts devoted mainly to colour; or Burleigh Gardner, president of Social Research Inc. (SRI), a fierce competitor of the Institute for Motivational Research. SRI and its founder, in any case, are closer to social psychology and mass communication than to psychoanalysis and advertising. Precisely, Gardner also made some contributions in the form of the book *Human Relations in Industry* (1955), co-written by David Moore. However, he will be remembered for an article he penned with a colleague from SRI, Sidney Levy: “The product and the brand” (1955). This is the true seed of the Brand Image and it is vitally important for the success of MR. It already warns about the power of meaning in brands: “[...] the conceptions of the different brands must be compounded of subtle variations in feelings about them, not necessarily in product qualities. A big problem in this area, then, is what kind of symbol a given brand is to consumers” (1955, p. 35). Levy will be the one who will go deeper into the symbolic capacity of objects in articles such as “Symbols for sale” (1959), concluding that marketing teams must learn to manage meanings:

The less concern there is with the concrete satisfactions of a survival level of existence, the more abstract human responses become. As behavior in the market place is increasingly elaborated, it also becomes increasingly symbolic. This idea needs some examination, because it means that sellers of goods are engaged, whether willfully or not, in selling symbols, as well as practical merchandise. It means that marketing managers must attend to more than the relatively superficial facts with which they usually concern themselves when they do not think of their goods as having symbolic significance. (1959, p. 117)

In this line, and despite the time that has passed, many researchers continue to work from this perspective. In the *Journal of Consumer Research*, Joseph Sirgy published a pioneering work entitled “Self-Concept in Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review”, in which he reviews the various psychoanalytical approaches to consumption and reflects on the concept of self-concept. Based on Rosenberg’s theories, Sirgy begins by defining self-concept: “Self-concept denotes the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (1982, p. 287). In their view, “consumers were thought to prefer products with images that were congruent with their self-concepts” (1982, p. 291). According to this theory of “self-congruity”, the brand and the consumer feed off each other. Govers and Schoormans agree with Sirgy by pointing out that: “Consumers prefer products and brands with a symbolic meaning that is consistent with their self-concept. Self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982) suggests that consumers compare their self-concept with the product-user image of a product” (2005, p. 190).

When dealing with the consumer, it is necessary to warn about the numerous classifications proposed from a sociological perspective, which are largely inherited from MR and Maslow. Perhaps the best known is Arnold Mitchell’s VALS (Values and Lifestyles), which divides the population into nine groups according to lifestyle and was published in *The Nine American Lifestyles* (1983). This theory is exported to other countries and enjoys an enviable longevity, thanks to the trust placed in it by the advertising industry in general and Plummer and Y&R in particular (Clark, 1989, p. 171-172).

Just as motivational thinking has permeated both academia and industry, the qualitative techniques championed by MR are undoubtedly its greatest legacy. In fact, from very early on, the MR approach expands on the relevance of qualitative as opposed to quantitative methodologies and the obsession with statistical validity. A good example of this is the book *Motivation Research in Advertising and Marketing*, where Smith warns of the importance of the “why”—to the detriment of the “what” or the “how much”—or explains in detail the levels of consciousness proposed by Freud. However, the book excels,

above all, at being a very complete sample of qualitative research techniques. Martineau also defends them: “Motivation research turns to a number of techniques in trying to understand these areas whose existence the individual does not suspect, in which he is inarticulate, or in which he is apt to give the wrong answers” (1957, p. 36). Gardner and Levy, who were also pioneers in the area, criticise quantitative research—empiricist researchers were derogatorily called “nose counters” (Fullerton, 2010, p. 59)—because of their incapacity to define the most personal aspects of the consumers, since this research does not clarify the deepest and real motivations of consumption: “... the reasons people usually give for using a product are inclined to be either strongly rationalized or related to the product’s most obvious purposes” (1955, p. 33). They claim that in surveys people usually respond by alluding to the effectiveness of the product—not because it is the real reason for their choice, but because it is the answer that fits this research technique. In this sense, they doubt the belief that the public cares about the “superficial reasons” that are supposed to be the best choice, because the consumer presupposes that quality.

Motivational’s Strategic Advertising Mechanisms and Storytelling Techniques

However, MR has the most influence, undoubtedly, within advertising agencies. It is not unreasonable to say that this psychological current has transformed the communication sector to a large extent (Mayer, 1958; Meyers, 1984; Clark, 1989). As mentioned above, the 1950s saw the rise of numerous research institutes and independent consultants, but above all, that decade witnessed the reformation of agencies. The most obvious effects were the recruitment of motivational psychologists by these agencies (Packard, 1957, p. 29) and the sophistication of market techniques by incorporating qualitative methodologies (Arens, Schaefer & Weigold, 2009, p. 161). However, the implications of MR in advertising activity are broader and richer in nuances, as it directly influences the methodologies for campaign creation; the so-called Strategic Advertising Mechanisms (Fernández Gómez, 2013). In fact, motivational studies are also the basis for numerous strategic advertising mechanisms of an emotional nature; strictly speaking, this is the approach that has provided the most mechanisms. And with this, storytelling strategies to generate brand content have increased (Salmon, 2007; Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu, 2005). In fact, despite David Ogilvy being credited with the creation of the Brand Image in the 1960s, the Englishman acknowledges that he built from the seminal work “The product and the brand”, which was explained previously, spreading what can be considered the first emotionally-based advertising mechanism; a mechanism that is the starting point for the development of many others, as important as Psychological Axis, Star Strategy or Lovemarks. In the same way, Brand Management borrows MR to develop Personality Branding—also inspired by semiotic studies—, a paradigm that adopts, for the first time, the intangible assets and the value of the brand beyond the product; or the most audacious approaches of Consumer Branding, that is, cognitive-based models that gradually emphasise their bet on the symbolic, the unconscious and the collective, such as relational or cultural models—where the Iconic Brand mechanism is a highlight. It is also no coincidence that campaigns as iconic as the Marlboro cowboy—a seminal campaign in the use of storytelling—are now taking root.

Ogilvy is the first advertiser who strongly recommends the use of a motivational advertising mechanism framed in the so-called Personality Branding models. In fact, in a conference titled “The Image and the Brand” (given on 14 October 1955 during a lunch of the American Association of Advertising in Chicago), he uttered a phrase that has been recorded in the annals of advertising science: “Every advertisement should be thought of as contribution to the complex symbol which is the brand image”, a phrase found in the classic *Confessions of an Advertising Man* (1963). Ogilvy uses a medium as

conducive commercially as the one provided by the AAA to make a real case for the power of image, semiotics, motivational psychology or long-term advertising objectives. And his formula is configured as a revolution in terms of persuasive philosophy and as a champion of the most suggestive and implicit advertising: “[...] That every advertisement, every radio program, every TV commercial is not a one-time shot, but a long-term investment in the total personality of their brands” (1963, p. 101). In fact, at that time, Ogilvy already spoke of a technique that was essentially very close to storytelling, which he called “story appeal” (1963, p. 116). In effect, Ogilvy agrees with Harold Rudolph in considering images that tell stories as the most attractive ones for advertising, because they arouse the curiosity of the public, incite them to read the text of the ad to know what else it says and thus, continue with the story.

More systematic than Brand Image, Henri Joannis’ Psychological Axis has gone down in history as the first European strategic motivational advertising mechanism. This mechanism is explained in several works, including *Le processus de creation publicitaire* (1988), which he wrote in the last decades of the 20th century, and which makes him one of the most influential theorists of advertising. Among his merits is the popular concept of Psychological Axis, which is part of the jargon of agencies in much of Europe. Joannis states that the advertiser must find the real reasons for purchase by looking at psychological needs: “We will see that the idea of a driving force is centred, not on the product, but on the satisfactions that the consumer receives, that is, on something that happens in his spirit. It is abstract like any psychological idea” (1969, p. 149). Precisely to find those emotional motives, he proposes the creative Z, a technique to generate ideas that features multiple emotional axes and implicit concepts typical of storytelling.

Also originating from France, Jacques Séguéla’s Star Strategy is based on the idea of “humanising” brands—hence its name, personality philosophy. Séguéla proposes a strategic mechanism quite close to Ogilvy’s Brand Image, sharing pragmatism (little wonder that, like his English colleague, his conception is associated more with professional practice than with theory), a popularising character and self-promotion. There is significant overlap between the two advertising men beyond the professional success that both of them reap. Chief editor of Paris Match and France Soir, he has been working in advertising since 1970 in the agency RSCG, of which he is founder and where he holds high-responsibility positions. His is one of the most notorious but unusual strategic approaches in the history of advertising, as Séguéla compares, in *Hollywood lave plus blanc* (1982), the creation of a Hollywood Star System with the conception and management of brands. Just as Ogilvy is committed to the emotional, the psychological and the suggestive, Séguéla claims the need to sell dreams and not products. “The new consumer is also an adept at dreams. He buys a product, naturally, for a use, but even more for the magic it gives him as an added value. Today’s successes are the result of a marriage between the useful and the imaginative” (Séguéla, 1991, p. 50).

Kevin Roberts’ (Saatchi&Saatchi CEO) Lovemarks reflect the resurgence of emotional mechanisms in the new century. Certainly, in *Lovemarks. The future beyond brands*, he takes up the most classic MR postulates, this time claiming “love” as “... the only way to ante up the emotional temperature and create the new kinds of relationships brands needed ...” (Roberts, 2004, p. 57). The mechanism is to try to position brands to match the highest values of “love” and “respect” because, according to Roberts, it is possible to make consumers become “brand ambassadors”—a sort of “earned” influencers who defend the brands. Roberts calls for “evocative stories” to build brands (2004, p. 75), which consolidates storytelling as a strategic driver. With the same theoretical bases, Edwards and Day’s Passion Brands, in *Creating Passion Brands* (2005), showcase their clearly motivational influences and sell their sweet-sounding methodology.

Although also linked to cognitive and humanistic theories, Douglas Holt's Iconic Brand, portrayed in his essential work *How Brands Become Icons* (2004), contains a theoretical renovation of the precepts of MR from its most anthropological and cultural features; hence its link to the approaches of Cultural Branding. In Holt's theory, the icon is an element that is considered a representative symbol in relation to something—especially, an exemplary symbol, representative of a culture or a movement (Holt, 2004, p. 1). Therefore, the first idea to highlight in this conception of branding is that the iconic brand is a symbol that represents relevant ideas for the public, a fundamental link to the narrative techniques that we study. In this context, the concept of cultural icon establishes relationships with dimensions of depth psychology. Incidentally, it is the first motivational packaging mechanism that was not born in the heart of an advertising agency (either as a working methodology or as a commercial weapon) but emerged from the university environment and was exported to the industry. Today, it is used profusely, as is the case of the methodologies of the London-based VCCP and its "Populate culture", to refer to the instrumentalisation of culture with branded contents.

In short, Motivation Research has had a permanent presence in the working methodologies of advertising companies: from the 1950s, when it permeated the industry hand in hand with Brand Image; to the 21st century, when Iconic Brands took up its philosophy again.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Perhaps the close link between MR and the advertising sector was one of the causes of its decline in the 1960s. Indeed, as Feldwick (2015, pp. 77-86) describes, MR had too many enemies within the industry to make it work: "The anti-research brigade", led by the creative genius Bernbach; "The Traditional Researchers", that is, behaviourists and some renegades of MR; and the toughest opponent, which Feldwick calls "The Ethical Attack", a real lobby that, after the success of Vance Packard's controversial *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957), did not stop trying to neutralise MR researchers. Certainly, MR lost steam from the business point of view and did not endure the shock, in strictly economic terms, to continue being the "benign Muse" of Madison Avenue (Borgat, 1967, p. 58). However, far from what is stated in much of the academic literature, MR does not die quickly and mysteriously in the 1970s, nor is it a passing fad that, like a tidal wave, revolutionised the sector in the 1950s to disappear shortly thereafter and forever (Feldwick, 2015, p. 67-76; Clark, 1989, p. 70). It did lose momentum—"Several years ago, motivation research (MR) was the rage. It has since declined in popularity" (Schultz, 1991, p. 197)—and—perhaps because of its own excess—the industry publicly declared its loss of confidence in MR. However, the same academics who wrote it off claimed that its effects would take much longer to evaporate from public opinion, in part because of the success of the controversial *The Hidden Persuaders*—: "Although marketing professionals have accepted the reduced scope of motivation research, the lay person is still haunted by the specter of the "hidden persuaders"" (Batra, Myers & Aaker, 1996, p. 672). MR is still present in agencies and brands through research, strategy, and general advertising thinking. As Bogart states, "Motivation Research has gone out of fashion, but it has not disappeared, by any means" (1967, p. 58). Feldwick sentencia: "And as motivation research was rapidly airbrushed from history, something important shifted in the discourse that was professionally permissible about advertising. This shift was simple: any mention of "the unconscious" was now off limits" (2015, p. 85-86)

More than being discredited, what eroded the image of MR was its rapid conceptual distortion—although from its origin it was a melting pot of fields of knowledge and methodologies—, which gradually

detached itself from the Freudian confines. In fact, a good part of its protagonists moved on to sociology or anthropology—among them, its founding father, Dichter. In the review of the book entitled *The Strategy of Desire*, “Martineau also noted Dichter’s pronounced swing from psychology to sociology and cultural anthropology, his shift logically paralleling that which motivation research as a field had made in the 1950s” (Samuel, 2010, p. 161). Defection became a constant and many consultants decided to renounce the MR brand, but less so the philosophy it entailed. For example, Walter Woods, Director of Research at Nowland, attacks MR in his “Psychological Dimensions of Consumer Decision” for being “undisciplined and even capricious” (1959, p. 15), proposing the more systematic approach of what he calls “dynamic research”—a sort of “Freud-free” MR. Interestingly, a former Dichter collaborator, Shepard, founded Motivation Dynamics by taking advantage of the demand. Soon Woods himself would leave Nowland to embark on a solo adventure, Products and Concepts Research International, with a new approach: ““concept” research, another attempt to quantitatively measure consumers’ reaction to new products and advertising. Could motivation research survive without motivation?” (Samuel, 2010, p. 160).

However, if MR has a *bête noire*, it is cognitive psychology. The new parameters defined around perception and advances in how memory operates are a bonanza for the advertising industry that will soon be adopted. In the words of Samuel: “Perhaps most damaging to motivation research, however, was the downgrading of the very concept of motivation as a factor in consumers’ behavior. As the rise of research methodologies like pupil measurement suggested, “perception” was fast taking the wind out of motivation research’s sails, increasingly recognized as a better indicator of consumers’ decision-making process.” (2010, p. 160). However, Meyers (1984, pp. 42-63) describes how Y&R, under Ed Ney, adopted new motivational approaches in the 1970s-1980s to pull the agency out of bankruptcy, in a circular logic that seems to haunt MR from its inception.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Precisely, the influence of cognitive psychology on MR is a very interesting area for further research. Similarly, another line of research may be the implications of cognitivism on strategic advertising mechanisms such as positioning. In general, it is very pertinent to work on the links of the different psychological schools with strategic advertising thinking.

CONCLUSION

They believe that we are manipulating people, that we have sunk pipelines down to the pre-Oedipal wellsprings, that we are practicing some dark, mysterious necromancy [...] Well, if these did not find hidden persuaders in their own countries, they will certainly not find them in this one; for, as all top advertising men know, such talk is the sheerest nonsense. It may serve to make a best seller of Vance Packard’s book; and it may pick up, along the way, people who are prone to believe in the sensational; but there are no hidden persuaders. (Reeves, 1961, p. 70)

Despite the words of Master Reeves, seen from a distance, we believe that there is no doubt that MR penetrates both the professional and public spheres. In addition to numerous procedural errors (Bogart, 1967, pp. 56-58), perhaps its configuration as a drawer of social sciences such as psychology, sociology,

anthropology and qualitative techniques weakened it conceptually (Mayer, 1958, p. 246). It is no less true that the excesses of its founding fathers also took their toll on MR. Neither should the imperative need for novelty in the advertising industry, which expires everything it uses before its time (Fernandez Gómez, 2014, pp. 22-23) or the urgency of empathising with the client (Mayer, 1958, p. 351) be dismissed. Nevertheless, books and articles about MR continue to be written, the media warns against it or its substitutes, and there are even countries where some of its practices are prohibited. From the academic point of view, MR continues to inspire theories such as Holt's (2004) or Mark & Pearson's (2001), but it also casts its long shadow upon more general works (Coleman, 2018; Batey, 2008). Even so, the fact that it continues to be part of the arsenal of work methodologies of a good part of the agencies in the sector is already an unequivocal sign of its validity.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Motivation Research: A set of psychological concepts and techniques inspired by psychoanalysis and applied to advertising.

Storytelling: Narrative-inspired technique for the generation of branded content.

Strategic Advertising Mechanisms: Planning methodologies for the creation of campaigns.

Section 3

Political Communication

Chapter 17

“A Narrative of Impending Tyranny”: Ideological Extremism and Internet Use in the Tea Party Movement

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ABSTRACT

Communication and the media count among the means political movements employ in order to influence public opinion. This chapter focuses on the use of internet communication by the Tea Party, a radical movement that re-energized the American right-wing. The authors aim to shed light on the ideological discourse of the Tea Party and its strategic use of online media. The analysis of the Tea Party’s discourse is performed in light of the specific ideological tenets and the reactionary narrative that inspire the movement. The study indicates that a consistently “on-message” anti-government libertarianism has found a new outlet on the internet.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the American right-wing political movement known as the Tea Party, emphasizing the organization’s ideology and online communication strategy. To a large extent, the extremism of the Tea Party lies in the ideological purism of its message, which repeatedly focuses on economic principles such as the reduction of government intervention, fiscal responsibility and defence of free markets. In terms of its media use, the movement relies on websites, blogs and social networks, these being the key channels for communicating its anti-government crusade.

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David Barstow pointed out in *The New York Times* in 2010 that a narrative of “impending tyranny runs throughout the ‘rebellion’ of the Tea Party Movement” (TPM). “This narrative permeates its websites, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and YouTube videos” (Barstow, 2010). The main objective of this chapter is to provide empirical evidence regarding the ‘on-message’ strategy the movement employs on the Internet, focusing both on the communicative representation of the central ideological values of the TPM, and on a particular narrative that opposes the threat of governmental intervention with tyrannical hues to the founding ideals of the United States.

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY OF THE TEA PARTY

The Tea Party is a populist, extreme right-wing political movement born in the United States in 2009. It originally emerged as a grassroots movement and consists of an agglomeration of hundreds of decentralized groups, many of them local and leaderless (Drum, 2010; NEWSWEEK STAFF [/ Kay], 2010). In addition to public rallies and protests, and abundant communicative and organizational activity on the Internet, the TPM “engages regularly with the political system through lobbying and electioneering” (Agarwal et al., 2014, p. 329).

Historically, the TPM arose as a reaction to the government bailout of 2009 (Agarwal et al., 2014, p. 329). In fact, the birth of TPM is usually dated February 19, 2009, when CNBC commentator Rick Santelli launched into a rant against President Barack Obama and his mortgage bailout policy from the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange: “This is America. How many of you people want to pay for your neighbor’s mortgage, that has an extra bathroom, and can’t pay their bills? Raise their hand! President Obama, are you listening?”, exhorted the television commentator surrounded by brokers who cheered him on. Santelli also made a comment that would name the movement: “we’re thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July. All you capitalists that want to show up to Lake Michigan, I’m going to start organizing” (as cited in Williamson, Skocpol, & Coggin, 2011, p. 37). However, it is possible to date the origin of the movement to an even earlier time; exactly three days before Santelli’s rant, when Seattle bloggers organized a demonstration on February 16, 2009. On February 27, 53 tea parties took place around the US, in which approximately 30,000 people participated (Southern Belle, 2011). These demonstrations and events were the first of many that would come later, including, most notably the national protests that took place on 15 April 2009, to coincide with ‘Tax Day’.

The Tea Party mobilized very quickly: in 2010, the *Washington Post* identified at least 650 groups (Roth, 2018, p. 541), and that same year the first national convention of the movement would take place in Nashville, Tennessee. This occurs in the context of what could be considered the most politically influential phase of the TPM: the period 2010-2012 (Judis, 2013). According to an April 2010 survey, 5 million people attended Tea Party rallies (Drum, 2010); that same year, the candidates identified with the movement began to win primary elections against Republican candidates of the establishment (Roth, 2018, p. 541), reaping electoral victories such as the triumph of the libertarian Rand Paul in the Republican primary for the Senate in Kentucky (Fox News, 2010).

Thus, the Republican Party became the electoral vehicle for the movement: “Rather than run candidates as independents, the tea party movement largely has inserted itself into Republican Party politics” (Talev, 2010). The influence exerted by the TPM at certain times on the Republican Party reached the point where Obama acknowledged it in September 2013: “House Republicans are so concerned with appeasing the tea party that they are willing to shut down the government” (as cited in Gold, 2013). In

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any case, 2013 could be considered the beginning of the decline in the TPM: if in February 2010 the favourable / unfavourable view of the public towards the Tea Party was 33% / 25%, by October 2013 it was 30% / 49% (Judis, 2013). Additionally, its coverage by media outlets such as Fox News and MSNBC fell sharply between 2015 and 2017 (Rafail & McCarthy, 2018, p. 433), and in the midterm elections of 2014 the movement was defeated electorally by establishment Republicans (Peters, 2014). However, it should be noted that the movement still exists — in 2017 there were at least 30 members of the ‘Freedom Caucus’ in the US House of Representatives, a caucus that was inspired by the TPM (Roth, 2018, p. 541).

Ideological Coordinates of the Tea Party

Although the Tea Party is usually described as conservative or ultraconservative, the movement originally possessed a spirit close to what in the US is called ‘libertarianism’: an individualistic political ideology that is radically focused on free-market capitalism and government reduction. Thus, Tea Party activists “describe themselves as a grassroots effort to curb government spending and to eliminate federal taxes, as such taxation and spending encroach of the freedoms outlined in the US Constitution” (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 523). The TPM is primarily concerned with economics: according to Alexander (2011), economic policies are what unifies the activists; polls have been able to identify that “Tea Party activists shared many other political concerns as well, but that those other policies played virtually no role in rhetoric or in Tea Party proposals” (p. 79). Thus, at the national level, 78% of Tea Partiers think that economic issues should be a priority over social issues (Williamson et al., 2011, p. 31). An indication that the TPM is basically a fiscal movement lies in the secondary nature of social conservatism in its agenda. As Williamson et al. (2011) point out in their study about the Greater Boston Tea Party: “Our results also confirm a widely-reported difference between Tea Partiers and previous generations of conservative activists: most Tea Party members do not see social issues like abortion or gay marriage as central to their current political activism” (p. 31). However, it seems that the evolution of the movement, to some extent, moved it away from economic purism. According to Michael Tanner, of the libertarian think tank Cato Institute, in comparison to its initial position, where social issues were not part of the movement’s platform, TPM diverged from its strictly economic origins, so that “increasingly issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and immigration have become the tail that wags the dog” (Tanner, 2014). In any case, the coexistence within the movement of libertarian and conservative attitudes rests on a minimum common denominator: anti-government sentiments. According to Kirby and Ekins (2010): “tea party libertarians and conservatives share economic concerns. Both groups are extremely concerned about cutting federal government spending, reducing the size of government and the recently passed health care reform.”

The primacy of these right-wing economic objectives is reinforced if it is remembered that the TPM is not only financed by small donations (Talev, 2010); rather, what was originally a grassroots movement ended up being financed by billionaires (Savage, 2012, p. 567). According to Williamson et al. (2011), the organizers of the TPM at national level “draw their resources from a small number of very conservative business elites, whose policy concerns primarily involve reducing government oversight and regulation and shrinking or radically restructuring broad social entitlements in the United States” (p. 28). Therefore, and despite the populist fervour of the TPM, it is logical that the main values of the movement coincide with the objectives of certain business elites: fiscal responsibility, constitutionally limited government, and free markets¹.

Pertaining to ideology, there is another important factor to consider: extremism. The mixture of elements such as radical anti-socialism or animosity towards the non-working, as inspired by Ayn Rand, would mark the TPM as an ideologically extreme phenomenon. Thus, it is not surprising, for example, that Bruce Majors, a right-wing activist and online organizer of the movement, described himself as an “Anarcho-capitalist revolutionary sharpening his guillotine” (as cited in Seitz-Wald, 2010). The movement has rejected the extremist label — according to the Tea Party - Western North Carolina (n.d.), “the national media would have the public believe that this is a radical right wing movement. . . . The Tea Party is made up of folks that live in every hometown. They are Middle America – not extremists”. However, according to the interpretation proposed by Drum in 2010, the TPM would be another link in the chain of a long history of American right-wing extremism, such as the American Liberty League — formed in 1934 against the New Deal — or the paranoid, anti-communist advocacy group the John Birch Society (Drum, 2010).

Ever since the 1930s, something very much like the tea party movement has fluoresced every time a Democrat wins the presidency, and the nature of the fluorescence always follows many of the same broad contours: a reverence for the Constitution, a supposedly spontaneous uprising of formerly nonpolitical middle-class activists, a preoccupation with socialism and the expanding tyranny of big government, a bitterness toward an underclass viewed as unwilling to work, and a weakness for outlandish conspiracy theories (Drum, 2010).

Discourse and Narrative of the Tea Party

The extremist anti-government ideology of the TPM is manifested in a very characteristic narrative. According to Savage (2012), the discourse of the TPM, very similar to that of McCarthyism, rests on the construction and demonization of a leftist enemy that threatens the American values of freedom and independence; values that are historically related to the founding moment of the United States (pp. 564-565).

This founding moment is a fabrication constituted through the social construction of a collective memory recalling key events in the American Revolution and framing of the constitution that signify the development of a unique American legacy and tradition of strong values. These values are represented in signifiers such as “liberty,” “freedom,” and “independence,” and they are linked together in a narrative that traces itself back to America’s point of origin in events such as the revolutionary break from England, the Boston Tea Party, and the writing of the constitution (Savage, 2012, pp. 572-573).

Facing this representation of the past, “the left-oriented enemy/disorder is constructed as the disruption of the legacy emanating from the founding moment” (Savage, 2012, p. 573). The TPM itself points out that its history dates back to Boston’s anti-tax tea riot in 1773 (*The Story*, n.d.), one of the events that led to the American Revolution. The settlers protested against British efforts to impose taxes on tea imports and threw this product into the Boston Harbor (Talev, 2010). Thus, “the Tea Party’s demands to reduce taxes are clearly related to the experience of the original Boston Tea Party” (Savage, 2012, p. 572), so that the appeal to the foundation is evident from the very name of the movement². Furthermore, the Tea Party discourse is full of references to American revolutionary and patriotic symbols: The Constitution, the reference to the People, the Founding Fathers, the Statue of Liberty, etc. To these symbols can be

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added the colonial style dress that became popular at TPM rallies. In particular, the Founding Fathers and the Constitution have a privileged place in the TPM myths:

The heroic narrative of the founders embraced American exceptionalism and illustrated the men who formed this nation as paragons of virtue who cannot be defamed. The Tea Party used the founders in two specific forms: the people who founded America (e.g., Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton) and the Constitution. The founders were figures of a perfect past of true Americans who stood for good and Christian values (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 259).

The TPM will use these elements from the past to criticize the realities and challenges of the present which do not conform to their libertarian ideals (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 529). Thus, the foundational ideal of limiting government power is currently used to demonize federal spending and social services and to dismiss these realities as socialist (Savage, 2012, p. 573). It is also important to note that the TPM represented the political and economic situation in conspiratorial and even apocalyptic terms, as pointed out in *Newsweek* in 2010 regarding a movement convention: “The salvos followed the established script of New World Order conspiracy theories, which have suffused the dubious right-wing fringes of American politics since the days of the John Birch Society”. According to this worldview, “America’s 21-st century traumas signal the coming of a great political cataclysm, in which a false prophet such as Barack Obama will upend American sovereignty and render the country into a godless, one-world socialist dictatorship run by the United Nations from its offices in Manhattan” (Newsweek Staff, 2010). Indeed, even though the Tea Party has many enemies, such as the Democrats and ‘establishment’ Republicans (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 524), Obama is going to play a key role as villain in a narrative that reaches paranoid levels.

The Role of the Internet

Regarding the TPM’s communication strategy, the Internet has played a fundamental role since its inception — as Zernike (2011) has pointed out, “while conservatives groups of the 1960s and ’70s relied on direct mail to get their message out, the Tea Partiers had email, Facebook, YouTube, Ning, and Twitter” (p. 61). The Santelli video that started the movement went viral and was quite popular; one of the copies of the video received almost 600,000 views on YouTube in a few days’ time (Orr, 2009). The first tea party was organized by bloggers, and the movement exploded “with local, spontaneously organised and internet-fuelled protests” (Pilkington, 2010). Email has been a technology of radical importance in the movement, and it has been used for planning events, private conversations, mobilization, distribution and obtaining information (Agarwal et al., 2014, p. 332). The TPM has also made ample use of blogs: “Blogging further allows an expansion of influence on subjects important to the movement as well as keeping members and others informed of important activities and interests” (Mellon, 2012b). More generally, the Internet has also influenced the communicative, organizational and modular mobilization model of the TPM (Roth, 2018, p. 541).

It is important to note that the Tea Party is probably the first movement developed in a historical context where social networks are already standardized: “The Tea Party may be the first U.S.-based, insurgent political organization that has developed within a political milieu that incorporates SNSs into everyday campaign communication” (Morin & Flynn, 2014, p. 117). This quote also indicates the relevance of social networks in the movement’s communications. In particular, tea partiers have prolif-

erated on Facebook — which has been identified as the movement’s most important social networking service for organizing their political activities (Agarwal et al., 2014, p. 332). According to Morin & Flynn (2014): “A quick search on Facebook reveals that there are hundreds of American Tea Party groups with memberships ranging from two individuals on some pages to over 800,000 members for the larger Tea Party groups” (p. 116).

Given the importance the movement accorded to the Internet, it is not surprising that academic literature has already given attention to these aspects of the TPM. Related research topics include the study of the establishment of its agenda and discursive practices on Facebook, as compared to other political groups (Mascaro, Novak, & Goggins, 2012), the TPM’s use of information and communication technologies based on a series of values (Agarwal et al., 2014), and the TPM’s use of alternative media (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 523). Additionally, a study by Rafail & McCarthy (2014) includes data on the blog posts of umbrella organizations such as Patriot Action Network, Tea Party Nation, Tea Party Patriots and TeaParty.org, indicating that between 2009 and 2014 these organizations produced a constant flow of content that featured the Obama administration and national identity as frequent issues, and which self-identify the movement as both conservative and national.

In this context, our research objective focuses on another aspect of the use of technology by the TPM: the expression of an on-message strategy in the movement’s online communication. The following section provides evidence on the representation of the ideological values and the narrative of the TPM according to said strategy.

STRATEGIC APPROACH, IDEOLOGICAL AND NARRATIVE POSITIONING OF THE TEA PARTY ON THE INTERNET

Politically, the TPM is not strictly identified as a citizen advocacy group for the Republican Party, but rather as an anti-establishment protest movement (Reynolds, 2009; Teapartyactivists, 2009). Thus, in the context of contemporary politics, aimed at marketing and personalization, the Tea Party would be a fundamentally *ideological movement*: as the Tea Party - Western North Carolina website noted: “It’s all about policy and philosophy. Political party affiliation is of no consequence” (n.d.). The wing of the GOP that the Tea Party most identifies with is the one devoted to ideological principles—indeed, the movement has attacked the RINOs (“Republican in Name Only”) “for their propensity to compromise conservative principles of limited government, low taxes, and individual responsibility” (Morin & Flynn, 2014, p. 124), and has talked about “to help elect tea party Republicans and focus the Republican Party on the core economic principles important to the movement” (Mellon, 2012b). At this point, TPM activism acknowledges parallels with the electoral campaign of libertarian Republican Ron Paul in 2007-2008, that has been described as “a pugnacious, ideological crusade against big government and interventionist leanings in the Republican party” (Wolf, 2008). The importance of principles and ideological purism in the TPM can be seen in the stipulations of Debbie Dooley, one of the directors of the Tea Party Patriots: “You should be bound by your principles and develop your position on issues based on your principles, not who your financial donors are” (as cited in Luscombe & Pietrasik, 2015). Regarding the purism of the movement, Atkinson & Leon Berg (2012) have made some interesting observations about the alternative media the TPM employs, which the authors describe as ‘narrow mobilization’, this is, “a process by which activists engage in a kind of constant comparative method, holding political actors or groups up

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to a theme of “purity” established in alternative media content” (p. 520). They note that political actors who do not adhere to the ideals of purity are expelled or ridiculed (Atkinson & Leon Berg, 2012, p. 531).

The ideological purism of the TPM would have a meaningful consequence from a strategic point of view: the importance of communicating the same ideological message over and over again. This coherence in the message was evidenced by the leader of the Tea Party Patriots Jenny Beth Martin: “When people ask about [social issues], we say, ‘Go get involved in other organizations that already deal with social issues very well.’ We have to be diligent and stay on message” (as cited in Tanner, 2014). Along these lines, our description of the online communication of the TPM rests on the hypothesis that the movement carries out an “on-message” communicative strategy, that is, it employs a strategy typical of political campaigns based on the repetition of a single stipulated topic, clearly stated and consistent throughout the campaign, which to be effective, must be reinforced in each individual communication with the least possible variation. Thus, the continuous repetition of the selected topic becomes the key technique in the on-message strategy (Benoit et al., 2011, p. 458).

The on-message strategy needs to delimit the concepts that make up the core of the message to be communicated. In the case of the TPM, its central theme can be defined as anti-governmentalism, thus connecting it with the American conservative movement, where the ideological minimum common denominator that unites different rightist factions is anti-governmentalism (Sorman, 1985, pp. 230-231)—that is, the reaction against State intervention and aligning in favour of limited government. This core theme is in turn structured through three fundamental values: fiscal responsibility, limited government, and free markets. These values encapsulate the TPM’s opposition to government ‘tax-and-spend,’ and form the conceptual basis of the Tea Party narrative: a storytelling of free men fighting against a tyrannical socialist/communist system, advocating for the return to the foundational origins of an America without intrusive government. In this sense, our description of the on-message strategy of the TPM is derived from the fact that there is a clear reiteration of the economic component present in its ideology.

Representation of Core Values

From the outset, the self-definition of the TPM on its websites and blogs indicates the essentially economic nature of its positioning, as well as the insistence on the affirmation of its core values. Thus, the website of the Tea Party Patriots — self-defined as “Official Home of the American Tea Party Movement”, and one of the leading advocacy organizations for the TPM (Williamson et al., 2011, p. 28) — specifies that the mission of the movement responds to the “excessive government spending and taxation. Our mission is to attract, educate, organize, and mobilize our fellow citizens to secure public policy consistent with our three core values of Fiscal Responsibility, Constitutionally Limited Government and Free Markets” (*Tea Party Patriots. Mission Statement and Core Values*, n.d.). Very significantly, this organization also exposes the need to focus on these principles without discussion of other issues:

We stand for Fiscal Responsibility, Constitutionally Limited Government and Free Markets. To allow an opportunity for these issues to get drowned out is to divert us from The Tea Party Patriots’ mission... we do not take a position on social issues. As an organization, we are neither opposed to, or in favor of, issues surrounding these questions, and will not expend our resources on them. (Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, n.d.)

The three core values are also affirmed on the Quiet Corner Tea Party blog (n.d.), on the Nevada County Tea Party (n.d.) website, or on the Anchorage Tea Party website (n.d.-a) from Alaska. Additionally, the on-message strategy can be seen on the Southern Belle Politics blog, where one of the organizers of the first Atlanta Tea Party reproduced the principles of the movement: “Fiscal Responsibility”, “Constitutionally Limited Government” and “Free Markets” (Southern Belle, 2011). In other cases, there are slight conceptual or terminological variations on the fundamental principles, as on the Tea Party 911 website in which “the tea party core principles of free markets, fiscal responsibility, and constitutional government” are discussed (Mellon, 2012), or the Tea Party - Western North Carolina (n.d.) website, which includes “Smaller Government”, “Substantially Lower Taxes”, “Less intrusion by government” or “A balanced budget” among the issues the TPM supports (n.d.). On other occasions, the TPM especially insists on some of its values, such as that of limited government. Thus, the TeaParty911.com website blog published a text on a gun control proposal in November 2017 warning about the possibility of “more power being ceded to the federal government” (Bocetta, 2017); the Eastside TeaParty blog exclaims: “Limited government with responsible and accountable representation is essential to your freedom!” (EASTSIDETEAPARTY BLOG, n.d.); the Northern Virginia Tea Party (n.d.) uploaded a text that advocated the philosophy of limited government in March 2016: “Support our work of promoting limited Government and a return to economic prosperity”; the TeaPAC’s website stated on 15 April 2016: “TeaPAC is dedicated to returning this nation to its founding principles of limited, constitutional government” (Help TeaPAC win elections!, n.d.); and the website of the Llano Tea Party (from Texas), includes on its mission to restrict “governmental functions to the original intent of the Constitution” (n.d.).

Alongside websites and blogs, social networking sites have also been used to consistently promote the principles of limited government. The key values of the movement appeared again on the Tea Party Patriots Twitter account: “Fiscal Responsibility”, “Constitutionally Limited Government” and “Free Markets” (Tea Party Patriots, n.d.-b). On Facebook, the same group has also promoted these values (Tea Party Patriots, n.d.-a). Tea partiers also use social media to enhance the movement’s values on the basis of the three core concepts, just as the Austin Texas Tea Party does on Twitter: “Free Markets, Limited Government, Personal Responsibility, Constitutional Constructionism, A Virtuous America, Strong National Defense” (AustinTexasTeaParty, n.d.).

The Ideological Narrative of the Tea Party

Along with anti-government arguments, the Tea Party also strongly advocates a libertarian narrative on its online communication. They present centralized control by the federal government as a threat (Bocetta, 2017); in this vein, the Tea Party Express announced on its website a tour between 27 March and 15 April 2010 that had the following message:

You, the politicians in Washington, have failed We The People with your bailouts, out-of-control deficit spending, government takeovers of sectors of the economy, Cap & Trade, government-run health care, and higher taxes! If you thought we were just going to quietly go away, or that this tea party movement would be just a passing fad, you were mistaken. We’re taking our country back! (The Tea Party Express III: Just Vote Them Out! Tour, n.d.)

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The elements of this narrative can be reduced to the three basic ideas of the TPM: limited government (“bailouts”, “spending”), fiscal responsibility (“spending”, “higher taxes”) and free market (“takeovers”, “Cap & Trade”, “government-run health care”). Additionally, the anti-tyranny narrative manifests a counterpositioning of “We the People” (a language that directly appeals to the US Constitution) with “the politicians in Washington”, and reinforces the anti-establishment connotations of the Tea Party.

This leads us directly to the characterization of the villain in the TPM narrative. In keeping with the core anti-government message, it is logical that “government” would be one of the terms used to describe the out-of-control threat facing the United States. Thus, the website of the Amarillo Tea Party Patriots (n.d.), from Texas, claims to unite “those individuals who believe the government has over-extended its reach and has been fiscally irresponsible through over-spending, bailouts and excessive taxation”. References to the assault of the usurping State against the constitutionalist tradition can also be seen in a 4 July 2012 entry in the TeaParty911.com blog, where Donald Mellon (2012a) notes that “the greatest problem needed fixing with respect to the Constitution is the loss of state and individual sovereignty caused by Federal Government usurpation of powers not granted and the complicity of the Supreme Court”, and the blogger muses about how wonderful it would be to repeal the 16th amendment, which allows Congress to “tax income from any source”. The Tea Party Patriots also depict the government as an out of control threat:

Washington is too big, too powerful and too intrusive in our lives. Led by out of control agencies like the NSA and IRS, which have literally persecuted Americans for political reasons, Washington has become a threat to opportunity, freedom and rights. (Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, n.d.)

The Montana Tea Party Coalition (n.d.) website also links a hostile government to citizen freedoms being under assault:

In recent years citizens across the USA have recognized that our nation is headed in the wrong direction. The growth and cost of government is no longer sustainable, putting the futures of our children and grandchildren at risk.

In addition, as governments become larger and control more of our economy, we find that the rights and freedoms guaranteed to citizens under our federal and state Constitutions are under assault.

Local Tea Party organizations have taken root across the state of Montana, and have now joined forces as the Montana Tea Party Coalition for the purpose of promoting sound fiscal practices in governments and the preservation of Constitutional rights.

In addition to the government, bureaucrats are also deemed the out-of-control enemy, as declared in a post on the Cleveland Tea Party Patriots blog on 19 August 2012: “The bureaucrats are driving The United States, Ohio and Cleveland into the ground” (Cleveland Tea Party Patriots, 2012). Moreover, the threat of state intervention in the economy has been taken to the point of describing the United States as a socialist or Marxist society. Thus, the Llano Tea Party (n.d.) sees the United States “spiralling into socialism,” and on 14 October 2012 the Central Minnesota Tea Party Blog published an entry — significantly titled “How America Became a Communist Nation.” — which begins indicating that “the idea that the State ought to sit in the center of society” is a bad idea, as if many Americans do not know that funda-

ments “of our modern State are based – nearly verbatim – on the demands of Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*.” The Marxist ideas that, according to this tea partier, have shaped the United States, are seen as desirable because people are seduced by “the siren song of living at the expense of your neighbour”. Conversely, progressive politicians adopted another Marxist innovation: “A progressive income tax. Let the rich pay!” The author closes the publication with another reference to the predominance of Marxist ideas — accompanied, on this occasion, by Keynesians: “The so-called “baby boomers” grew up in a world dominated by Marxism and Keynesian economics. These are bad ideas. They are destined to collapse. And the collapse is here” (Stansberry, 2012). The Marxist threat has also been denounced on the TeaPAC website: “Together, we in the Tea Party movement have resolutely opposed runaway government spending, the nationalization of our entire economy, and unrestrained Marxist-style socialism under one party rule” (About TeaPAC, n.d.).

This leads us to another moment in the storytelling of the Tea Party: a return to an idealized past that is in accordance with the founding principles of the nation. Thus, the Tea Party Activists blog advocates for going back to a golden age of the free market when it urges to “get the government out of the people’s way, and let freedom return us to the productive nation we once were, not a simple socialist model based on the failed ideas that Europe has continued to flounder under” (Teapartyactivists, 2009); The Anchorage Tea Party has a vision of “a renewal of the historic American Constitutional Republic grounded in free markets and free people” (n.d.-b); and the Central Minnesota Tea Party Blog longs for the times when State intervention was very limited:

Until World War I, the central government of the United States . . . played a small role in the lives of its citizens. Its powers were strictly limited, as were its revenues. It was specifically barred from taxing citizens directly. It was a humble government that interacted with the individual states in the union, but didn’t interact much with individual citizens. (Stansberry, 2012)

In the movement’s online communication, the reactionary longing for an idealised past is connected to the founding political mythology of the United States. Thus, the Llano Tea Party (n.d.) refers to the Founders, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Bill of Rights of 1791; and the site of the Amarillo Tea Party Patriots (n.d.), before quoting Thomas Jefferson, states that the federal government “is in overreach mode usurping Sovereign State Powers. It will not change until “We the people” make changes happen”. There is another reference to the Constitution in the use of the phrase ‘We The People’ appearing on the Spartanburg Tea Party (South Carolina) website, which also affirms its commitment to the Constitution, along with advocacy for “limited taxation, spending, and size of federal, state, and local governments”, and other references to personal responsibility, and the promotion and research of “free market solutions to replace burdensome public programs” (*About Spartanburg Tea Party*, n.d.). Additionally, the Tea Party Patriots’ website affirms that the Constitution “is a timeless document that guarantees our basic freedoms”, and also refers to the Bill of Rights (Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, n.d.).

The communication of the TPM in social media has also revealed its anti-tyranny narrative and advocacy for the foundational principles. “Give me free market over government intervention anytime any day,” proclaims the Massapequa Tea Party (New York) on Twitter (2012) —an intertextual reference to the expression ‘Give me liberty or give me death’ attributed to Patrick Henry (one of the Founding Fathers) in a 1775 speech. The Tea Party Community social network presented a quote by Thomas Paine with reference to the idea of freedom on 29 March 2015: “Those who expect to reap the blessings of free-

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dom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it” (as cited in Tea Party Community, n.d.). The Tampa Tea Party (Florida) asserts the notion that the US is moving towards communism, as is reflected in a tweet from 2010: “Wow, even Cuba is calling for less statism to help its awful economy... while we move in the opposite direction” (2010). The Cleveland Tea Party (2012), in Ohio, has also gone quite far in characterizing who the enemy is on Twitter: “Our objective is to annihilate the Marxist ideology that has infiltrated America”. As to the idea of restoring the past and reversing the course of history, the Tea Party Patriots makes it clear on Facebook: “Tea Party Patriots is a movement made up of millions of individual Patriots aimed at restoring limited government and basic free-market principles our country was built on” (n.d.-a)—once again, libertarianism as a foundational ideal to return to.

CONCLUSION

About five years after the conception of the Tea Party, the Cato Institute noted that the movement had been “successful in changing the terms of the national debate on issues such as debt and spending. . . The Republican midterm sweep of 2010 would not have been possible without its energy and enthusiasm” (Tanner, 2014). It is no accident, therefore, that “the discourse of the Tea Party has thoroughly infiltrated institutionalized conservative politics within the United States” (Savage, 2012, p. 565), and that even Donald Trump—who was supported by the Tea Party Patriots (Martin, 2016)—has been viewed as “a culminating Tea Party figure” (Roth, 2018, p. 542). Additionally, the TPM’s influence can be noted even in movements that are ideologically disparate (when not opposed) to it, as is the case of Indivisible — which emerged in response to the election of Trump — which has channelled its message through Twitter and Facebook (Roth, 2018) and has used “the Tea Party’s combination of decentralized organizing made possible by the Internet, its focus on local political races, and its general willingness to work with an established political party” (Roth, 2018, p. 539). Indeed, the use of social media is an area where the significance of the TPM can be verified, which has influenced a greater use of social networking sites by the US right, as a headline of *Computerworld* magazine in November 2010 stipulated: “Tea Party pushes GOP past Dems in social net use” (Gaudin, 2010).

As with previous libertarian-leaning campaigns, such as Ron Paul’s (Pineda & Hernández-Santaolalla, 2014), Tea Party communication can be regarded as a hybrid of Internet orientation, radicalism and focus on ideological principles. Also, as in Paul’s case, the TPM phenomenon indicates that ideological purism and on-message persistence are viable strategies in online politics. The TPM may be an organizationally diffuse movement, but the unity with which it insists on its core values gives it a homogeneity that is very effective in terms of communication. The empirical evidence available on websites, blogs and social media indicates that the Tea Party reiterates similar concepts (limited government, free markets, constitutionalism, etc.) over and over again, thus it acts consistently with the ideological approach that governs its positioning — as the Minnesota Tea Party (2009) summarised on Twitter in June 2009: “Stay on message: fiscal responsibility, limited government and free markets”. The TPM’s online communication also illustrates its basic narrative: the need to restore the individualist foundational ideals of the United States, which they claim is facing a socialist and increasingly threatening government. The result is a coherent and disciplined promotion of right-wing economic libertarianism on the web.

Although the evidence provided illustrates the movement’s on-message communication strategy, there should be further study of the relative statistical weight of the central libertarian ideology that is present in all the different issues the TPM addresses online. This is especially true when considering

that an empirical study on Facebook indicates the presence of a religious variable in the movement’s discourse, stating such things as God is on the side of conservatives and using religion and prayer to support political candidates and the Tea Party in general (Morin & Flynn, 2014, p. 126). Thus, an empirical study offering, for example, representative data on the relative importance of the TPM’s fiscal conservatism in contrast to the presence of socially conservative values, is necessary. In this sense, our qualitative approach could be complemented by a systematic one that quantifies the presence of the core values of the Tea Party on its websites, blogs and social media.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Libertarianism: Political ideology characterized by the freedom of the individual as supreme value, the reduction or elimination of state intervention in the economy and society, and free market capitalism.

On-Message Strategy: Strategic approach (typical of political campaigns) based on the stipulation and repetition of a single theme that must remain consistent throughout the campaign, and that must be reinforced by each individual communication.

Tea Party Movement: Populist extreme right-wing political movement born in the United States in 2009 and ideologically focused on reducing government intervention in the economy.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Williamson et al. (2011) clarify the anti-government nature of the TPM, given that federal social programs such as Social Security or Medicare do enjoy the approval of the Tea Partiers. The opposition of the movement focuses on government spending dedicated to those subjects who in the opinion of the TPM do not work and *do not deserve*, therefore, to benefit from social programs. Faced with the radical economic libertarianism of the elites that have financed the movement, the conservatism of the social foundations of the TPM would consist in dedicating social programs to those who “deserve it.” Among the “non-working” who do not deserve help, young people and unauthorized immigrants stand out — the latter is relevant, given that, for example, 78% of Tea Partiers in Massachusetts consider immigration and border security very important (Williamson et al., 2011, p. 33). Thus, the Tea Party base is defined as workers and productive citizens, compared to those who do not work and, therefore, do not deserve governmental help, and it can be said that the TPM contains a certain element of the ideology of “producerism”, “a doctrine that champions the so-called producers in society against both ‘unproductive’ elites and subordinate groups defined as lazy and immoral” (Berlet & Lyons, as cited in Roth, 2018, p. 542).
- ² “TEA” would also be the acronym for “Taxed Enough Already” (*Tea Party* - Western North Carolina, n.d.), which would also point to the fiscal conservatism of the movement.

Chapter 18

The Social Media Politicians: Personalisation, Authenticity, and Memes

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ABSTRACT

Social media brings to the forefront two very important factors to today's politics: the prominent role of the internet and the importance of personalisation which is closely tied to a tendency of political candidates to overexpose their private lives. This does not mean that the candidate becomes more relevant than the political party or the ideological platforms thereof, but the interest tends to fall on the candidate's lifestyle; on their personal characteristics and their most intimate surroundings, which blurs the line between the public and private spheres. Online profiles are used as a showcase for the public agenda of the politician at the same time as they gather, on a daily basis, the thoughts, tastes and leisure time activities of the candidates. This chapter offers a reflection of the ways in which political leaders develop their digital narratives, and how they use the social media environment to approach citizens.

INTRODUCTION

The personalisation of politics refers to the process by which individuals as political actors become more relevant to collective entities, such as political parties or parliaments (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Ferreira da Silva, Garzia, & De Angelis, 2019; Langer & Sagarzazu, 2018; McGregor, 2018; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007), but also to topics or issues (Adam & Maier, 2010). Although it is not new (Holtz-Bacha, Langer & Merkle, 2014; Newman, 1999; see also Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes, 1960), this trend is becoming more relevant today, especially in relation to the exposure of the more personal side of politicians (McGregor, Lawrence, & Cardona, 2017); a trend that is framed in the context of an increasingly personalised society (McGregor, 2018): the society of the “me generation” (Bennett, 2012).

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In this vein, this chapter will further explore the notion of political personalisation, deepening the understanding of concepts such as individualisation, privatisation or celebrification and, from a more general perspective, how political discourse has been simplified in the social network environment.

PERSONALISATION AS A FEATURE OF “NEW” POLITICS

Political personalisation has been perceived as one of the fundamental characteristics of the so-called contemporary politics (Agranoff, 1974; Castells, 2009; Maarek, 2011), in line with other aspects such as the growing relevance of media—especially related to television—the simplification of political discourse, social fragmentation (Bennett, 2012) or partisan dealignment (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000). Regarding the latter, there is no lack of examples in which the evolution of certain political organisations has been linked to the trajectory of their leaders, such as Forza Italia and Silvio Berlusconi or En Marche and Emmanuel Macron (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019), to the point of finding parties that bear the name of their leader in their names, such as the Italian *Noi con Salvini* or the GIL, acronym of Independent Liberal Group (*Grupo Independiente Liberal* in Spanish), founded by Jesús Gil y Gil. In the face of this, Daoust, Blais and Péloquin-Skulski (2019) found, however, that despite declining membership or laxity in party loyalty, parties remain more important than leaders. After all, parties become more stable than their members, which invites easier and more lasting identification with the electorate. In this way, it would be expected that loyal voters would cast their votes according to the political party, while those more fickle voters would pay more attention to the candidate or the programme; although it is true that in such decision making, each country’s election system plays a role (Canel, 2006), as well as the personal preference of each voter (Rospir, 1999). In this way and facing the impossibility of drawing a reliable conclusion based on the variables involved, the most suitable strategy to follow seems to be for the candidate, the political party and the programme to integrate coherently and consistently with the electoral message.

As indicated by Pedersen and Rahat (2019), while most of the works addresses the possible negative consequences of political personalisation, a few researchers focus on the benefits that it can have for democracy. Regarding to the first point of view, the criticisms revolve around the possibility that it “will inject irrational elements into democratic politics and enhance populist trends”, or “it will increase emphasis on personal charisma rather than [sic] the impersonal rule of law and institutions” (p. 1). As for the positive consequences, it is proposed that political personalization could improve the confidence lost in institutions and the political class—especially in the young sector (Manning, Penfold-Mounce, Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2017)—resulting, thanks to the possibilities of the internet and new communication technologies, in “a more individualized society, in which technology allows direct communication between decision makers and citizens” (Pedersen y Rahat, 2019, p. 2); a “direct communication between politicians, not parties, and citizens” (Kruikemeier, van Noort, Vliegenthart and de Vreese, 2013, p. 54), that “can contribute to citizens’ political involvement” (p. 60).

Personalisation can help to define and simplify certain political slogans and ideas, since it is easier to tell a personal story than to communicate abstract political issues (Martín Salgado, 2002; Salmon, 2008). This allows to connect such political personalisation with infotainment, and more specifically with politainment. Following Castells (2009), the simplification of political discourse involves identifying it with human faces, and it is much better if these faces can be recognised as celebrities. This makes possible to establish a connection between the wider concept of political personalisation and the “politician

celebrity” category (Street, 2004), i.e. that politician who intentionally or unintentionally sets him or herself up as a celebrity to the public (Marsh, ‘t Hart & Tindall, 2010).

While all parties tend to become centre parties and reproduce the divisions of the political spectrum within themselves, voters increasingly float away from these empty cubicles in order to identify with public individuals or celebrities who condense particular themes and emotions in a spectacular display of character and style.

Increasingly, people want to vote for persons and their ideas rather than for political parties and their programs. Their so-called ‘apathy’ or lack of interest (which is often a legitimate lack of interest in the interests of political professionals) is at least to some extent counterbalanced by a more distracted interest in political infotainment and celebrity, framed within the permanent campaigning, marketing and polling rhythms that characterise a fully grown media democracy (Corner & Pels, 2003, p. 7).

As for the study of political personalisation, Pedersen and Rahat (2019) argue that it can be classified in three dimensions: 1) arena, which refers to where such personalisation is manifested, distinguishing between institutional, media and behavioural personalisation (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007); 2) level, which differentiates between centralised or decentralised personalization, depending on whether political power is vested in a few leaders or distributed among the different members, i.e. the individual politicians (Balmas, Rahat, Sheaffer & Shenhav, 2014); and 3) character, which focuses on the how and refers to both tone (positive vs. negative) and to the quality of information (individualisation vs. privatisation).

Individualisation and privatisation are precisely two of the main dimensions into which political personalisation has been divided; a division to which van Santen and van Zoonen (2010) would add—in their work on personal narratives in the political discourse on television—that of “emotionalisation”, which, as they say, is less common than the other two dimensions, and its use does not seem to extend more over time but depends on each politician (p. 62). For Van Aelst, Sheaffer & Stanyer, individualization “concerns a focus on individual politicians as central actors in the political arena, including their ideas, capacities and policies” (2011, p. 204), whereas privatization “implies a shift in media focus from the politician as occupier of a public role to the politician as a private individual, as a person distinct from their public role” (p. 205). On the first concept, for example, Langer and Sagarzazu (2018) distinguish two additional sub-dimensions: greater importance of individual politicians over the parties they represent, and the fact that the focus is placed on the leader or president, thus diminishing the importance of the rest of the government team. This is something that the authors approach with caution, since they understand that, within this individualisation, it may not be only the leader, but an elite made up of individuals belonging to the hard core of the party or the government who dominate the media agenda. From the perspective of privatisation, as noted, personalisation entails a further step towards the exploitation of the politician’s intimacy and lifestyle, blurring the boundaries between the political and the personal (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013, p. 758).

SIMPLIFICATION AND PRIVATISATION OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Social Networks, Engagement and Memes

Political personalisation is not a topic confined to the Internet and digital social networks; however, it is true that the new media landscape has facilitated and increased the exposure of certain facets of politicians' private lives beyond their positioning or management capabilities. "The affordances of social media in particular allow politicians to humanize themselves" (McGregor, 2018, p. 1141).

Metz, Kruikemeier and Lecheler indicate that, based on previous empirical studies, it would seem that "social media stimulate the use of personalised communication styles" (2019, p. 4), although they warn that it is really complicated to compare the results of these studies, since they start from different definitions of the concept of personalisation. In their study, the authors confirm "that self-personalization is a multi-layered concept on social media" (p. 11), pointing out three fundamental elements: the professional, the emotional and the private. In this respect, they state that, although the three aspects play a joint role, they are also relevant separately. Thus, they draw attention to how private self-personalisation can increase audience engagement, but is rarely used, while professional self-personalisation, which is widely used, would have no effect on engagement. Similarly, the authors focus on the importance of using audiovisual material to strengthen such personalised communication in any of the three aspects of self-personalisation.

This growing relevance of audiovisual content is not exclusive to social networks or the political context—it simply responds to a generalised trend that has been forging for years, and which finds a perfect example in memes within the digital environment (Carrasco-Polaino, Sánchez-de-la-Nieta-Hernández y Trelles-Villanueva, 2020). The term *meme*, short for *mimeme*, was coined by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene*—first published in 1976—to convey "the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or unit of imitation" (2016, p. 249). Thus, for him,

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation (2016, p. 249).

In this way, like genes, memes would be subject to modification and selection, so that, among the vast number of possibilities, only a few—the "useful and powerful" (Rushkoff, 2010, p. 102)—would be developed and successfully disseminated (Shifman, 2012, p. 188). It is true that memes are not exclusive to the Internet, but on the Internet they have found a preferred medium for their propagation. In fact, according to Shifman (2012), this memetics would respond to the participatory logic of the internet, where growing individualism interacts with a need to share and create communities. Memes are the creative and unique expression of an individual, who wishes, at the same time, that his or her creation be shared and re-imagined, in order to extend its life. Thus, compared to the community that shares and gives value to memes (Martínez-Rolán & Piñero-Otero, 2016), there is an innovative minority that shapes them (Ballesteros Doncel, 2016).

This participatory notion of memes, as well as their capacity to condense, simplify and concretise complex and abstract ideas into audiovisual content (Re, 2014; Martínez-Rolán & Piñero-Otero, 2016), has led to their emergence in the political context, being perceived primarily as a new tool for political

participation (Ross & Rivers, 2017, p. 2). In this way, although this activity can lead to demobilisation, insofar as people are limited to and content with sharing memes instead of more involved actions—in line with the concept of slacktivism (Mozorov, 2009; Kristofferson, White & Pelozo, 2014) and the more specific concept of clicktivism—, it can also contribute to citizens attending to certain issues that would otherwise go unnoticed (Vie, 2014), a “create new opportunities for cognitive engagement, discursive participation, and political mobilisation” (Dennis, 2019, p. 186) and, in short, to articulating political discourse (Muriel, 2018). In other words, “While such practices may seem frivolous, the circulation of digital visual media can play a crucial role in political community formation” (Dean, 2019, p. 259). The current era is viewed as a kind of a “‘golden era’ of citizen participation” (Echevarría Victoria & González Macías, 2019, p. 121) where images and memes gain special relevance, thus placing *artivism* at the service of activism and social movements (Gutiérrez-Rubí, 2014).

However, beyond this social and collective power of the meme, or perhaps precisely because of it—and its engagement ability (Rodríguez, 2013; Carrasco-Polaino, Sánchez-de-la-Nieta-Hernández y Trelles-Villanueva, 2020)—, the meme has become another tool of institutional and political communication (Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2015; Martínez-Rolán & Piñeiro-Otero, 2016; Hernández-Santaolalla & Rubio-Hernández, 2017; Meso-Ayerdi, Mendiguren-Galdospín, & Pérez-Dasilva, 2017). In this respect, memes could be set up as another mechanism for the mobilisation of netroots—a term derived from grassroot, with which Jerome Armstrong labelled online communities of political activists (Armstrong & Moulitsas, 2006, p. 146). This is how, in the American context, the election of 2016 came to be recognised as “the most-memed election,” in reference to Bernie Sanders’ prominence on the network (Dewey, 2016). However, years before, Barack Obama had already known how to make perfect use of memetic speech, although with an important difference in terms of the electoral yield obtained by each one. In Spain, on the other hand, memes were used systematically for the first time in order to encourage political debate on social networks during the elections of 20 December 2015, although usage was uneven among political forces (Meso-Ayerdi, Mendiguren-Galdospín, and Pérez-Dasilva, 2017, p. 675). After all, if citizens communicate through memes, it is logical to think that politicians, who want to show themselves to the public as authentic representatives of the “majority”, will also make use of them. In this sense, politicians’ use of Internet memes would be just one more consequence, or perhaps a symptom, of the continuous personalisation and simplification of political discourse.

“One of Us”: Blurring the Boundaries Between Public and Private

Manning et al. (2017) describe how citizens, especially younger ones, want politicians to be responsible and professional, but at the same time be “fallible and capable of having ‘fun’”, just like any other citizen, i.e. to be “just like us” (p. 140). They acknowledge that this conflict, which they identify as a contradiction, can be overcome “in the liminal space of social media where the boundaries between public and private are permeable and shift rapidly” (p. 140).

Social media provides for the publicisation of ‘private’ everyday activities (e.g. through ‘selfies’), the sharing of ‘private’ thoughts and opinions as well as being used to publicise ‘public’ parts of one’s life (e.g. work achievements). Moreover, social media is instantaneous, enabling ‘real life’ to be captured spontaneously making posts less formal, quickly composed, with many containing slang and abbreviations or resembling a stream of consciousness. These characteristics lend themselves to ‘authentic’ and

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'genuine' representations, composed quickly to document a moment or share a current preoccupation (2017, p. 130).

The pseudo-ubiquity that characterises social networking sites makes them a preferred channel for the dissemination of both private and public life. In this regard, several regular users have begun to register on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with two profiles, a more personal one and a more professional one, as a mechanism to avoid, especially, the effects the former can have on the latter. However, this is more complicated when it comes to politicians. A dual digital identity may be counter-productive, since, as noted, social networks would function as a sign that these are regular citizens rather than public agents. On several occasions, this difficulty in using social networks has led to the decreased popularity of certain members of political parties, as they have posted unfortunate messages when they had already entered the political field. For example, in the Spanish context, the aesthetic judgement issued by Elena Valenciano (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE) regarding football player Franck Ribéry, the dissemination of the score of an online game played by Fátima Báñez (Popular Party, PP) or Albert Hoffmann's death announcement by Tony Cantó (Citizens)—which came five years late—were all infamous. On other occasions, however, their political post has been jeopardised by their social activity prior to becoming public agents; that is, by their sole role as citizens. This is the case of Guillermo Zapata, who had to resign from his post as Councillor for Culture of the Madrid City Council for tweeting a series of unfortunate dark humour jokes that caused unrest in some of the population (García Gallo, 2015).

This, which can be seen as a contradiction, only reinforces the idea that politicians have to be seen as a reflection of the electorate, but still a reflection that is more prepared and even idealised: the best possible version of the citizenry.

Sixteen years after the birth of Facebook, social networks are reaching a maturity period that, in the political arena, not only translates into a refinement of the communication developed through them, but also means that many emerging politicians have a social profile created years before they entered the political arena. In this way, the "sins" of innocent youth, which decades ago were silenced by the privacy of the time when they happened, can now turn against the person when he or she begins to become popular with the electorate. The opposition, who used to have to dig into the politician's past to find a weapon—more personal than professional—to attack its opponent, can now simply fall back on checking the person's timeline. All this occasionally translates into a systematic cleaning of online social life prior to the start of a political career, so that profiles on social networks are as unpolluted as possible or, at least, in perfect harmony with the image that the politician wants to give to the electorate.

Influencer Technology for Political Management

Now more than ever, politicians are born, develop and die in social networks; they shape their public being from conversations in the digital environment, or at least by broadcasting messages through them. Famous are the Twitter interventions of Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro or Nicolás Maduro, which, according to Diego Fonseca (2019), are nothing more than the artifices of a "demagogic show" that is set up in a context in which social networks have sold an illusory connection between leaders and citizens, denying the need for intermediaries. Fonseca's opinion column for *The New York Times*, however, focuses on the last great representative of virtual politics: Nayib Bukele. Named the millennial president or the hipster president (Villalta, 2019), and the self-proclaimed "coolest president in the world" (Bukele, 2019), El Salvador's top leader uses this microblogging network to give orders of various types, as well as to share

certain moments shared with his family. The latter, which can be seen as a legacy of Obama's tweeting administration, and which serves as an example of the dilution already noted between the public and private spheres, has been applauded by certain sectors as an act of transparency—in keeping with the idea of new politics that he represents, with his victory ending thirty years of bipartisanship—although it has also been branded as political trivialisation, and even, as Fonseca (2019) states, as a democratic risk.

But beyond this constant disjunction, these attempts at politics through social networking sites are increasingly taking root. For Gloria Santiago, Vice President of the Balearic Parliament (Spain), “most people are not here to listen to big speeches, even if they are necessary”, and she says it is “a mistake to underestimate this way of doing politics: if you can express it simply and quickly, people will understand you better” (in Galvín, 2019). A member of the Unidas Podemos party (United We Can), Santiago has become especially famous for her ironic videos presenting her political positions, in an attempt, as understood from her own words, to simplify the discourse and thus reach more people. The problem is viewing this as something radically new because, in reality, it is still an evolution of one of the most important features of contemporary politics—only now the broadcast of these simple messages is done from the living room of the politician's house or even from his or her bedroom.

The phenomenon of privatisation and the growing—although almost always controlled—exposure of the politicians' intimate sphere is where political communication is evolving most. Within Spanish politics, examples of this privatisation can be found in some posts by the ultra-right-wing Santiago Abascal (President of Vox) on Instagram, or the newspaper #GarzónOnTheRoad as a web series by Alberto Garzón (General Coordinator of United Left, IU) in the 2016 electoral campaign.

These types of publications have both supporters and detractors, although there is an important difference: while male politicians can be accused of trivialising the political sphere with these actions, women's policies not only have to face these criticisms, but also other criticism related to their gender. Thus, in the context of the political personalization, Campus (2013) indicates that, when it refers to women, the discussion is more about appearance (dressing style, age, etc.) than about credibility or expertise. In fact, going back to Gloria Santiago, she has been described as a “beautiful shop window” (Merino, 2019) or as “too beautiful to be a feminist” (Siri, 2019), whereas Mamen Sanchez attracted attention in June 2015 during her investiture as mayor of the Spanish city of Jerez de la Frontera for her shoes and little toes. The “wing-mirror toes”, as it was known, caused numerous memes and jokes to which the mayor also responded with humour (Jones, 2015). However, along these lines, especially significant is the case of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a representative of the United States Congress who has also been seen as suspicious in the political arena due to her gender and youth. Among the most notorious attacks was the publication on Twitter of a video in which she was seen dancing happily during her university years—an adaptation of the mythic scene from *The Breakfast Club* (John Hughes, 1985), but with the song “Lisztomania” by Phoenix—with the text “Here is America's favorite commie know-it-all acting like the clueless nitwit she is” (Lyons & Walters, 2019). However, more striking was the congresswoman's response, in which she uploaded a video showing her dancing in the halls of Congress: “I hear the GOP thinks women dancing are scandalous. Wait till they find out Congresswomen dance too!” (Ocasio-Cortez, 2019). In this case, the Republican meme met with an unexpected response, not only from the congresswoman, but from a large part of the network, which far from condemning her dancing, shared it and even reinvented it with other songs, as a form of vindication of “having ‘fun’”, which Manning et al. already described as a valued ability of politicians (2017, p. 140).

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In any case, it is not that men's physical appearance or even their dancing abilities are not taken into account as was the case of Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister, or Miquel Iceta, First Secretary of the Socialists' Party of Catalonia but there, such aspects are not usually seen as a handicap for doing their job, but perhaps as a more playful side of the political leaders.

In any case, the biggest difference between men and women in the field of politics is precisely when it comes to bringing together the public and private spheres. For men, showing their private lives is a way of demonstrating how they can combine their family and work obligations, while for women it is a reminder of the need to choose between their private lives—as wives and mothers (and even daughters)—and their professional careers (van Zoonen, 2006). The images of Alberto Garzón or Nayib Bukele looking after their daughters can bring them enormous benefits, while a similar scenario can be a weakness for women and, in fact, when it is shared, it is usually precisely as a mechanism to vindicate female politicians who do not wish to hide this side in order to appear more professional (from a male perspective). In accordance with this, Meeks (2016) pointed out after a content analysis of the Twitter feeds of U.S. Senate candidates during 2012 general election, that

Winning men included twice as many references to family and included twice as many personal photos as winning women. These two elements in particular cut right to the heart of the double bind, of the idea that a woman's role has historically and culturally been in the private sphere, as wife and mother, and thus set apart from the public sphere of politics. Ultimately, women candidates may be able to go all in on interactivity in feminized campaign spaces, but they may still need to walk a delicate line when it comes to embracing elements of personalization if they want to win (p. 306).

In summary, and along the line of the Strategic Stereotype Theory proposed by Fridkin and Kenney, politicians have to play with the stereotypes attributed to their gender to promote them or to silence them when seeking an electoral advantage (in McGregor, Lawrence & Cardona, 2017); a strategic decision that becomes more delicate for women.

As a (Virtual) Goodbye

Social networks have undoubtedly become a fundamental channel for the development of political communication and not only in election periods. They are also very relevant in the daily agenda of public representatives, contributing to the development of the so-called permanent campaign (Larsson, 2016), a notion that was introduced in 1976, when Patrick Cadell, advisor to President Jimmy Carter, called attention to the need to continue campaign efforts beyond the actual campaign. But what happens when a politician is removed from office or leaves his or her post? What role should social media play in this farewell? There are several politicians who, in recent years, have decided to use their online social profiles to communicate to the public (or at least to their followers, understood perhaps as those loyal to them) that they are leaving their executive functions.

On 10 December 2019, Mauricio Macri left the presidency of Argentina; however, his farewell began on 22 November on Instagram, in what he hoped would be “an entertaining, amusing and constructive conversation” (Macri, 2019), as a prelude to the expected walkabout on 7 December in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo. As another example, Albert Rivera left the leadership of Citizens and resigned from his position as representative after the poor results achieved by his party in the Spanish elections of 10 November 2019. In this case, although the official statement took place in a media appearance the

day after Election Day, he did not miss the opportunity to broadcast a video through Instagram on 2 December, from the very floor of the Congress of Representatives, to thank his audience for their past trust (Rivera Díaz, 2019a). Two days later, he would use the same social network to announce that he would be a father again, stating that “once again, love wins” (Rivera Díaz, 2019b). Finally, another Spanish case that was also famous for the use of social networks was that of Cristina Cifuentes, former President of the Community of Madrid, who had to resign from office after a series of scandals related to irregularities in obtaining her master’s degree and the stealing of creams in a supermarket. After the official statement, on 27 April 2018, she posted an image on her digital profiles featuring a superimposed “thank you to everyone” (Cifuentes, 2018). However, beyond this virtual goodbye, what was especially relevant and transcendent was the video she posted on Twitter on the night of 21 March—which was deleted shortly after. In the video, she assured that she was not going to resign, and she addressed those who wished her to leave to show them that she was going to stay and continue being “your” president (eldiarios, 2018). This was planned as an act of resistance and an attempt to gain the approval of her followers, which did not avoid, in any case, the expected outcome.

Social networks allow those politicians who have to leave their post, usually in a forced way, to address a large part of the citizenry without intermediaries, and from a more private context than that of a press conference or an official statement. Thus, the virtual environment also provides a way to end the relationship between politician and citizen, allowing the former, in an illusory conversational environment, to say goodbye to the latter as if he or she were a friend. The professional politician says goodbye from their desk, the person from the privacy provided by the front camera of a laptop or mobile device.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main drawbacks of using social profiles on the web is that they do not fully correspond to reality, i.e. there is a dissonance between the virtual profile and the offline profile. This becomes even more pressing in the case of public figures and, especially, politicians, as they are expected to be authentic, consistent and professional. Social networks, and the Internet in general, have sometimes been seen as a magic wand, when in fact they are just another channel—a tool that must be used following a comprehensive communication strategy that takes into account both the political representatives themselves, and the parties and programmes. The transparency, interaction and intimacy provided by the digital environment should not really be seen as a new paradigm, but as an evolution of the idea of political personalisation, simplification and spectacularisation that has characterised so-called contemporary politics for decades.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

In recent years, political discourse has become increasingly personalised and simplified, in an attempt to move closer to a citizenry that is increasingly apathetic and disaffected with politics, but also more misaligned from a partisan point of view. Social individualisation has found its counterpart in politics, where although parties and campaign issues continue to be significantly relevant, the candidate, or a reduced group of members, are the ones that monopolise the most media attention. In this context, social networks have burst in as an especially suitable tool to reach the electorate, since it allows politicians to

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talk to users one-on-one and in their own space. Social networking sites favour immediacy in communication and eliminate intermediaries. The citizen not only listens to the politicians but can also respond to them in real time, even though, on most occasions, the conversation is more of an illusion than a reality. Even though the Internet may have been seen as a prelude to a more real democracy, it is undeniable that it is changing the way we communicate. This is not to say that memes, or the fact that politicians can issue a statement from their bedroom through their mobile devices, represent a revolution for politics—rather, they are the “new” tools of a political drift that has been developing for decades. Whether this is making politics more banal or, on the contrary, is allowing them to reach a part of the population that would otherwise not attend to politics, is a debate that remains open. Thus, future research should delve into the reception and effects of this communication, on the one hand, and into how politicians implement their communication strategies in different contexts and situations, on the other, focusing on reality from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Individualisation: Focus on the individual politician as the central actor in politics.

Meme: According to Richard Dawkins, unit of cultural transmission.

Netroot: Coined by Jerome Armstrong, it refers to online communities of political activists.

Personalisation of Politics: The process by which individual politicians become more important than collective bodies, such as political parties or parliaments.

Politainment: Fusion of politics and entertainment.

Politician Celebrity: A politician who intentionally or unintentionally sets him or herself up as a celebrity in front of the public.

Privatisation: Focus on the politician as a person who has a private role, apart from his or her public role.

Strategic Stereotype Theory: Coined by Fridkin and Kenney, it refers to the management of gender stereotypes by politicians for profit.

Chapter 19

Electoral Propaganda Through Televised Fiction: The Online Communication During 2019 Spanish General Elections

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ABSTRACT

The third golden age of television, in consonance with the increase of the phenomenon transmedia, has coincided with disseminating the message on social media. Spectators themselves are linking the fictional discourse on television with events that are happening in the news, especially through humor. This tendency has also been embraced by political leaders, who use memes and other productions to draw parallels and connect them with their ideas. In the Spanish context, the campaign around the last general elections of April 28, 2019 has taken place together with the beginning of the broadcasting of the Game of Thrones' last season. This has provoked the adoption of its fictional discourse by the main political leaders, who have also used other fictional references for their campaign. Hence, the aim of this chapter is studying the connection between the political ideas and the fictional product in the online party communication.

INTRODUCTION

Television shows have been experiencing huge growth in recent years, hand-in-hand with the international success of at-home *video on demand* services, such as HBO or Netflix. The quality and quantity of these

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shows provokes continuous conversation among the viewers who make up the fan community for these media products. In addition, titles such as *House of Cards* (Willimon, 2013-2018), *Game of Thrones* (Benioff & Weiss, 2011-2019), or *The Handmaid's Tale* (Miller, 2017-) are ideologically charged, which at times suggests the identification on the small screen of real political characters, ideas or parties. In this regard, social media is the ideal space to express this imagined representation, as occurred in the case of Spain during the 2019 national elections (see Baños Mafud, 2019).

What is certain is that the solid construction of these fictional characters, who generate such enthusiasm on social media, does not go unnoticed by the political class itself. Using their official accounts, politicians include allusions to these popular references in their campaign plans as a new way to connect with the fan community. This fact forms part of the current digital era in which the candidate shows their more personal side on social media, thereby gaining authenticity among their followers (see Enli & Rosenberg, 2018). For example, Donald Trump did so on certain occasions with *Game of Thrones* on Twitter (Heritage, 2019), and in Spain, Isabel Serra, the Podemos candidate for the Autonomous Community of Madrid in the elections for the autonomous regions in 2019, also used the show in her campaign (el Diario, 2019). In Spanish politics, the strategy of using mass culture as part of political communication in general and of electoral propaganda in particular has been especially common since there was a surge of new parties.

The electoral campaign in question began in a context in which the emergence of new parties since the European Parliament elections of 2014 created a new political panorama in Spain that ended the traditional two-party system. Accordingly, until 2014, the Spanish government and those of its autonomous regions and local authorities had been in the hands of the Partido Popular (PP), made up of a wide range of right-wing politicians, or of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), traditionally connected to the centre-left. However, from the European elections onwards, the left-wing Podemos party appeared in strength on the electoral scene (at times forming a coalition named Unidas Podemos with the pre-existing communist Izquierda Unida party), followed shortly after by the Ciudadanos party, which originally self-defined as social-democratic but would later describe itself as liberal-progressive. They became the third and fourth most-popular political forces in the general elections of 2015 and 2016. More recently, the far-right VOX party has achieved significant parliamentary representation in response to the new wave of national patriotism that has emerged as a reaction to the Catalan independence movement. These five political forces, led by five men (Pedro Sánchez of the PSOE, Pablo Casado of the PP, Pablo Iglesias of Unidas Podemos, Albert Rivera of Ciudadanos and Santiago Abascal of VOX), stood as candidates for the general election of 28 April 2019 (referred to as 28A), called by Pedro Sánchez, who had become president a year prior after winning a vote of no confidence against the PP.

This much anticipated electoral period took place from 12 to 26 April and, based on the exemplified increase in the overlap between mass culture and propaganda, the aim of this research is to understand the propagandistic use that each party or candidate for the presidency of the Government of Spain in 2019 made of fictional discourse on social media, studying the parallels established between the party's ideology and that proposed in fiction.

BACKGROUND

TV Series and Political Discourse Between Reality and Fiction

The role played by fiction in society, whether on television or in the cinema, has been widely debated. In this regard, shows can be interesting vehicles for reflecting on the sociocultural contexts in which they are set: through their stories, they express the fears, concerns and hopes of the community and these elements may be used in the real political arena to discuss one's own political programmes or those of others.

Firstly, considering the classification established by Buonanno (1999), television shows have three functions in society: the storytelling function (they reconstruct issues central to daily life), the familiarisation function (they preserve a series of shared beliefs) and the function of maintaining the community (which suggests that societal changes, if introduced into their scripts, are introduced gradually and in a moderate manner). These points can play an important role in politics for two reasons: on one hand, shows sometimes create stories about democratic systems or the essence of power itself; alternatively, the same politicians in the real world use these stories by incorporating them into their discourse. The former case fits into *politicotainment*, "the ways in which politics and political life are interpreted, negotiated, and represented by the entertainment industry, in particular by drama-series" (Riegert, 2007, p. 1). This includes series such as *The West Wing* (NBC, 1999-2006) or *Political Animals* (USA-Network, 2012), where the Democratic government is represented in an idealised manner that borders propaganda (Hall, 2005; Donstrup, 2018).

In terms of the second aspect, by contrast, this content goes beyond the screen and is used by politicians as metaphors for reality, it being understood that these word games have a creative power that influences our perception and our conceptualisation of reality (González García, 1998). Thus, leaders use them to reduce the complexity of their statements and present their ideas in an agreeable manner so that the public takes them in better. Similarly, fiction is a notable source of metaphors, as these stories, which can themselves cement the identities of both the viewers as well as the political agents (Street, 2000), talk of us and about us, as stated by Buonanno (1999). In this manner, states Street (2000), politics and mass culture share the art of creating an audience or a community who share their fears or hopes and laugh at their jokes: "both the media as well as the politicians must create popular works of fiction capable of representing credible universes so that the public can identify with them" (p. 83). Both share a single aim as well as the source that feeds them: society and all its elements where these fears and hopes are anchored. This is especially true in the case of mass culture:

Popular television and film about politics thus produce a potential resource that is a combination of media discourse, experiential knowledge and popular wisdom [...] The mixture of resources and the narrative appeals that popular film and television fictions about politics contain may therefore be very influential in how people make sense of politics, form their attitudes and express their opinions. (van Zoonen, 2007, p. 532)

Therefore, fictional discourses are not mere entertainment products devoid of content, but are popular representations of politics provide people with an opportunity to pick up and/or confirm a broad sense of politicians and the political process, and enable them to express general political reflections and judgements" (van Zoonen, 2007, p. 545). Moreover, "given favorable combinations of repertoires of media use, habits, and rituals, alongside values, resources, and dispositions, the viewing of TV-series

clearly constitutes a link to the world of politic” (Nærland, 2018, p. 17). Viewers create bonds with the fiction that they follow: they worry about its characters, they put themselves in its scenes and reflect on their actions. When these stories are about or evoke the political systems, they wonder about their representatives, would they act like the character they see on the screen? As Barnes states, “consuming fiction might facilitate social cognition in the real world” (2018, p. 125). This is what he calls *imaginative engagement*, meaning active participation by the viewer who, rather than viewing the screen alone, immerses themselves in the experience of receiving the content:

A reader contributes imaginatively and creatively to a text by filling in gaps, puzzling over interpretations, fleshing out what is written, or otherwise imputing meaning onto the page that extends beyond what is written—or, in the case of film media, what is explicitly shown (Barnes, 2018, p. 127).

Political Communication in the Digital Era - The Adaptation of the Fictional Discourse

From the beginning, social media has demonstrated a notable increase in enthusiasm for new works of fiction. There are increasingly more Twitter accounts, Instagram accounts and Facebook pages dedicated to collecting phrases, interesting facts and memes on any media product, bringing together an online community that is continuously increasing. Similarly, during electoral periods, users pay a lot of attention to these platforms. In Spain, according to the latest report by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Centre for Sociological Research, CIS), referring to the Catalan Parliament elections of 21 December 2017, 33.1% of Catalan users followed the campaign on social media (CIS, 2018); 6% more than the national users at the last general elections in 2016 (CIS, 2016).

Politicians have taken advantage of this situation, at times adapting their communication to the trends of online discourse to show complicity and closeness to the public. They do so using *politainment* strategies, which are the result of merging politics and entertainment (Nieland, 2008). In the formats in which they come together, politics becomes sensationalised and subsequently stripped of ideology in favour of personification (Adam and Maier, 2016). Using this strategy, the candidate shows their citizen side, sharing tastes, passions and personal stories with the interviewer as if they were a celebrity. In this manner, *politainment* directly results from the *celebrification* of the candidate.

The *celebrity* candidate can define themselves in various ways depending on their character. At times, the concept of “celebrity politician” refers to personalities from the entertainment industry who are involved in politics (see Wheeler, 2014; Street, 2012). Nevertheless, in this text we will understand it as the candidate who uses the means of communication common to a famous person from popular culture (Wheeler, 2013, p. 155) to thereby combat voter apathy. This kind of *celebrity* candidate, according to Wood, Corbet and Flinders, “uses the power of the media to present an figure of almost the anti-celebrity politician in order to resonate and draw-support from the broader anti-political social context” (2016, p. 2), framing into a typology of “everyday celebrity politicians” or ECP who allows him to show his more personal facet (2016, p. 3). What is certain is that to achieve this closeness, the ECP candidate “has successfully installed themselves online and enjoys exponential growth through broadcasting on digital media” (Berrocal-Gonzalo, Martín-Jiménez y Gil-Torres, 2017, p. 939). Because, in the opinion of Bennett, “[celebritization of politics] is particularly well suited for the format and tone of social media-based political communication. In fact, it has contributed to the rise of digital politicking driven by celebrity politics-infused ‘performed connectivity’” (2016, p. 7).

On this digital panorama, the “celebrity” candidate becomes closer to social media users (who are, at the same time, part of the electorate), participating in the usual discourse of the online community. In Spain, the leader of VOX and candidate for the presidency, Santiago Abascal, collected memes created by users who supported the party (Rendueles, 2019). At the same time, the Mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau, from the party Barcelona en Comú, broadcasted her electoral campaign on YouTube using a channel that was created following the guidelines for the standard youtuber (La Vanguardia, 2019). In addition, in the Andalusian elections of 2 December 2018, Adelante Andalucía (left-wing group including Podemos, Izquierda Unida, Izquierda Andalucista and Primavera Andaluza) based part of its electoral campaign on the identification of personalities from the political party with fictional characters (Roces, 2018), as Izquierda Unida had done in previous elections (La Vanguardia, 2016). This latest strategy that we are considering is highly interesting given that it is not only about adopting a communication style (as occurs with memes or the figure of the influencer), but it also establishes a premeditated relationship between ideological content and fictional content. This relationship leads to, on one hand, the potential emotional connection with the fan community of the media product in question, and on the other, the simplification of the political message. Both are central parts of *politainment*.

In fact, Podemos has been characterised by making use of this fictional discourse both online and offline, the show *Game of Thrones* being particularly relevant for the party, which was the main topic of one of the books coordinated by Pablo Iglesias and in which various members of his team participated (2014). In addition, Iglesias gave King Felipe VI of Spain the first four seasons on DVD (Domínguez, 2015). Also, the Podemos leader’s career has included two additional books in which he uses cinema or TV shows to reflect on the various political ideologies (see Iglesias, 2013a; Iglesias, 2013b). Due to this, some research has focused on this connection between Podemos and *Game of Thrones* (see Molpeceres, 2016; Cascajosa and Rodríguez, 2018). “Mobilizing the HBO series in general terms, and, specifically, the figure of character Daenerys Targaryen”, said Cascajosa and Rodríguez, “allowed Podemos to make a series of connections with a young generation generally dissatisfied with traditional politics” (2018, p. 4). It is in the digital universe where participative culture rooted in new television shows combines with these *politainment* strategies, resulting in electoral campaigns that seek complicity with the user-viewer, as well as provoking the same reactions that successful mass culture products can trigger.

Because this turn from the traditional fandom toward political activism “reveals a new form of engagement, where the discursive practices of fans were put at the service of a political ideal that has turned participation into one of its main lines of action” (Cascajosa y Rodríguez, 2018, p. 17). Therefore, adopting Domenach’s idea (2001), the polymorphic nature of propaganda has not lost its validity and entertainment shows are one of its new tools.

FICTIONAL PRODUCTS IN THE ONLINE CAMPAIGN FOR SPANISH PRESIDENCY

Game of Thrones, The Lord of the Rings (and Titanic) as Mains Arguments

Various references to fictional products have been observed on the social networks of the political parties and candidates. Undoubtedly, *Game of Thrones*, of which broadcasting of the final episode of the season (and of the show) partially coincided with the Spanish electoral campaign period, became the most referenced series: four of the five main parties challenging for the presidency made use of this

production in their online communication. VOX did not follow this trend, although it did choose another cinema title for its social media campaign: *The Lord of the Rings*.

As indicated by Galbraith, “the story is written based on exercising power, as well as the sources of this and the tools that impose it” (2013, p. 106). In this regard, “of the infinite desires of man, the main ones are the desires for power and glory” (Norton in Galbraith, 2013, p. 11). It is precisely on this basis that *Game of Thrones* is written: a fantasy audiovisual production inspired by historic fact (The Guardian, 2018), based on a series of epic novels written by George R.R. Martin. It is a show that, despite the fantasy storyline, is remarkable for its realistic appearance including “political and emotional relationships [...] between the characters” (Raya Bravo, 2013, p. 145). It is the story of various influential families vying for position in the geopolitical sphere of Westeros, the land where they are established. Therefore, each and every one of them will move the pieces in accordance with their opportunities; who wins the match will depend on their abilities and their alliances. Ultimately, the family or character who manages to overcome their enemies will find their prize: power, honour and glory, materialised in the coveted Iron Throne.

Thus, from among the seven most powerful families, three are highly positioned: House Stark, House Lannister and House Targaryen. The first of these acts under the symbol of the wolf and the words “Winter is coming”; the second, the Lannister family, has the lion as their sigil and “Hear my roar” as their warcry, while the outcast Targaryens have the most legendary animal in all of *Westeros* as their sigil, the dragon, and they promise to take back the Iron Throne that was snatched away from them under the words “Fire and blood”. These are slogans that do not just disappear into the air, but as they acquire the performative nature of language, their sigils become action: “the ends justify everything, and when what is at stake is the chance to exercise power over others, no action goes too far, however cruel or dishonourable it may be” (Hernández-Santaolalla, 2013, p. 327).

The story of the cinematic trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Peter Jackson in 2001, 2002 and 2003, is also about power and is also based on literature, specifically the homonymous trilogy written by J.R.R. Tolkien. In this epic fantasy story, the most prized item in Middle Earth is a ring, the power of which is obtained by the main villain, Sauron. The novels and the films narrate the journey of Frodo Baggins, a hobbit who is tasked with the mission of destroying this ring.

As an interesting feature in addition to the cases referred to below, the PSOE also took the film *Titanic* (Cameron, 1997) as a major source of inspiration for its campaign slogan (“haz que pase” (make it happen)), although it did not create any visual pieces in its online communication based on this historical tale. Based on the sinking of the renowned transatlantic ship, Cameron recreates a love story between a young upper-class girl who is already engaged, and a lower-class boy, whose social group will find it harder to survive the tragedy. As confirmed by Government spokesperson Isabel Celaá when asked about the slogan, she said of the protagonists that “he says to her: ‘make it happen, make it count’ and they meet at the clock” (Celaá in Fernández Jara, 2019). Interpreting it as the most effective mobilisation to vote, Celaá continued: “The Spain that we want, the Spain of cohesion, social recovery, democratic regeneration, equality of opportunities, that is the one we want and for it to happen, you must make it happen. How? With your vote” (Celaá in Fernández Jara, 2019). Thus, avoiding the ideological implications from this fiction of the stratification of social classes, the PSOE alluded to the film’s romantic aspect. However, other groups have taken advantage of the reference to compare the socialist party with the sinking of the Titanic.

Five Fictional References: The Political Use of Popular Culture

Inés Arrimadas (Ciudadanos) as Daenerys Targaryen in Game of Thrones

“My colleagues call me Khaleesi”, explained Arrimadas in an interview for national television (on Telecinco, 2019), and a few months later, the figure (figure 1) that was held of her in the party was externalised to capture votes in the general election, launched as publicity on Twitter and Instagram. Inés Arrimadas, candidate for the vice-presidency of the government under the slogan of “España en Juego” (Spain at stake), dressed up as the mother of dragons to persuade voters to elect her. In line with the party’s slogan for the 2019 campaign: “¡Vamos! Ciudadanos” (Let’s go! Citizens.) (Ciudadanos, 2019), she points to herself as the ideal choice to help the party’s leader, Albert Rivera, to improve the country. Here, we must highlight that, unlike the character, she is not the protagonist of her party, rather she has the role of being an active assistant (Greimas, 1987).

Meanwhile, beyond the candidate’s function as a protagonist or otherwise, it is worth noting here the identity of the party that she represents: Ciudadanos, an emerging political organisation on the Spanish national scene but which was founded in Catalonia in 2005, positioning itself under the flag of liberalism (Ciudadanos, 2019). This is a political doctrine that economically defends a capitalist system, and which was established to challenge the absolute power of the monarchy based on the divine right of kings. Therefore, instead of absolutism, liberalism advocates for a constitutional and representative government (Heywood, 2012, p. 21). Having said this, Daenerys, rather than giving the choice of electing a representative government, attempts to establish her power over the seven kingdoms, which she feels belong to her by the right of blood. Her family reined for centuries and she will retake this mandate “with fire and blood” against her enemies under the appearance of being a queen who is different to the others: “They’re all just spokes on a wheel. This ones on top, then that ones on top and on and on it spins crushing those on the ground [...] I’m not going to stop the wheel, I’m going to break the wheel” (“Hardhome”, 8x05). This means that, despite proclaiming her right to the throne in the traditional manner, Daenerys states that her reign will end the old establishments: are Ciudadanos pursuing the same? It should be mentioned that the party has abstained from condemning Francoism, a dictatorship that was in place in Spain for nearly forty years, on more than one occasion (Tomás, 2018).

Partido Popular and the Game of Thrones’ Intro

Now, let us move on to one of the traditional parties of the Spanish political scene: the Partido Popular. In this case, continuing from the previous one, it also references *Game of Thrones*, but in another format: a 72-second video (VozPópuli Redacción, 2019) (Figure 2). In addition, it is interesting that it mentions the show, but only in order to disconnect itself from it: Spain is not like the scene that this represents, “it is not Game of Thrones”. Thus, imitating the maps that appear in the show’s introduction, it mentions those “who prefer to divide and live separate from the rest, who they call beasts”, pointing to an area of the map that seems to be Catalonia. In this regard, like in its electoral campaign for the 2019 general election, in the video the reference to the Catalan conflict and desire for Spanish unity appears in prime place. Later, it refers to those who “cannot get over the past and continue thinking in empires”, with apparently medieval figures in green; a reference to the extreme right-wing party VOX, an organisation that, imitating the rhetoric of the US president Donald Trump, seeks to “hacer España grande otra vez” (make Spain great again).

Figure 1. Figure of Ciudadanos' post.
Source: Instagram.



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Figure 2. PP's tweet¹

Source: Twitter.



The tape continues moving over the map and arrives at a castle with purple details, adding that there are “those who need revenge” and those who “cannot say Spain or even look at its flag”, alluding to the left-wing party Unidas Podemos. Similarly, attacking the organisation, it continues to defend its desire for the unity of the country and later moves onto Ciudadanos, which it portrays as a weather vane: “There are also those who want to govern without having a fixed path”. Next, the party warns about the various pacts that Ciudadanos has made on the Spanish political scene, both with parties associated with the right wing as well those on the traditional left of the country, the PSOE, with which it continues: “those who will do anything to stay in power, even though they always ruin everything”. As a result, the party that was in government finishes off the journey over the map, which they symbolise with the destruction of the country that they associate with socialism. However, the PP ends with: “Spain is not Game of Thrones” but “a modern country that does not need any more wars [...] Spain deserves unity and looking to the future to continue advancing. Spain is a great country and we are a safe investment”.

Therefore, by disconnecting itself from the atmosphere of chaos and destruction that rules the show, the PP has made use of it, but only to associate it with all its opponents in the general elections. Thus, maintaining its main argument of the unity of Spain as the guarantee of the country’s wellbeing, it has positioned itself as the only one capable of stabilising democracy.

López de Uralde (Unidas Podemos) as Hodor in Game of Thrones

In this electoral campaign, Unidas Podemos continued developing its most prominent reference: *Game of Thrones*, this time through a performative video (figure 3). The music begins and we see ministers entering a building, then leaving through a revolving door with senior roles in private companies; this is all accompanied by envelopes under their jackets. Soon, someone breaks with this aesthetic: wearing jeans and a casual jacket, a stout man escapes from the well-dressed walkers, who pursue him furiously to cross through the revolving door. “Hold the door” ends the video, with a Hodor exhausted due to having managed to stop the flow of ministers.

Figure 3. Pablo Iglesias’ tweet.
Source: Twitter.



This is the video with which Unidas Podemos ended the last few days of the electoral campaign. Using it, the party alludes to a specific scene from *Game of Thrones*. In this regard, this fragment does not refer to the fight for power between the seven kingdoms, but between good and evil, life and death.

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Likewise, it is worth mentioning that the episode in question (“The Door” 5x06) has at its heart the sacrifice of Hodor, the faithful assistant of Bran Stark, to the White Walkers so that his friends can escape the horde. The ministers and senior managers become the danger for the country, taking advantage of their roles to get rich with private companies. On the opposite side, Unidas Podemos presents itself as those who block the door so that this cannot keep happening: “we want to put an end to them”, concludes the party’s leader, Pablo Iglesias. Ultimately, using that part of the show with a humorous tone, Unidas Podemos references *Game of Thrones* by identifying the traditional parties with the show’s common villain. In this regard, the *White Walkers* are the undesirable thing that cannot be empathised with: the villains that must be beaten. For its part, its equivalent in the form of corruption is the winter that is stalking Spanish society and which must be shut out after blocking the revolving door.

Pedro Sánchez Against the White Walkers

The PSOE has also used *Game of Thrones* in its electoral campaign, specifically through a piece created for broadcast on Twitter by the Juventudes Socialistas de Madrid (Young Socialists of Madrid), published on the first day of the eighth season of the show (figure 4). Nevertheless, the point must be made that the PSOE official account did not retweet it. In the photo montage we see the face of the party leader, Pedro Sánchez, on a first level with a corporate red tone. Behind him, and characterised as White Walkers, in a wintery blue landscape we see the leaders of the three liberal parties: Pablo Casado, Albert Rivera and Santiago Abascal (from left to right in the figure). The Juventudes Socialistas de Madrid are thereby identifying the Spanish right with the common threat of the White Walkers that intend to settle in Westeros, and Pedro Sánchez, without placing him into any family, with the joint fight to defend the land. To the piece’s main message (“defiende Poniente” (defend Westeros)), written in the show’s font, is added the PSOE’s campaign slogan for the 28A elections: “Haz que pase” (Make it happen), a central element of the campaign, in turn inspired by an audiovisual fiction, as has been mentioned previously.

VOX as Aragorn in The Lord of the Rings

Lastly, the extreme-right party *VOX* waited until the day of the vote to publish a reference to a work of fiction on Twitter. In this case, it referenced the epic-fantasy film trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, specifically a battle scene from the last film: *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (Peter Jackson, 2003) (figure 5). It shows a frame from the Battle of the Morannon or Battle of the Black Gate that takes place in Mordor, where one of the main characters, Aragorn, faces an army of orcs, the army of the saga’s main villain (Sauron). The parallelisms are clear in the photo montage, given that over each character are the symbols with which *VOX* intends to identify them. In this manner, the protagonist corresponds to the party and the Spanish nation. The amalgamation of enemies they face are: political movements such as republicanism, the Catalan independence movement, communism, anarchism or the antifascist movement; media sources such as *El País* (written press), *Cadena Ser* (radio) or *La Sexta* (television); feminism as a social-ideological movement, and homosexuality as a sexual orientation.

Figure 4: Figure of Juventudes Socialistas de Madrid's tweet³.

Source: Twitter



It was not the first time that VOX has adapted elements from Jackson's trilogy for use in its campaigns. In the Andalusian elections of 2018, it used the main theme track from the films to give an epic tone to the video figures of Santiago Abascal and his team riding horses (El Periódico, 2018). On this occasion, however, it results in complete identification with the character's cause, who is at the front of the vanguard of a minority facing the greatest threat to the land to help the protagonists to fulfil their mission. VOX found its fighting metaphor in this individual bravery and the isolation of the warrior. Nevertheless, Aragorn differs substantially from the party's ideas, as has been made very clear by Viggo Mortensen, the actor who plays him: "It is [...] ridiculous to use the character Aragorn, a multilingual statesman who advocates for the knowledge and inclusion of the different races, traditions and languages [...], to legitimize an anti-immigration, anti-feminist and Islamophobic political party" (Mortensen, 2019).

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Figure 5. VOX's tweet⁴

Source: Twitter



DISCUSSION

The strategy that the five parties have used can be framed within *politainment* (Nieland, 2008), where they all intend to make political propaganda into a pleasant, digestible message and, if done properly, one that goes viral and is received well by the electorate. One of the advantages of merging with fiction is that it enables the recognition of “us” and “them” already imposed by the audiovisual media, as well as the use of characters that already generate positive feelings among the public. All the candi-

date's personal traits are found in this identification with the protagonists, something that arises from the storytelling function of TV-series (Buonanno, 1999) and personification strategies inherent to the celebrification of the candidate (Wheeler, 2013). In this manner, it can be stated that the ECP category ("everyday celebrity politician") of Wood, Corbett y Flinders (2016) includes this use of mass culture in social media. However, within this use of social media and the personification campaign using fiction is found, in turn, a celebrification that raises the politician to the level of media star, television hero, thereby merging the ECP with the SCP category.

The five cases shown are, undoubtedly, an example of the success of audiovisual products in particular and mass culture in general, as it crosses the borders of the screen and installs itself in other non-fiction discourses. Nevertheless, this appropriation of the discourse that the political class has made of fictional shows and films is not always thought through, rather at times it is only a show of complicity with the fans (and possible voters), or a response to the virality that the use of certain audiovisual references can entail. The latter can be seen predominantly in the case of the PP and the opening of *Game of Thrones*, used only as a recognisable creative base, or in Ciudadanos and Daenerys, where the identification between the party's vicepresident and the Mother of Dragons requires an ideological justification which is absent. In addition, in the latter case, a parallel is drawn between the leader and Daenerys that had already been made by other parties such as Podemos with the candidate for the Autonomous Government of Andalusia, Teresa Rodríguez. This leads us to reflect that, if various parties identify with the same heir to the throne, their reasons may not be ideologically well-founded. Therefore, rather than complicity with the fan public, they may even create confusion among the electorate. In fact, in Spain, the first identification of a politician with a *Game of Thrones* character was made ironically by pointing to the previous president of the Autonomous Government of Andalusia, Susana Díaz (PSOE) as Khaleesi (Lora, 2014; La Vanguardia, 2017). To this fact must be added the expiry of the propagandistic piece when using an unfinished audiovisual reference, as in the aforementioned examples, which makes using it risky. Thus, with *Game of Thrones* completely finished, the collection of these photo montages by the party or their rivals may negatively impact their figure, given the accelerated development of the protagonist (in this case, Daenerys), into a villain.

Beyond this, and in the opposite sense, the indiscriminate use of the audiovisual reference may end up misrepresenting the message of the product or character in question, as claimed by actor Vigo Mortensen in the case of VOX and *The Lord of the Rings* (Mortensen, 2019), and even the producers Warner Bros and HBO themselves in communications on Twitter during the Spanish electoral campaign (eldiario.es, 2019). Therefore, the most relevant thing to take into account after this analysis of the Spanish general election of 2019 is the need by the political parties to make a moderated use of these references, to not overload the public, as well as it also being reasoned so that it does not result in inconsistencies.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The merging of mass culture and propaganda poses interesting questions. In this regard, based on the existing scientific literature on the emotional bonds created by works of fiction, it may be interesting to verify how the intertextuality generated by the political parties affects the electorate. In this manner, although here it has been determined that in terms of content these references have not been developed in accordance with the proposed ideology, the electorate has the final say in the elections. Therefore, it may be appropriate to look into how the audience receives these intertextual references: whether or not

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they value that politicians are fans like they are, whether or not they agree with the ideas they express through their favourite characters or whether they understand and accept the political metaphors or, alternatively, reject them.

CONCLUSION

In general, it can be concluded that the success of the works of fiction and the growing campaign for political personalisation in the digital era go hand in hand at certain times, creating propagandistic pieces that give continuity to Domenach's statement (2001) regarding the polymorphism of propaganda. The leaders of the various parties include audiovisual references in their campaign strategies to capture the attention of the fan community. Nevertheless, as has been shown in this study, these references are at times built on weak foundations. However, as this is a recent phenomenon, it may be interesting to see how they develop in subsequent electoral periods.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Celebrity Politician: Political candidate who uses the mass communication media and social media to present their most human and citizen-like aspects to the electorate, giving weight to their professional political situation.

Imaginative Engagement: Contributions by the viewer to the audiovisual piece by attributing meanings that are beyond those shown.

Intertextuality: Relation of coexistence between two or more texts or the presence of one text in another.

Mass Culture: Entertainment products created by large business conglomerates and aimed at a wide audience.

Politainment: Political content that is presented to the viewer in an entertainment format with the aim of making it pleasant and digestible.

Politicainment: Representations and interpretations of professional politicians made by the entertainment industry.

Propaganda: Communicative phenomenon that aims to achieve or maintain an asymmetric power relationship between the broadcaster (or broadcasters) and recipient (or recipients).

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Text of the tweet: “Some people think that Spain is formed by seven kingdoms, but Spain is not #GameofThrones”
- ² Text of the tweet: “Revolving doors are a legal form of corruption, which large companies use to buy former ministers and former presidents. They are a danger to democracy. We want to end them. #HoldTheDoor!”
- ³ Text of the tweet: “The three white walkers are coming on #28A, show your vote and #Defend-Westeros!”
- ⁴ Text of the tweet: “Let’s the battle start!”

Chapter 20

Post-Truths and Fake News in Disinformation Contexts: The Case of Venezuela

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the concept of post-truth related to the circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in the formation of public opinion than emotional appeals and personal beliefs, and the subsequent projection of this phenomenon in social media, as various studies have demonstrated that some fake news stories generate more engagement from users than vetted reporting from reliable news sources. This will start from a general introduction and an associated theoretical reflection, and then focus on the case of Venezuela and its recent historical circumstances in order to analyze how fake news circulates in this country stimulated by a context of widespread disinformation.

INTRODUCTION

In November 2016, the Republican Donald Trump and the Democrat Hillary Clinton ran against each other in the US presidential elections. Against all odds and the polls, Trump received 304 electoral votes and Clinton, 227, with a participation of 55.4 per cent (State Elections Offices, 2016). The analysts all noted that Trump had won a majority thanks to a combination of rural and white working-class voters, who all rubberstamped his discourse, thus thwarting the campaign strategies of the Democrats. Broadly speaking, the constituents proved themselves to be weary of the establishment, with which they identified Clinton.

It was difficult to predict that some of the promises made by Trump during his presidential campaign would prove to be so profitable for him and win him the presidency. He had pledged to bring about an immediate revolution with the aim of “making America great again”: to reform the tax code and to deport illegal immigrants, starting with the undocumented migrants with a criminal record proliferating from coast to coast; and to commence work on a robust, lofty wall along the border with Mexico: “We

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will build a great wall along the southern border — and Mexico will pay for the Wall (...) They don't know it yet, but they're gonna pay for the wall", Trump said during the campaign (Mccaskill, 2016).

He also noted that in his first one hundred days as president, "the immigration ban on Muslims would be in place" (Healy, 2016). Likewise, he vowed to repeal the former president Barack Obama's health program, known as "Obamacare", on different occasions and even on his own Twitter account on February 10, 2016: "We will immediately repeal and replace ObamaCare - and nobody can do that like me. We will save \$'s and have much better healthcare!". Post-truth based on allegations that ceased to be grounded in objective facts, appealing instead to emotions, beliefs or desires, in this case, those of the electorate, was a hugely successful strategy, for Trump is currently occupying the White House.

On June 23, 2016, several months after Trump's election victory, the British had the opportunity to vote in referendum on the United Kingdom's permanence in the European Union: Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? the possible answers were two: Remain a member of the European Union / Leave the European Union. After a dramatic vote count, according to official data of The Electoral Commission (2016), with 51.9% (remain 16,141,241 - leave 17,410,742), and turnout of 72.2%, they decided that they were better off on their own (although the debate continues). Those voting to leave the European Union had come to believe that, among other issues, the United Kingdom would save millions of pounds a week, money that could then be spent on the health service; that the arrival of immigrants in the country would be checked; and that trade and tariff arrangements would remain unaffected. Together with Trump's election victory, the Brexit phenomenon managed to make something that was apparently true more important than the truth itself. Also at the end of 2016, the term "post-truth" was chosen as the *Oxford Dictionaries* "Word of the Year" (Oxford University Press, 2016). In the selection process, the editors took into account that the searches using a combination of both terms (post/truth) had increased notably:

Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

'in this era of post-truth politics, it's easy to cherry-pick data and come to whatever conclusion you desire'

'some commentators have observed that we are living in a post-truth age'.

This had swift repercussions, for in 2017 the term "*posverdad*" was included as a neologism in the *Diccionario de la Lengua de Real Academia Española*, which defines it in the following terms: "The deliberate distortion of a reality, which manipulates beliefs and emotions for the purpose of influencing public opinion and social attitudes."

The media had placed the concept of post-truth, linked to circumstances in which objective facts have less influence on public opinion formation than appeals to emotions and personal beliefs, squarely on the table. Similarly, they fostered the debate on the new technology and Internet access boom, plus the growing popularity of social media, all of which has led to the proliferation of fake news.

In order to analyze such an important issue in current communication, this chapter will focus on Venezuela, a country in which the confluence of different factors has facilitated the alarming proliferation of post-truths and fake news. What are the contextual aspects that have determined this circulation of fake news in the country? How have Venezuela's political and historical circumstances conditioned its production both before and at present?

One of the most decisive factors behind the abundance of fake news relating to the governing party and the opposition, alike, has to do with the news blackout imposed by President Nicolás Maduro, which makes it difficult for the Venezuelans to obtain first-hand domestic news. In Venezuela, as will be seen further on, the broadcasts of national and international TV channels have been censored in the past few years. By the same token, radio stations, online news outlets and websites have been closed, and many of the country's print media have ceased to be published. Against this backdrop, there is a pressing need to understand what is happening and the vast majority of Venezuelans resort to social media to keep abreast of the news. Similarly, from a geostrategic point of view, Venezuela is a country in which different nations, including the United States, the Russian Federation, China, Turkey and Cuba, have vested interests. This geopolitical and economic context obviously influences the production, content and circulation of fake news.

The methodological perspective of this chapter reflects on the problem's historical dimensions and performs a qualitative analysis of the different factors that, in Venezuela, have contributed to make fake news go viral on social media. The working hypothesis here is grounded in the notion that the proliferation of fake news in Venezuela is mainly due to a context of general disinformation in which people give credibility to post-truths that connect with their convictions and preconceptions or exert an emotional influence on them as regards important issues, in an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambiguity.

POST-TRUTHS - GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

In the field of communication, the phenomenon of the proliferation of fake news does not only rely on the Internet, social media and the mass media themselves, but has also found an ally in new technologies that allow for manipulating, editing, designing and retouching images, producing montages, and humor with the creation of memes. What is perhaps more relevant, new technologies offer instant messaging programs and apps that guarantee the swift circulation of fake news. To such a point that it can be said that social media and mobile screens have become fundamental spaces for socialization and establishing relations that lead to the sharing of photos, collages, videos and other types of multimedia content in a matter of seconds. This content can then be commented on and shared by users on different platforms. Immediacy is doubtless the new sign of the times.

From a theoretical perspective, post-truths imply that, in quite a few cases, a report on a development that has been accepted can have a greater impact than the development per se, insofar as there are stronger links between the receivers (who think according to what they receive) and the information than between the former and the event itself. This is the reason why one of the most important keys to understanding the inner workings of fake news is the connection between the beliefs and values of people, who tend to surround themselves with friends, acquaintances and likeminded individuals on social networking sites (García, 2019; Bharali & Goswami, 2018; Illades, 2019; Parra & Oliveira, 2018).

It is important to bear in mind that there are different determinants influencing the amount of attention that is paid to fake news, such as prior knowledge, sympathies and beliefs. These determinants are shaped by the specific culture of subjects or by their association with a particular ideology. This last aspect (ideological and cultural identity) exerts an influence on the selective attention that people preferentially pay to information that, in their view, is more reliable or cultural products to which they are accustomed.

This capacity to circulate audiovisual material swiftly in real time forms part of current communication and news dissemination methods that tend to revolve around images (photos and infographics),

videos and audio files. This technological potential to make participation and the circulation of opinions possible and easier is extraordinarily important in the field of political communication. Likewise, social networking sites function with algorithms that determine what content is more relevant and most interesting to each user, which means that the information received has already been filtered. The relevance of news also increases as a result of the interactions that take place, whereby the dissemination of fake news or misleading information can be inexorable (Amorós García, 2019; Illades, 2019).

The incessant activity of the connected world and omnipresent screens, plus the viral nature of content, evince an important change in the strata, directionality and poles of the traditional communication scheme: broadcasters, messages, codes, channels and receivers have all been surmounted. This scheme has been substantially amplified in the sense that connected subjects can instantly enhance, disseminate and multiscale their messages via diverse channels to reach multiple receivers. In a recent study, it was determined that

The accurate information analyzed in this study took six times longer to reach 1,500 people than the fake news. In the case of political fake news, while a piece of fake news reached 10,000 individuals, the political kind reached double that number in a third of the time (Estudio de Comunicación/Servimedia, 2018, p. 5).

VENEZUELA - HISTORICAL EVENTS, DISINFORMATION AS A STRATEGIC WEAPON AND ITS IMPACT ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to fathom the current crisis in Venezuela, it is necessary to understand two important milestones. The first was reached on March 5, 2013, the day on which the then president Hugo Chávez Frías died, subsequently leading to early presidential elections that, in accordance with the constitution, were supposed to be called within 30 days of his demise. A few months before, in December 2012, Chávez had publically acknowledged that he had been treated for the cancer with which he had been diagnosed in 2011. Ultimately, he was unable to complete his fourth term in office, for which he had been elected on October 7, 2012. In light of this, he named Nicolás Maduro, the then vice-president and chancellor, as his successor.

Following Chávez's death, presidential elections were held on April 4, 2013. Standing as the candidate for the Gran Polo Patriótico Simón Bolívar, Maduro obtained his first victory. According to the official data of the Consejo Nacional Electoral (hereinafter CNE), he received 7,505,338 votes (50.66 per cent), while Henrique Capriles Radonsky, the opposition candidate of the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (hereinafter MUD), came away with 7,270,403 (49.07 per cent) (CNE, 2013). The narrow margin of 224,742 votes by which Maduro won these elections led to an important crisis of legitimacy. As already noted, Chávez had been re-elected for the fourth consecutive time in 2012, defeating Capriles by a wider margin (55.07 versus 44.31 per cent). Several years before, on February 15, 2009, a constitutional referendum had been held on the amendment of the articles that disqualified all public office holders (including the president of the republic) from running in popular elections in a continual fashion. The articles were finally amended, which for the opposition was a blatant attempt by Chávez to remain in power.

The second important milestone was reached on December 6, 2015, when elections were held in Venezuela to form the National Assembly during the new legislative period from 2016 to 2021. Nearly 20 million Venezuelans were called on to cast their ballot to elect the assembly's 167 deputies. These

were the fourth legislative elections since the constitutional reform in 1999. The country's political parties formed two coalitions. On the one hand, the Gran Polo Patriótico Simón Bolívar, led by President Maduro's Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV), and on the other, the MUD grouping together the country's main opposition parties: Voluntad Popular (VP), whose leader is the politician Leopoldo López, disqualified in 2008 and imprisoned in 2014, and Primero Justicia (PJ), led by Capriles.

In the first bulletin released by the CNE, presided by Tibisay Lucena, in the early morning of December 6, it was announced that the opposition had won the elections, the MUD winning 99 seats versus the 46 of the party in power. President Maduro appeared before the press to acknowledge his defeat. There were still 22 seats in the offing, which kept the country on tenterhooks for several days insofar as the Venezuelan Constitution envisaged three types of majority and those seats would be vital, as will be seen. Finally, the MUD won 112 seats of the 167 in play, representing 56.2 per cent of the votes (CNE, 2015).

Maduro's electoral defeat was important at all levels. The organization of the National Assembly, the status of the deputies, the formation of laws and the procedures are set out in Chapter 1 (Arts. 186-224) of the National Legislative of the Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela (1999). As just noted, it also envisages three types of parliamentary majority after the holding of elections. With a simple majority, equivalent to 85 seats, it is possible to legislate on all national issues, except for those covered in the Magna Carta or the parliamentary legislation. However, with a qualified majority of three fifths of the assembly (i.e. 100 seats) it is possible to legislate so as to enable the president to pass emergency laws and to table a motion of censure against governmental vice-presidents and ministers. With a two-thirds majority (i.e. 111 seats), it is possible to pass organic laws, renew the magistrates of the Supreme Court (hereinafter TSJ), appoint public prosecutors and state attorneys, convene a constituent assembly and approve constitutional reforms.

After losing power in the National Assembly, the government reacted swiftly. On the one hand, despite the fact that the election results had been validated by the CNE, Maduro went on the offensive denouncing frauds and irregularities on the part of the opposition (vote buying, the abundance of invalid ballots, etc.). Finally, the elections were contested before the TSJ, the announcement of the results being suspended as regards four deputies belonging to the electoral district of Amazonas State. Meanwhile, before the end of the judicial year in 2015, the magistrates of the TSJ were supposed to be renewed. This was the government's second line of action, which involved bringing forward those elections in order to hold them before the opposition parties that had won a majority in the recent parliamentary elections could occupy their seats in the National Assembly. The Venezuelan Constitution envisages processes and timeframes that were not respected, there were irregularities in the nomination procedure, the majority of the elected magistrates were close to the regime and some did not even fulfil the prescribed requirements (Pardo, 2015).

Owing to the anti-government protests, which were harshly repressed with many demonstrators being killed or wounded, 2016 was a complicated year. In March 2017, the Constitutional Chamber of the TSJ delivered two controversial rulings. On the one hand, Ruling 155 of March 28, 2017, by virtue of which the National Assembly was found in contempt and continual legislative omission due to the interference of a foreign authority (i.e. the Organization of American States – OAS), stripping the legislative authority of its powers and ordering the president to “implement the civil, economic, military, criminal, administrative, political, legal and social measures that he deems appropriate and necessary to avoid a state of shock” (TSJ, 2017a). On the other, Ruling 156 of March 28, 2017, in which ‘Attention is draw to the fact that while the situation of contempt and the invalidity of the actions of the National Assembly

Post-Truths and Fake News in Disinformation Contexts

persist, this Constitutional Chamber shall guarantee that parliamentary powers be exercised directly by it or by the body in which it delegates, to ensure the rule of law” (TSJ, 2017b).

Against this backdrop, Maduro convened the Constituent Assembly on May 1, 2017, through a presidential decree, insisting that the opposition was planning a coup d'état backed by foreign powers. According to the president, the Constituent Assembly would be a vehicle of peace. The vote took place on July 30, 2017, according to electoral rules approved by the CNE, which stipulated that 545 constituents should be chosen from a total of over 6,000 candidates. In reality, only 364 would be “chosen” because the other 181 candidates represented different sectors previously identified by the executive: workers, peasants, students, disabled people, indigenous peoples, pensioners, entrepreneurs and community councils (all the pertinent documents can be found on the CNE’s website).

In Venezuela, since then, the National Assembly and the Constituent National Assembly have functioned in tandem, thus leading to a clash of legalities. The following presidential elections should have been held in December 2018 but were brought forward by the Constituent National Assembly to May 20, 2018. With relevant figures of the opposition in prison (such as Leopoldo López) and no candidate with the ability to unite it, Maduro won with 67.48 per cent of the votes, under allegations of irregularities and lack of transparency. The official turnout was 46 per cent (CNE, 2018), the lowest since the advent of democracy in 1958. Governments and international bodies refused to acknowledge these results owing to the lack of electoral guarantees.

Juan Guaidó has become a relevant player since “proclaiming himself” the president of the republic on January 23, 2019. The National Assembly refused to recognize Maduro for the reasons set out above. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the allegations of the Venezuelan opposition and international criticism, he took office on January 10, 2019, with the National Assembly accusing him of “usurping” the presidency. The key was to be found in Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution. In light of the power vacuum that, as it was argued, had existed in the country since January 10, the president of the National Assembly (in this case, Guaidó) should take office as the head of state until new elections were held. Many international governments understanding the circumstances have recognized Guaidó. For his part, Maduro has the backing of others and remains in power in a context of general crisis and the sanctions imposed by the United States.

Reality of the Media in Venezuela - Strategies for Imposing Silence

Before the enactment of the Ley de Responsabilidad Social en Radio y Televisión [Law on Social Responsibility on Radio and Television] in 2004, the legislation on communication with a view to regulating electronic media was inspired by a law passed in 1940 and the applicable legislation was included in a regulation of 1941, which was renewed in 1984. At the time, there were no TV channels in the country, the first, Televisora Nacional YVKA-TV-Canal 5 (a public channel) appearing in 1952. For its part, Televisa YVLV-TV-Canal 4 was founded in 1953 and, years later, would be bought by the Cisneros Group (currently Venevisión) and Radio Caracas Televisión (hereinafter RCTV) belonging to the Phelps Group (Brito, 1983).

The debate on the enactment of this law was complex. Misgivings were expressed in different sectors, above all in relation to the “punitive administrative proceedings”, which had a broad scope of action, from the imposition of penalties to fines, through administrative disqualification and the revocation of concessions. The “Ley Resorte”, as it is known, stipulated heavy fines for those who did not fulfil the obligation to broadcast, or interfered with, the messages or addresses of the state, or conveyed messages

that breached the law or impeded the action of the state security bodies or the judiciary. The law also envisaged suspensions when the messages conveyed promoted, sought to justify or encouraged affrays. The censorship and closure of media outlets were now a reality, because if those penalties had been in place in the years before the law's enactment, much of the information reaching the Venezuelans via the media would not have been in circulation.

Quite a few TV channels and radio stations started to censor themselves, restricting live participation in the programs that they broadcast, owing to the fact that the law made them jointly responsible for the "inappropriate" comments made by people participating in them. Some journalists and presenters had their contracts amended, in order that the media could engage them as professional freelancers and thus avoid any responsibility for their opinions.

The truth is that the Ley Resorte has had a huge impact and, in the past few years, the Venezuelan media landscape has undergone notable changes. The figures provided by the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Prensa (hereinafter SNTTP) coincide with those of the organization Espacio Público y el Caracas Press Club, indicating that, since Maduro came to power in 2013 until October 2018, 115 media outlets (including 25 newspapers) have closed in Venezuela, with an eye to favoring "the consolidation of the sole discourse that the state intends to impose" (El Nacional, 2018). This is the picture that the SNTTP painted on its Twitter account @Sntpvenezuela, with the following list:

*In 2013, 8 media outlets closed
5 in 2014
8 in 2015
5 in 2016
59 in 2017!
and in 2018, 30 to date ... (@SNTTP, November 2, 2018)*

However, this situation was not new. When Chávez was still in power, precisely RCTV, one of the country's most traditional channels with the largest audience share, which had started to broadcast in 1953, was closed. On December 28, 2006, Chávez announced the revocation of RCTV's concession, due to the stance that it had taken during the coup d'état in 2002. He accused it of being a pro-coup channel and, subsequently, RCTV stopped broadcasting on May 27, 2007, despite the major protests occurring throughout the country.

There were also other relevant episodes in Chávez's confrontation with the media, such as the so-called "Radiocidio [Radiocide]" in 2009, in which the order was issued to curtail the broadcasting activities of 34 radio stations and TV channels (Primera, 2009). Similarly, on quite a few occasions Chávez threatened the media, accusing them of abusing the freedom of expression, with the revocation of their concessions, fines and jamming signals. Another policy involved the purchase of media outlets by government supporters (as occurred with the TV channel Globovisión) or imposing technical and logistical limitations on them.

In this connection, the government's control over staples, particularly paper, deserves a special mention: it reached such extremes that *El Nacional*, one of the country's most important dailies, stopped producing its print edition on December 14, 2018, after 75 years of interrupted circulation (although its online version is still available). The front page of its last print edition included an editorial piece entitled, "Un descanso en el camino [A rest on the way]" and an interview with Miguel Henrique Otero, the newspaper's chairman, entitled, "*El Nacional* es un guerrero y seguirá dando la batalla [*El Nacional*

is warrior and shall continue the fight]”. In the interview, Otero put the decision to print only 10,000 copies with 15 page down to the economic meltdown and the lack of paper.

Four years before, in 2014, the government had created the so-called “Corporación Alfredo Maneiro”, which controlled the supply of paper to the press. At that moment, the media opposing the government cautioned that the aim of the monopoly on paper was solely to control the written word. M. H. Otero describes the scheme for controlling paper supplies, which sounded the death knell for the media, in the following terms: “They created a monopoly that imported paper and sold it at a preferential and controlled price. The newspapers that did not support the government were excluded from the Corporación Alfredo Maneiro, which was a state enterprise, and therefore had to buy paper on the free market. The exchange rate differential was so huge that there was no paper available on the market” (*Semana*, 2018). The consequences were immediate and, as noted by the Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela (IPYS), the less than 90 print media that existed in 2013 had plummeted to 27 by 2018, representing a 68 per cent fall (IPYS/Prodavinci, 2018).

Another strategy, first implemented by Chávez and then by Maduro, has been to harass and threaten journalists and other media professionals. The TV program *Aló Presidente* bears witness to this. In point of fact, Venezuela occupies a very low position in the global freedom of press ranking of Reporters sans frontières (hereinafter RSF). On the 2019 map, it is ranked 148 out of 180 countries, only being surpassed by Cuba (RSF, 2019). On RSF’s website, there are also plenty of news stories about the arrest of journalists (both Venezuelans and foreigners), censorship, aggressions and harassment on the part of the authorities. To these should be added threats, kidnappings and even torture, the ban on leaving the country affecting media executives, fines for certain “editorial behaviors” and attacks on the freedom of press. The SNTP, for its part, has reported the arrest of media professionals by the Bolivarian National Police, the Bolivarian National Guard and the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN). In 2019, the arrest receiving most international media coverage was that of the journalist of Univisión Jorge Ramos, together with his team, detained at the Palacio de Miraflores and then expelled from the country after asking unwelcome questions during an interview with Maduro.

By the same token, the broadcasts of the international TV channels, which paradoxically allowed the Venezuelans to learn about what was happening in their own country, have been subject to progressive censorship. In 2014, la Comisión Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (National Commission of Telecommunications – hereinafter CONATEL) prohibited, without prior notification or any legal proceedings, the Colombian news channel NTN24 from broadcasting on the Venezuelan airwaves; it was the channel that had covered the student protests backed by members of the opposition. The measure was regarded as arbitrary by international bodies like Amnesty International and different press associations. In 2017, this policy of restricting the broadcasts of international TV stations was stepped up and, this time, it was the turn of the CNN in Spanish. The decision was made by President Maduro (who called it a “tool of war”) after the broadcasting of a report on passport and visa trafficking at the Embassy of Venezuela in Iraq. Later on, TV Azteca, Tiempo TV, the Argentinian channel Todo Noticias and the Colombian channels RCN and Caracol, which had covered the protests directly, met the same fate. Also in the same year, CONATEL closed the TV channel of the Universidad de los Andes (*El Estímulo*, 2019).

Consequences - the Circulation of Fake News in Venezuela

As to recent developments with political connotations in Venezuela, the country’s TV channels do not offer news or coverage that has to do with the opposition, because they run the risk of being fined or

losing their concessions. So, most Venezuelans resort to social media, YouTube channels and the Internet to keep abreast of the news. Additionally, a large number of messages (above all audio files of unknown origin) circulate via WhatsApp.

In light of this, the government has implemented initiatives aimed at hindering access to the Internet. These include, for example, cutting the connection, at certain moments, of subscribers to telephone services provided by state enterprises like CANTV. Different studies have confirmed the censorship of online news referring to Guaidó as the president. These online anomalies are of CANTV's doing and have led to the blocking of YouTube, Wikipedia, Twitter and Instagram (IPYS, 2019).

According to the Global Digital Statshot report published by Hootsuite/We are Social in January 2019, the connectivity data reveals that a large proportion of the urban population has access to mobile telephone services, the main operators being Movistar, Movilnet and Digitel. In Venezuela, there are 19.55 million Internet users (approximately 60 per cent of the total population of 32.58 million). In both cases, the number has increased, despite the fact that the Internet access speed is among the slowest in the world. On the list of countries analyzed with the slowest Internet connections, Venezuela occupies 120th place with 3.69 Mbps, the global average being 54.3 Mbps. The number of active users on social media (the number of people connecting at least once a month) is high. Facebook comes in first place with some 12 million active users per month, followed by Instagram with 4.2 million, LinkedIn with 3.3 million and Twitter with 1.28 million, although the latter is the social networking site that has experienced the greatest growth (Hootsuite/We are Social, 2019).

The desperate need to receive news, a “hunger for information”, has promoted the dissemination of information demanded by the citizenry via the aforementioned social media. Some of the most relevant instances of fake news in Venezuela in 2019 have revolved around different topics, all of which are related to the political situation arising from the proclamation of Guaidó as the country's interim president. One such example was the military intervention in favor of the opposition and against the government. In this connection, in February there was an authentic deluge of news (photos, videos and audio files) referring to US military deployment in La Guajira Department in Colombia for an alleged invasion of Venezuela. The Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* analyzed this piece of news in a “lie detection” section entitled, “Las fake del Face”, verifying that the images corresponded to a US Navy drill on the beach of Agua Dulce de Chorrillos in Peru, and not in Colombia” (*El Tiempo*, 2019).

Another frequent type of fake news involves manipulating the attendance figures at demonstrations and marches. For instance, in view of the opposition's convening power, at the beginning of February 2019 the government organized a march in Caracas on the 2nd, which was only covered by the official media or by those in the government's orbit. Notwithstanding the fact that coaches arrived in the vicinity of Caracas from the interior, the well-known Avenida Bolívar (which was said to be packed with people) was practically empty, as demonstrated by videos, filmed from buildings close by, circulating on social media (Vinogradoff, 2019).

Audio files sent via instant messaging apps, either from unidentified sources or those identified as privileged – members of the military or the state security forces of different rank or international analysts – have also proliferated. In these audio files, facts are very emphatically established and users are asked to share them. Some include elements whose aim is to generate confusion and fear, with slogans such as “stay at home”, “keep the battery of your cell phone charged”, or “keep food reserves”. These audio files refer over and over again to the issue of military intervention (not only involving US troops, but also Colombian, Canadian, Brazilian, Israeli and French forces equipped with the latest technology and prepared to carry out an impeccable operation), the desertion of servicemen or the divisions between

factions of the armed forces, possible uprisings in different places and “serious revolts”, armed clashes or the comings and goings of planes, helicopters and tanks.

In 2019, there was a very serious energy crisis that led to blackouts throughout Venezuela, with terrible consequences. On March 7, there was a far-reaching blackout that affected 22 of the country’s 23 states for almost a week. Since then, there have been more. The opposition placed the blame on the neglect of and lack of investment in the country’s electricity grid, as well as on the embezzlement of the funds earmarked for its maintenance. For its part, the government attributed the blackouts to sabotage and an “electromagnetic attack”, in the words of Jorge Rodríguez, Minister of Communication, claiming that it was an attempt to damage “the hydroelectric power system of Guayana, the country’s main electricity supplier” (Manetto, 2019).

One of the stories disseminated on social media regarding this power crisis showed the alleged explosion of the hydroelectric plant of Guri, in the south of the country. As demonstrated by the fast checking platforms specializing in disproving fake news, like Newtral and Maldita.es in Spain, it was a video of a plant in China posted on YouTube in 2015 and which has been used on other occasions. To that effect, the images appearing in the video were compared with the electricity grid in Venezuela via Google Earth and Google Images, reaching the conclusion that did they not correspond to the plant in question (González, 2019).

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In disinformation contexts, the issue of fake news and post-truths is relevant because the current dissemination of information acquires new nuances associated with digital environments in which hoaxes, lies disguised as truth, the distortion of reality, the perspectives of facts modified with filters and wide-angle lenses, plausible but unreal truths, willful deceit, etc., circulate very agilely and with the ability to convince. Framing this issue in the Venezuelan context, with profound problems of a different nature and, especially, with a tendency towards censorship, the closure of media outlets and the promotion of disinformation, is an important step towards finding a solution. It is essential to tackle this situation in different areas, including academia, from a scientific and knowledge perspective.

We recommend three courses of action to face up to the reality described above. There is a need for the citizenry to understand that, in the realm of rationality/emotions, fake news frequently appeals to the latter. Accordingly, strategic lies, half-truths and distorted realities enter into play for specific purposes ranging from reinforcing particular ideologies to consolidating voter bases. To this end, it is fundamental to train and educate the citizenry in order that they should learn how to consume information in the age of post-truth and, in this sense, to take an active part in reporting fake news, rather than sharing it. This would involve corroborating sources, contrasting information and being rigorous with what we share (however indignant, surprising or akin to our ideas it might be). That certain news reaches us through family members or friends does not guarantee its truthfulness. The marked political intentionality of fake news exacerbates the harmful effect of diminishing the capacity for criticism.

Our second recommendation pertains to the legal sphere. Broadly speaking, crimes are considered as such regardless of the environment in which they are perpetrated, including the virtual kind. So, this means assessing whether or not a news story has involved illegal behavior or intentions (for instance, affray, violation of honor, damaging someone’s image or reputation with false information, security alerts, etc.). However, there is currently a debate on the need for specifically classifying the dissemina-

tion of fake news as a crime. Given the current circumstances and the paradigm shift in information consumption, it would be advisable to examine this matter in more depth and, if possible, to implement the appropriate legislative measures.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize the Venezuelans' right to receive reliable, comprehensive and diverse information, making this compatible with the freedom of expression. The self-serving contexts of disinformation encourage, sponsor and promote the production and dissemination of fake news. It is certainly difficult to act politically, given the polarization existing in the country and its terrible consequences. For which reason it is essential that, in the international sphere, local reports be brought to light, investigated and backed and that those actions inhibiting or restricting communication, the security of media outlets and professionals, and, in short, freedom of expression in Venezuela be publicly condemned.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

A future line of research has to do with developing digital strategies that allow for the swift detection and highlighting of fake news. It is crucial to identify profiles spreading fake news on the Internet, mindful of its power to make information go viral. In a well-known media outlet, there is a perceivable editorial line, a context and references. This does not occur on the Internet where there are plenty of fake profiles. Accordingly, every effort should be made at different levels – investment in human resources, research and technology all being important – with the aim of protecting users against manipulations and falsehoods. Furthermore, specialized posts should be created in organizational and work structures that decide on the truthfulness of information circulating on social networking sites.

A second line of research would consist in monitoring the reality of the media in Venezuela. It is important to analyze and report what is happening in the country employing international standards to assess different situations. To omit facts or actions intentionally or to consider them as normal or even positive, something that would never be tolerated in the immediate environment, is not good practice. It is necessary to go beyond reporting situations encroaching on freedom of expression and human rights, as many organizations not only in Venezuela but also abroad have stressed.

CONCLUSION

The Internet and social media have brought about an important paradigm shift in information consumption. Users have ceased to be passive receivers of information to become disseminators of news and opinion. It is currently impossible to understand communication and the circulation of information without taking into consideration post-truth as a concept and the so-called “alternative facts” deployed so as to disguise demonstrable falsehoods. The concept of fake news, in its full scope, including that which entails appealing to this consideration in the face of any critical information, has also become central. In the case of Venezuela, as has been seen, these ideas and, specifically, fake news are commonplace.

There are different factors behind this, above all the disappearance of independent media outlets, closures that are going on apace. Quite a few radio stations and print media have disappeared, due to the difficulty in covering the news or to the shortage of staples like paper, the newspaper *El Nacional* being the most illustrative case in this respect. To this should be added the closure of emblematic TV channels

like RCTV or the censorship imposed on their international counterparts. It is also unquestionable that the continual closure of media outlets has reduced more and more the spaces of plural and open public debate and dissent, which in turn has undermined the process of social auditing. Other strategies for harassing media professionals have resulted in Venezuela being placed on the red lists of countries in which freedom of expression is threatened. The country's press trade union has recently reported the imprisonment of dozens of journalists.

Venezuela has been transformed into an ideal place for the circulation of all types of fake news in a complex political context of polarized audiences, which encourages people to pay attention preferentially (namely, what they say, hear, see or read) to information that coincides with their stances and ideas. And all this in a critical economic and social context with food shortages, the lack of medical supplies and medicines, and widespread extreme poverty.

In sum, the proliferation of fake news has been, and still is, an attack against the quality of democracy in Venezuela and the formation of a public opinion well-versed in rational arguments and knowledgeable about current public affairs and the country's political, social and economic circumstances.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

CANTV: The state enterprise Compañía Nacional de Teléfonos de Venezuela [National Telephone Company of Venezuela].

CONATEL: The Comisión Nacional de Telecomunicaciones [National Telecommunications Commission] is the Venezuelan body tasked with implementing communication policies.

Constituent National Assembly: A body defined in Articles 347, 348 and 349 of the Bolivarian Constitution, equivalent to a temporary parliament, specially elected to draft or reform the country's constitution.

Gran Polo Patriótico: A group of left-wing political parties and social movements, guarantors of the Bolivarian revolution, which first backed Hugo Chávez and then Nicolás Maduro.

Ley Resorte: Ley de Responsabilidad Social en Radio, Televisión y Medios Electrónicos [Law on Social Responsibilities on Radio, Television and Electronic Media], enacted in Venezuela in 2004 and partially amended in 2010.

Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD): The coalition of opposition parties, created in 2008 when the main opposition parties signed the Acuerdo de Unidad Nacional [Agreement of National Unity], which in the following year would become the MUD.

National Assembly: The body in which, according to the Bolivarian Constitution, legislative power resides.

Post-truths: From a theoretical perspective, post-truths imply that a report on a development that has been accepted can have a greater impact than the development per se, insofar as there are stronger links between the receivers and the information than between the former and the event itself.

Chapter 21

The Use and Management of Public Information in Social Media: A Case Study of Town and City Councils Throughout Andalusia on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube

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ABSTRACT

The increase of political disaffection in Spain, as is occurring in many western democracies across the world, coincides with a growing vindication of democracy on the part of the citizenry, which translates to a demand for more governmental transparency and access to information. With this in mind, this chapter explores the availability of information in local public administrations on social media. The study analyses the presence of town and city councils throughout Andalusia on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, examining how these media are managed and their effects, by studying the content and resources provided to the citizens for interacting with the institutions. The results revealed that although the selected councils tried to adopt these new information channels, they are still far from taking full advantage of the possibilities the new technologies could provide.

INTRODUCTION

Local authorities constitute the most direct conduit between citizens and public administrations. They are the gateway for most of the requests that citizens make to their political representatives, who in turn have the duty to attend to, manage and process petitions, either within the same town hall or by appealing to other institutions (Bosón, Torres, Royos, & Flores, 2012). In this sense, Campillo Alhama (2011, p. 1036) points out that citizens must be informed and have access to all the information on administrative

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procedures and actions that may influence their situation. It is based on the idea that transparency is a basic democratic principle and that its role in the public sphere requires that administrations publish and make accessible general information that may be of interest to citizens (Gandía, Marrahí, & Huguet, 2016, p. 29).

This study is framed in a context in which Spain (as is occurring in many other EU countries) is experiencing a growing disaffection with the political class, which is augmented by the lack of a tradition in government transparency which coincides with a growing demand for democracy by the citizens (Villoria, 2014). Given this scenario, a new law regulating transparency, access to public information, and good governance was put on the books in Spain (Ley 19/2013, de 9 de diciembre, de Transparencia, Acceso a la Información Pública y Buen Gobierno). In its preamble, the document enthrones transparency, access to public information and good governance standards as “the fundamental axes of all political action”. Despite this, compliance with the law by administrations has not been uniform and there is still the problem of the lack of facilities for users to access this information in an intelligible way (Beltrán Orenes & Martínez-Pastor, 2016). This law has already had its transposition in almost all the Spanish autonomous communities. In the case of Catalonia, as an empirical result of this implementation, the heads of the Journalism and Communication Laboratory for Plural Citizenship of the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (Moreno Sardà, Molina Rodríguez Navas, Corcoy Rius, Aguilar Pérez, & Borrás Farran, 2013) prepared the Infoparticipate Map. The map is an online platform that was developed from 2012 with the purpose of collaborating to remedy the lack of Spanish legislation on transparency. The main objective of this project, which was extended in the first phase to the autonomous communities of Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Madrid, Andalusia, Aragon and Galicia, was to evaluate the information to ensure that public administrations improve their communication practices and offer complete and understandable transparent information, so that citizens can exercise their legitimate rights to democratic control and evaluation of institutions.

Given this scenario, and based on Law 19/2013, cited above, this chapter emerges as a complementary line of research to the one developed by the Catalan Research Group in its R&D&I project entitled: “Methodologies and information models for monitoring the actions of those responsible for local governments and accountability.” The work starts from considering that in today’s society, in which technological development is the protagonist, easy access and the correct disposition of online information by local authorities creates a growing need for all citizens. Beyond its presence through web portals, it is considered convenient to pay attention to the use and management of information on social networks as an instrument that allows citizen participation. Thus, the objective is to analyse how the main municipalities of each Andalusian province share public information through these new channels which are presented as a communication and interaction tool between administrations and citizens.

FIRST NOTES

To begin to enter the digital landscape at the hands of public administrations, social networks must be understood as social technologies derived from the web 2.0 that allow the generation of virtual communities from the connection, generation, interaction and exchange of information of an unlimited group of people who share interests (Criado & Rojas Martín, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Its consolidation as another means of communication in our society causes new social challenges which public administrations cannot ignore. Thus, the public sector has found in these new channels

an ideal instrument for increasing its visibility by being close and accessible to citizens for the sake of transparency (Criado & Rojas Martín, 2013; Díaz & Cortés, 2014; Rojas Martín, 2014; Aguilar Rodríguez, Ramírez García, & Rocha Valencia, 2019, Campos Acuña & Vaquero García, 2019; Consejo de la Transparencia de la Región de Murcia, 2019). But to carry out an adequate and adjusted implementation to the new medium, public entities must be knowledgeable about it, defining and executing a strategic plan based on two-way and multidirectional communication objectives.

Given this panorama, the Law of Electronic Access of Citizens to Public Services (LAECSP) is created. It not only recognizes the right of citizens to interact with Spanish public administrations through electronic media, but also regulates the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) so that users' rights are guaranteed. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the obligation to protect citizens from situations of risk. Knowing that the main activity public administrations engage in on social networks involves the issuance of public information, the 2011 Social Networks on Internet Study conducted by the National Observatory of Telecommunications and the Information Society, states that the main Risks arising from the use of these technologies are related to the processing of personal data, impersonation, the possibilities that they may know what is done or said on the network and the criminal use of the information contained therein. "The social network services have, at a minimum, identification and authentication problems, as well as security, integrity and confidentiality of the information, all of which are required by LAECSP¹ for the use of information technologies in the relations of the Administration with the citizenship" (Pereyra Caramé, 2012, p. 460).

The presence of administrations on these new channels is, therefore, an increasingly incipient and regulated reality but reviews are mixed as to how they are exercised. Pereyra Caramé (2012) states that the effort made by the Spanish Public Administrations has been notable. The Electronic Administration portal itself determines that social media and networks serve as a meeting place where Internet users spend more and more time. Therefore, agencies and ministries have begun to approach the citizens, going out to meet them where they are. The author relates that the objectives of the administrations to participate in these networks contribute, directly or indirectly, to the achievement of what is known as "Open Government", a concept that is articulated around three pillars: transparency, participation and collaboration (Calderón & Lorenzo, 2010). However, there is the push from European Union which contributes to the development of the initiative known as the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020, formulated within the framework of the Europe 2020 Community Strategy, which seeks to promote the information society as the axis of an intelligent and sustainable society and whose main objective is to reach 50% of citizens who use the Internet to deal with public authorities. With all of this, there is a strong belief—a "cyber-optimism" (Criado & Rojas Martín, 2015, p. 28), if you will—in the innovative capacity of social networks in the public sphere. The reasons that embrace this approach raise the capacity of technologies to transform the mediation process between public institutions and society by contributing to a better understanding of social patterns and citizen dynamics, to build trust in public institutions, to create public information collectively and increase the perception of transparency by citizens (Bailey & Singleton, 2010; Criado & Rojas Martín, 2012; Hong, 2013; Graham & Avery, 2013; among others). Even so, authors such as Agostino (2013) and Ellison and Hardey (2014), among others, detect deficiencies in the use that administrations make of these new platforms and the management of content therein. One of the greatest criticisms is that administrations are not realising the full potential and achieving all of the benefits these social technologies can offer. Comparison with other types of ICTs adopted in the public sector suggests that social technologies have started their journey in the public sphere through informal

experimentation, in a very sectoral and capillary way, but with a very high rate of dissemination (Criado, Rojas Martín & Barrero, 2015, p. 157).

While it is true that there is a lack of robustness in the use and management of public information through social networks, the reasons are diverse. Gil García (2012) states that factors such as organizational forms and environmental variables determine its success in the public sector according to the Enacting Electronic Government Success (EEGS) model he proposed himself. This neo-institutionalist theoretical model, while allowing the study of information technologies in the field of public administrations, “could be used to understand any type of e-government initiative” (Gil García, 2012, p. 74).

The Presence of Spanish Town Halls in Social Media

Works such as Balcells, Padró-Solanet, and Serrano (2013), Simelio Solà and Molina Rodríguez-Navas (2014), Salgado Losada and Ibáñez Pascual (2015), Martínez de Salinas Murillo (2015) and Criado, Rojas Martín, and Barrero (2015) have been proving that, despite Instagram being the fastest growing social network (IAB, 2018), the most used platforms by Spanish town halls are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which coincides with previous international studies (Criado & Rojas Martín, 2013; Graham & Avery, 2013; Maultasch Oliveira & Welch, 2013). Experts deduce that the municipalities choose these social platforms, which are some of the most popular ones, as a strategy on the governments’ part, to approach the citizens where they can be found. Additionally, they criticize that the profiles of the town halls demonstrate a high level of heterogeneity in terms of the number of followers they have, people who follow them, the level of interaction they engage in, their degree of influence and the frequency with which they publish content (Criado & Rojas Martín, 2015, p. 31). In this sense, they explain, the recent literature shows how public administrations are not achieving high levels of interaction with citizens, since the dimension of unidirectional communication seems to prevail, identifying deficits in active listening (Mickoleit, 2014).

We agree with Criado and Rojas Martín (2015) when affirming the scarcity of studies in Spain focused on exploring the process of adopting social networks and their impact. Being aware of this situation we will make a timely review of the most current academic works that study and analyse the use and management of public information by some Spanish municipalities.

Referring to the case of Catalonia, the works of Balcells, Padró-Solanet, and Serrano (2013), on the one hand, and Simelio Solà and Molina Rodríguez-Navas (2014), on the other, pay special attention to Twitter as a tool of communication and participation. Both studies show that although it is clear that the web 2.0 facilitates tasks such as accountability and the recovery of citizenship confidence towards the political class, it is observed how the municipalities have failed to take advantage of the resources that the new online communication channels offer them, especially in the case of Twitter. Thus, Balcells, Padró-Solanet, and Serrano (2013) suggest that these will only be effective if the organization agrees to fully engage with them.

For their part (focused on the government of Castilla y León) Salgado Losada and Ibáñez Pascual (2015) highlight the good practices carried out in this municipality. In this case, the correct management of public information is based on guidelines regarding its use, training and coordination. Despite this example of good practices, Criado and Rojas Martín (2015), point out that of 121 municipalities that make up the sample of their study, only 29.8% have a formal action strategy and 26.4% rely on guidelines for social media activity.

In the case of this autonomous community, it should also be noted that the action model created to define the presence of the administrations in the digital medium is aimed at creating accounts and profiles with different objectives and audiences. In this way, the defined communication strategy will meet the needs of a specific group of citizens. This practice turns out to be a growing trend because, as Martínez de Salinas Murillo (2015) observes the case of the Aragonese government which has created a profile focused on employment (Aragonese Employment Institute). The author defends that the general social networks are reaching their saturation point and therefore emphasizes the desirability of sectoral spaces with which to achieve a loyal following. Martínez de Salinas Murillo also highlights the responsible use of the channels by the Aragonese government, as they valued how to manage the information for achieving an effective result beyond the mere fact of being present on the Web 2.0.

Methodological Process

According to what was considered in the theoretical framework, the methodology of this chapter starts from the content analysis of the social networks Facebook, Twitter and YouTube of the main municipalities of the Andalusian provinces during the first half of 2019. For this, a total of thirteen indicators (considering both qualitative and quantitative types) inspired by the work of Simelio Solà and Molina and Rodríguez (2014) were prepared. For those indicators which report percentage data regarding the use and management of the information, were formulated in such a manner that the answers could only be positive, in the event that the information exists, and negative, in the event that it does not or is done so improperly. At the same time, others are handled which justify certain actions. The items that have been established to evaluate the use and management of public information are elementary issues and the way of validating them leaves no doubt, as they were written in such a way that the answer can only be yes or no (there is a tool).

Both the indicators and the way in which they are formulated and evaluated allow for the contrasting of transparency and accountability.

Sample

For the selection of the sample, we relied on the latest population figures resulting from the revision of the municipal register of January 1, 2018, offered by the National Institute of Statistics in Spain (INE). We selected all of the municipalities of Andalusia (the most populated Autonomous Community of Spain -8,384,408 inhabitants in the year 2018) with more than 100,000 inhabitants, since the intention was to address a high percentage of the population with the aim of observing a greater demand and participation in social networks. Thus, a sample of twelve cities was obtained: Almería (196.851 inhabitants), Algeciras (121.414), Cádiz (116.979), Córdoba (325.708), Dos Hermanas (133.168), Granada (232.208), Huelva (144.258), Jaén (113.457), Jerez de la Frontera (212.879), Málaga (571.026), Marbella (141.463) and Sevilla (688.711).

Definition of Indicators

It is convenient to specify that only the official accounts of public institutions were analysed. For this purpose, an analysis sheet was prepared, adjusted to each of the platforms according to their characteristics, whose indicators were the following:

1. General Account Information
 - Account name. This item allows us to know if the municipality in question always uses the same identifying name for easy location by citizens on any of the platforms.
 - Date of creation. This reveals how long the profiles have been active in each of the social networks analysed. In addition, it provides information on whether the profiles all date from the same timeframe.
 - Accreditation credential. Considering the problem indicated above about the reliability or legality of the account, it is necessary to know if the profile analysed is presented as an official account. Only those specified as being official accounts are considered valid.
 - They provide a contact and other information. It will be necessary for the different accounts to provide links to other social or web networks to generate social traffic between each of the platforms.
 - Generic / sector accounts. Following the study carried out by Salgado Losada & Ibáñez Pascual (2015), described above, it is considered convenient to detect if the municipalities have generic and / or sectoral accounts. Those sector accounts are considered according to the activities with the greatest impact (culture, youth, employment or tourism).
 - Community. Number of followers.
2. Information management: content strategy. It is considered fundamental that the accounts of the municipalities have a defined content strategy which they execute in a manner that can be adjusted to the communication strategy they pursue online. Therefore, the following items are valid:
 - Frequency of constant content updating is provided. Compliance with this indicator shows whether or not the account interacts closely with citizens and regularly publishes information, regardless of the topic. This contributes to the creation of a loyal base of followers.
 - The information presented in the accounts complements the website. This demonstrates that the content managers adapt the content according to the platform so that social traffic is generated between each of them.
3. Use of social media
 - Engagement. One of the most complex challenges on social media networks is generating engagement with the user and creating loyalty or commitment with those who follow the account. The constant publication (indicator 2a) and interaction with the content constitute a valuable asset.
 - The account generates interaction:
 - Two-way communication
 - The citizens of the public make comments on the publications
 - Type of comments This item, although it does not provide us with quantifiable data, allows us to know the use that citizens make of the social media networks.
 - Citizens share publications on their accounts or personal profiles. If this indicator is fulfilled, multidirectional communication is implemented.
 - The account responds to comments made by citizens. Compliance with this indicator is essential for adhering to interaction.

RESULTS

Being aware that, although the analysis performed here is not decisive, since it is limited exclusively to the use and management of information on the social networks of those Andalusian municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, it should be understood as a study that complements and enriches the landscape created by existing publications. In this way, it helps to provide more information about the management and exposure of public information on social media networks in Spain.

Following the order of indicators set out in the analysis sheet, and focused on Facebook, the results obtained show that 75% of the municipalities have an account on this network while 25% have unofficial pages. Knowing that, in the case of Facebook, our sample is reduced to nine municipalities (Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada and Huelva) and it is estimated that 88% of these are easily located, since they use an identifying name (City Hall followed by the city). For its part, the remaining 11% (corresponding to the town hall of Dos Hermanas) include the qualifier “*Excmo.*”, which can make it more difficult to find the account quickly and accurately. This fact supposes a complexity for the citizenship when looking for public information of the locality on social media.

Regarding the date of creation, it can be said that it ranges from 2011 (in the case of the city council of Sevilla Algeciras and Málaga) and 2015 (city hall of Almería, Granada and Huelva).

On the other hand, and according to the veracity of these profiles, 88% of these municipalities specify the officiality of the account indicating “Government Organization” or “Official Account”. Knowing that public information must be accessible to all citizenship through any platform, we have assessed whether the official accounts of the municipalities analysed offer users more information resources as complementary links so that the citizens have all the information, they need available, for the sake of social traffic. Thus, it is extracted that 100% of the accounts provide a link to their official websites and that 66% also offer a contact telephone number and / or an email. In the case of Marbella, a curious detail to mention is that the e-mail address provided is a personal one. This detail is interpreted as showing a lack of institutional rigor with which this account is treated. In the case of Granada, it should be noted that the city council uses its Facebook page to announce the opening of a new channel (Citizen Participation Portal) which ensures transparency, open government and participatory democracy. Despite this, large deficits in the correct use of Twitter and YouTube were observed in this municipality.

Focusing on the type of account created, all of the municipalities have a generic account, but only 44% of them also offer separate accounts according to sectors. This occurs in the case of the city council of Sevilla, which offers separate channels for employment, emergencies and tourism; the city council of Almería, which offers *Cultura Almería*; the city council of Córdoba, which includes channels for the Youth House of Córdoba and Tourism Córdoba; and the city council of Granada, which offers a separate channel for Granada Youth Employment. These additional accounts by sectors contribute to the creation of spaces with specialised, more specific and expanded information on a given topic, which assumes greater transparency and allows for the easy location of the contents for the user.

As part of the second and third block of the analysis, it can be affirmed that 88% of the official accounts of the municipalities publish regularly, and that the information, in all cases, is complementary to that set forth on their respective official websites. The type of information varies, although some themes are common to all of the cities: events, happenings, public works, awards, breaking news and plenary sessions.

With all this in mind, and in keeping with the correct use of social media networks and all of the features they offer, in 100% of the cases there is engagement, and citizens frequently consume public

information, creating bi-directional and multidirectional communication. Thus, it is observed that in all the accounts analysed, users share and comment on the social media posts. Despite these data, it is necessary to mention that during the analysis phase, it was determined that only 22% of the accounts responded consistently to citizens, 66% did so rarely and 11% never responded.

Table 1. Use and management of information on Facebook

Facebook	Local governments
Accounts with identifying names	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Granada and Huelva.
Account Accuracy	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada and Huelva.
Accounts that provide complementary information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only web: Almería and Dos Hermanas. • Only web and contact telephone number: Sevilla, Algeciras, Málaga, Córdoba, Granada and Huelva. • Web and e-mail: Marbella (non-official email).
Municipalities that create a sector account to avoid information saturation in generic accounts	Sevilla, Almería, Córdoba and Granada.
Constant publication	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Granada and Huelva
Common themes	Events, Works, inaugurations, awards, breaking news, among others.
Engagement and interaction	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Granada and Huelva. In the case of Córdoba and Dos Hermanas, there is interaction, but it is no so continuous.
Constant dialogue in response to citizen comments	Sevilla and Almería

Source: (Own elaboration)

Secondly, and referring to Twitter, the data indicate that 91% of the municipalities have an account on this network (Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada, Huelva and Jaén) and that 63% of the municipalities use an identifying name, while 27% use the abbreviation “Ayto.” and 9% use only the name of the city. Considering these results, it is interpreted that, in the case of Twitter, there is a greater complexity for citizens to look for and find information for a determined account.

In the case of Facebook, when considering the date of creation, the time ranges between 2011 and 2015. Only the municipalities of Algeciras (September 2012), Málaga (July 2011), Marbella (2012, in this case the year coincides, but the month is not specified on Twitter), Dos Hermanas (September 2015) and Huelva (February 2015) created both accounts simultaneously.

However, in line with the social media networks analysed above, 81% of these municipalities specify the official status of their accounts, while 90% offer only a link to their webpages to complement the information, 18% indicate both a webpage and a telephone number, and 9% do not show any type of alternative access.

Focusing on the type of account created: 100% of municipalities have a generic account and 72% have sectoral accounts. These are: Sevilla City Council (*Emergencias Sevilla* - they use the same name on Facebook as on Twitter, which makes the citizens’ search for information easier -, *Turismo de la*

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Provincia - they use two different names for Facebook and Twitter on the tourism channel-), City Hall of Almería (*Cultura Almería* -which is the same on both accounts-), Málaga City Hall (*Andalucía Emprende* - the business channel- Málaga), Marbella City Hall (Marbella Tourism), Córdoba City Hall (Córdoba Youth House and Córdoba Tourism), Granada City Hall (Granada Youth Employment) and Jaén town hall (Jaén Tourism). Nevertheless, the data obtained on the number of followers indicate an outstanding difference: from 1,077 followers in Granada and 160,000 in the case of the city council of Sevilla.

Blocks two and three of the analysis sheet show that in 81% of cases the publications are constant (in the municipality of Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Huelva and Jaén), in 9% there is a leisurely publication (Dos Hermanas) and in the case of the city council of Granada it is observed that the information has not been updated since 2017. The 100% of the cases, the information shared is complementary to what appears on the respective official websites. At this time, it is necessary to point out that although the contents deal with the same topics, they are dealt with in a way that conforms with the features of the networks in which they are published.

With all this, in 90% of cases, there is engagement. The same percentage demonstrates two-way communication and indicates that the citizenship shares the content but in none of the cases, during the period we analysed, does the account respond to comments or doubts from the citizens.

Table 2. Use and management of information on Twitter

Twitter	Local governments
Accounts with identifying names	Sevilla, Almería, Málaga, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva and Jaén. Algeciras, Marbella and Dos Hermanas use the abbreviation (Ayto.).
Account Accuracy	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Marbella, Dos Hermanas, Huelva and Jaén.
Accounts that provide complementary information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo indican web: Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Huelva and Jaén. • Web and contact telephone number: Sevilla, Marbella,
Municipalities that create a sector account to avoid information saturation in generic accounts	Sevilla, Almería, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada and Jaén.
Constant publication	Sevilla, Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Huelva and Jaén.
Common themes	Spots, culture, public and political information, events, among others.
Engagement and interaction	Every profiles except Granada, because its activity stops in 2017.
Constant dialogue in response to citizen comments	In any case.

Source: (Own elaboration)

Finally, the YouTube social network presents a drastic decrease in activity. It is observed that 41% of the municipalities analysed have their own channels to which citizens can subscribe (Sevilla, Almería, Málaga, Marbella and Huelva). In the remaining cases, the provisions of YouTube are videos uploaded by the city's own public television. Therefore, the analysis is rejected because it is not a channel that the public institution manages itself.

Eighty per cent of official channels have the same name as in previous networks. The remaining 20%, corresponding to the city of Almería, and is called “Almería City Hall News”. With respect to the date of creation, the range is between 2011 (in Sevilla) and 2016 (municipality of Almería and Huelva). If we compare these data to the previous ones, it is known that the people responsible for the use and management of public information have not implemented a communication strategy in social networks in a cohesive way, since there is a wide difference of years in terms of the presence of information on each of these platforms. Thus, it is observed and deduced that the exposure of public information on this network is not as a priority. This approach is corroborated if we look at the “Accreditation Credential” indicator, since 60% of the cases do not report the officiality of the account, which may mean that citizens lack confidence in the content. In the same way, they do not usually provide other links to which citizens can go. Only the municipalities of Sevilla and Málaga, in their respective channels, provide links to their official websites and / or the Twitter accounts.

With respect to the existence of sectoral channels, 80% of the cases do not incorporate this except for Málaga (Málaga Turismo).

Otherwise, the number of followers of each of the channels shows a lack of interest in this network with respect to the previous ones (41 subscribers in the case of Huelva, 80 in Marbella, 669 in the Almería city hall channel, 1,508 in the case of Málaga and 5,638 subscribers to the YouTube channel of the city council of Sevilla).

Finally, assessing the content strategy, as well as the use they make of this network, it is known that the frequency of publication is not constant except in the case of the Almería city hall channel in which, although the information is not as continuous as on Facebook and Twitter, there is a better disposition compared to other channels. Even so, the information presented is the same as in the previous cases, with the municipal plenary sessions being the most used content.

In this situation, engagement is negative. Bidirectionality occurs in 80% of the cases but citizenship comment on only 20% of the channels (Sevilla city hall channel) citizens comment on the uploaded videos (these are questions and opinions) and interact with the *likes* and *dislikes*; in 80% of the remaining cases the citizens do not comment but they do show their satisfaction through the “I like” and “I do not like” (channel of the municipality of Almería, Málaga, Marbella and Huelva). Finally, and in terms of the responsiveness of those responsible for the channels, it is shown that 80% do not respond and 20% rarely do so (Sevilla City Council channel).

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Table 3. Use and management of information on YouTube

YouTube	City Halls
Accounts with identifying names	Sevilla, Málaga, Marbella and Huelva. In the case of Almería: Almería City Hall News.
Account Accuracy	Málaga and Marbella
Accounts that provide complementary information	Sevilla (provides a web link and Twitter account) and Málaga (provides web link only).
Municipalities that create a sector account to avoid information saturation in generic accounts	Málaga.
Constant publication	Almería (the record is lower than in the case of Facebook and Twitter).
Common themes	Municipal plenary sessions, promotional videos of tourism and local celebrations.
Engagement and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement: in no case. * Interaction Sevilla and Cádiz (likes and comments), Almería, Algeciras, Málaga, Córdoba, Granada, Huelva and Jaén (likes but no comments)
Constant dialogue in response to citizen comments	In none of the cases. Sevilla does it although it is not continuous.

Source: (Own elaboration)

Table 4. Municipalities that do not make good use and management of public information through social networks

Indicators not met (the most common)	Cities that no fulfil
Indicate that the accounts and channels are official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cádiz and Jerez de la Frontera on Facebook. • Jerez de la Frontera on Twitter. • Algeciras, Cádiz, Jerez de la Frontera, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada and Jaén on YouTube.
Publication frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dos Hermanas on Facebook. • Dos Hermanas and Granada on Twitter. • Sevilla, Málaga, Marbella and Huelva on YouTube.
Interaction of citizenship with posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almería, Málaga, Marbella and Huelva on YouTube (no comments, but “Like” and “Dislike”).
Account interaction with citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeciras, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas Granada and Huelva on Facebook. • Every local governments with official profile on Twitter. • Almería, Algeciras, Cádiz, Málaga, Marbella, Córdoba, Dos Hermanas, Granada, Huelva and Jaén on YouTube.
Generate engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granada on Twitter. • Every local government on YouTube.

Source: (Own elaboration)

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It would be interesting, as well as necessary, to continue further research on the use and management that local administrations make of public information throughout Spain. The purpose is to present a decalogue of good practices that serves public institutions so that they can take advantage of the resources that social media networks offer.

CONCLUSION

The above data allow us to confirm that Andalusian municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants comply with a higher percentage of indicators on Facebook. However, if we pay attention to how citizenship use social media networks, the number of followers of the respective accounts reveals that the medium most citizens use to access public information is Twitter. Despite this, Facebook is the network that accumulates the greatest interaction both in terms of the number of comments and the number of likes and dislikes in each of the posts. The results are somewhat predictable as they coincide with the characteristics of the respective networks: while on Twitter the immediacy of the message prevails. Facebook, unlike Twitter, provides a more suitable space for commenting.

Additionally, we detect a commitment on the part of public institutions to maintaining a reliable rhythm of content posting, on both Facebook and Twitter, thereby achieving engagement in both cases. Yet, there is little effort to maintain an interaction with citizens by responding to their comments on any of the three platforms analysed. This fact leads to negative consequences regarding commitment, transparency and open government through social networks.

In the case of YouTube, the breach of the indicators in all cases is underlined. Therefore, and from an evaluative point of view, the use and management of public information through this social network is disastrous and the audiovisual resource is devalued as an informative and entertainment tool.

With all this, and despite the passage of time, the panorama described in this study follows the investigative line of those previously published by Criado and Rojas Martín (2015) and Simelio Solà and Molina Rodríguez-Navas (2014). While it is true that the selected municipalities try to adapt to information technology, resulting in the acceptance of Facebook and Twitter on the part of the citizens, public institutions continue to manifest fundamental deficiencies. If they do not overcome these, they will not be able to take advantage of all the resources social media networks can offer them; which would imply the creation of a closer relationship between institutions and citizens as the main subject of public management.

Thus, we conclude and state that the Andalusian municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants engage in good use and management of public information through Facebook and Twitter, although they do not participate in a sustained dialogue with citizenship. Therefore, it is understood that they use social networks as platforms to deliver public information to a large number of citizens but do not use them to create networks or a community where constant interaction prevails, which is the essence of this medium.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Accountability: Action to provide public information to citizens about a certain activity that affects them given their contribution through taxes.

Engagement in Social Networks: Commitment and loyalty by users to the content published on social networks.

Information Accessibility: Ability to provide citizens with access to information regardless of the means in which it is available.

Information Transparency: Basic democratic principle that obliges state agencies to publish information of public interest and make it accessible.

Interaction in Social Networks: Action-Reaction that users exercise on content published on a profile.

Multidirectional Communication: Takes place in a communicative process in which the sender sends a message to a receiver, through a channel, and forwards it to another subject so that they all become senders and receivers of the information at the same time.

Open Government: Government willingness to openly display information of a public nature and of interest to citizens.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Article 1.2. LAECSP: “Public Administrations will use the information technologies in accordance with the provisions of this Law, ensuring the availability, access, integrity, authenticity, confidentiality and preservation of the data, information and services they manage during the year in the exercise of their competencies.”

Section 4

Business Models: Netflix as Paradigm

Chapter 22

Content Bubbles: How Platforms Filter What We See

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ABSTRACT

Personalisation has extended to our entire user experience in the digital world. In practical terms, almost all the online services promote us to create a user profile and from there, they offer access to personalised content and/or services. This leads us to the generation of Big Data associated with user profiles which the companies harvest through analytic and predictive algorithms, which they later use to recommend, filter, and provide the content we consume. Having more and more detailed data from user profiles allows for the platforms to detect tendencies in a global public and to create the content that has the greatest chance for success. This chapter examines the massive data management that occurs on platforms that distribute visual content on demand and its impact on content creation. We will focus on Netflix as a paradigm example.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the audiovisual sector has undergone major changes that have affected all phases of production of audiovisual content, the content itself, the marketing related to that content, the value chain, and the way in which viewers or users relate to and consume the content. The change may seem radical in some respects, but the most striking element is the speed at which it is taking place.

With the introduction of the so-called information technologies, digitalisation and the creation of the Internet, our notion of space and time has been reconfigured. Communication technologies are causing time to accelerate (Virilio, 1997) and space to contract (Augé, 2002), which places us before three concepts around which the most significant changes at the communicative level revolve since the appearance of the Internet: digitalisation, ubiquity and instantaneousness.

The Internet, due to its characteristics and implications, has become an environment that forces us to redesign processes (Roca, 2012). The digitalisation of contents and their access through the Internet alters, at the same time, production systems and knowledge transmission systems.

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Content Bubbles

All companies working with content and/or processes that can be digitised are speeding up the process that turns products into services. Netflix, Hulu and Spotify are examples of these models. The era of access (Rifkin, 2000) to content and services is replacing that of ownership.

These multinational media companies are using the new digital revolution in communications to connect the world and, in the process, they are inexorably pulling the cultural sphere into the commercial sphere, where it is commodified in the form of ready-made cultural experiences for their customers, mass commercial shows or personalised entertainment (p. 18).

Internet access is allowing consumers to manage their time and space for consumption. An environment where content is available anytime (instantaneousness), anywhere (ubiquity) and on all devices (mobility) has changed users' consumption habits and their relationship with content and content providers.

"Speed changes the view of the world" (Virilio, 1997, p. 23) and this time in a more pointed way, by being an intrinsic element of this hyperconnected society and of the technologies of instantaneousness that have shaken the foundations and processes of the cultural industry sectors: press, music, audiovisual, editorial, etc. An industry such as the audiovisual sector, whose business model is based on the management of intellectual properties in time and space, with products that can be digitised and easily reproduced, has seen how in just a few years it has needed to adapt to changes and, in some cases, redefine or even reinvent its business model.

This chapter joins other research on the relationship between new technologies and users (McLuhan, 1996; Battelle, 2006; Manovich, 2005; Gertrudix, Borges-Rey, & García, 2017) and aims to understand the mass data management carried out on audiovisual distribution platforms on demand and its impact on users and content creation.

To this end, we will analyse the management of audiovisual content within streaming video-on-demand platforms, taking Netflix as a paradigmatic example. We will focus on the company's data analysis and recommendation system, working with primary and secondary sources: bibliographic and video review, analysis of data published by the company itself and specialised press.

BACKGROUND

On 4 December 2009, an entry titled "Custom Searches for Everyone" featured on Google's corporate blog. Many missed it, but that day saw the largest change in the history of search engines (Pariser, 2017). The change brought about by Google was a turning point in the way we consume information: the era of personalisation was beginning.

Searching drove the Internet (Battelle, 2006), and it continues to do so through multiple services and applications. Users still tend to think that search engines are impartial: "Your screen is increasingly a kind of one-way mirror that reflects your own interests, while the algorithm analysts observe everything you click on" (Pariser, 2017, p. 13). The digital world seen through any of the devices we use that are connected to the internet is a machine that collects and analyses our personal data. The goal of large Internet companies is to obtain as much data as possible about us. Practically all online services ask us to create a user profile and from there, they offer us personalised access to their content and/or services (Izquierdo-Castillo, 2012, 2015). Through "free" services, companies such as Google or Facebook obtain data on their users, and they convert that data into money. "The more personally relevant information

they are able to offer, the more advertising space they can sell and, consequently, the more likely it is that we will buy the products they are offering. The formula works” (Pariser, 2017, p. 17).

Today, personalisation has spread to virtually all of our user experience in the digital world. It is a basic strategy for search engines, social networks, mobile applications or VOD services (Neira, 2015). This leads to the generation of Big Data (Serrano-Cobos, 2014) associated with user profiles, which companies use through analytical and predictive algorithms to offer, recommend and filter the content we consume (Gómez-Uribe & Hunt, 2016).

The positive side of all this indicates that consumers are the beneficiaries at large, since they obtain, through searches or personalised recommendations, content that meets their personal tastes and preferences. Having more and more detailed user data allows the platforms to detect trends in a global audience and create content that has more guarantees of success. The negative side is that the filter made by the algorithm wraps us in a bubble and keep us from other content that initially is outside our tastes (Turckle, 2012). Searching is also the means we use to rethink the relations between us and our environment (Battelle, 2006), and the personalisation of our searches prevents us from doing so to some extent.

The new generation of internet filters looks at the things you seem to like—the things themselves, or the things that people like you like—and tries to extrapolate. They are predictive machines whose goal is to constantly create and refine a theory about who you are, what you will do, and what you will want next. Together, they create a universe of information unique to each of us—what I have called a ‘filter bubble’—which, essentially, alters the way we find ideas and information. (Pariser, 2017, p. 19)

At this point, issues such as the notion of content relevance now take on great importance. And here Big Data (Fernández-Manzano, 2016), or management of massive data, comes into play for our analysis, specifically in audiovisual environments.

Activity and consumption in content networks turns each viewer into a data generator. Big Data is currently a strategic ally in decision making within the large distribution platforms of audiovisual content. However, data alone has no value—what matters is what is done with it; hence, the importance of the combination of algorithms used by the platforms and the process flow of Big Data management. Aspects as relevant as recommendations to users, production of own content or new acquisitions depend on them (Fernández-Manzano, 2016).

Among the different uses and opportunities presented by the analysis and management of data for the media, we would highlight: Knowledge of user preferences and needs; Predictive analysis; Development of personalisation and recommendation services; Design of variable pricing business models; Segmentation; Evaluation of the impact of advertising on and off the website; Enrichment of CRM in subscription models and paywalls; Implementation of native data-based advertising; Understanding how content is consumed and propagated on social networks; and data journalism and visualisation services. (Cerezo, 2018, p. 83)

This revolution, almost invisible and hidden behind the friendly face of the benefits of personalisation, has brought about a change in the relationship with the user, in our consumption of content, in the business management of content, in the creation of content and, finally, in our construction of reality. In this sense, it is necessary to carry out further research on the relationship of new technologies with users and how this also affects content creators.

Content Bubbles

Companies like Uber, Airbnb and Netflix have succeeded not because they had bigger budgets or better technologies, but because they have applied the new rules of the digital economy by reinventing the value chain of their respective industries. (Cerezo, 2018, p. 23)

Digital economy companies in general, and streaming audiovisual content distribution platforms in particular, faced three problems: attention, overabundance and relevance.

Michael Goldhaber (1997) expands on the concept of attention economy, attributed to Herbert A. Simon in 1971, according to which content is considered a passive subject that consumes human attention. Digitalisation makes it easier to generate content, and the greater the amount of information, the greater the poverty of attention, which means that attention must be allocated more efficiently. The development of algorithms to make certain content more accessible, ordering and structuring it according to interests detected in user behaviour, puts this concept back in the spotlight for large Internet corporations.

On the other hand, the economic model used by television stations has traditionally been a model of scarcity; that is, scarcity of content associated with the exclusive ownership of that content by a given channel. When, on the face of it, we move in a model of overabundance in the digital world—in our case, overabundance of content—, how are scarcity models created there? If we take Google as an example, such a model would be created with a single search associated to an available advertising space based on the keywords of that search. If we take Facebook as an example, it would be created with a unique news flow for each user at all times and a space for the promotion of content and advertising (Pariser, 2017). If we take Netflix as an example, it would be created with an interface that offers content selected specifically for a particular user according to their preferences.

To address the issue of customisation and recommendations, data analysts observe and consider our movements and behaviours when making a search request and navigating the options offered in response. They have found that much can be learned by looking at statistical models of search usage and converting them into algorithms. To do this, they track our clicks after a search, to check what results we decide to click on and what content we go to next, in order to better determine the algorithms to be applied to the result pages. The conclusion of this process is that customisation and recommendations have the potential to improve every day, the more users use them. The analysis of Big Data and predictive algorithms allows us to establish which content will be potentially relevant to communities of users with shared tastes. In this sense, technology platforms have the

ability to act both as an aggregator of supply and as a consolidator of demand. This ability makes them the main intermediaries and establishes an unparalleled relationship with and knowledge of the user, having known how to monetise [the user] like no one else (Cerezo, 2018, p. 49).

This way of managing content also allows to apply the theory of the Long Tail (Anderson, 2007), which allows the coexistence of two models in the new digital economy: 1. Mass market: focusing on the high performance of a few products. 2. Niche markets: based on the sum or accumulation of all the small sales of many products that may equal or surpass the first one. This mix of the two models is applicable to digital content platforms (such as Netflix) which have several products that fit the first model and others that are aimed at the second model.

In short, the new streaming video-on-demand (VOD) platforms are conceived as *costumer media*, placing the user at the centre of their strategy, managing to quickly capture their attention. *Costumer media* are characterised by their obsession with data and analysis. They are social, they are mobile, they

are audiovisual, they attract the millennials, they opt for new advertising formats, they are conceived as platforms, they have a desire for internationalisation, and they are the target of investors (Cerezo, 2018: p. 63-76).

In order to place the user at the centre of the focus, it is necessary to listen to the user through the data and try to understand what he or she wants. Companies that have been able to put the data at the service of its environment, through good data management and analysis, have been able to transfer their results to their business decision making with considerable success.

They have managed to channel the potential of social networks, generate community and direct audiences to their websites, as well as take advantage of the opportunities of each channel and offer users what they want anywhere and at any time (Cerezo, 2018, p. 64).

In short, it is about using data, understanding how users access information and share it on social networks, creating communities around a brand and interacting with users.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

From Products to Services

In 1994, Nicholas Negroponte was already thinking about how to solve the problem of what to watch on TV in the digital age. For him, the key to the future of television was “to stop thinking of it as such, and to envisage it in terms of bits ... there will be many new bits, like the ones that will inform us about the other bits” (p. 34). Under this view, television would become a completely different medium and we would start seeing new and creative applications: it would be something like Netflix.

Netflix was founded in 1997 by Reed Hastings and Marc R. Randolph. It was introduced as the world’s first online DVD rental store, with many titles available. Their business model was based on the advantages of home shopping and the efficiency of a digital store. An extensive catalogue, a simple website, an effective search and competitive prices with low shipping costs were the keys to its success.

From the beginning, Netflix always aimed to offer its users the perfect film for every occasion. To do so, it implemented three search applications on its website: *FlixFinder* (search by title, actor or director), *FilmFacts* (database of fact sheets, synopsis, ratings) and *Browse the Aisles* (categorisation of films by theme or genre) (Carrillo, 2018, pp. 28-29). In 1999, Netflix launched its first subscription service. In 2000, it launched its first personalised film recommendation system, using users’ ratings to predict options for all Netflix members: *Cinematch*.

2007 is a historic year for the Internet entertainment industry: Netflix launches its streaming service: *Watch Now*. In 2008, it expands by offering the possibility of streaming viewing without a time limit. In 2010, its streaming service becomes ubiquitous. A multiplatform strategy leads it to partner with consumer electronics companies, with the goal of being featured in 100 models of Internet-connected devices.

In 2011, Netflix announces the separation of its streaming and rental services along with a new higher price rate. In the following months, this led to its largest drop and an example of Netflix’s failure to manage the crisis communicatively by not explaining the increase in fees to its users. The services were divided into two sites, rental and streaming; the use of the service became more complicated and user numbers dropped significantly. Netflix did not know how to listen to its customers.

Content Bubbles

In 2013, Netflix surpassed HBO subscribers for the first time, and the streaming service also offered more benefits than that of DVD for the first time. By continuing its deals with device manufacturers, consumer electronics companies and telecommunication operators, Netflix achieves the highest possible ubiquity either directly or through joint deals.

After several phases of geographical expansion, Netflix became available worldwide in 2016.

House of Data

If we are looking for a paradigm of internal data management and metadata exploitation in the audiovisual sector today, that would be Netflix. The fundamental reasons would be its use of information in a flexible and adaptive way to fit the environment, its decision making based on Big Data, and a business model that places the consumer at the centre of its decisions. Netflix is characterised by the intensive use of data to offer a service with a high degree of personalisation and recommendation. In the words of Neil Hunt, the company's Chief Product Officer, "Netflix will know exactly what you want to watch, even before you do" (Cerezo, 2018, p. 208).

Netflix's fundamental goal is "to continue to provide the most appropriate content to each customer in the fastest and most economical way possible" (Carrillo, 2018, p. 178). Their internal studies show that after the first 90 seconds, the probability of a user leaving the platform without watching anything increases. To prevent this from happening, Netflix helps you find the right content from its huge catalogue, and does so quite successfully:

Sixty percent of Netflix's views come from the custom assumptions it can make about each customer's preferences—at this point, Netflix can predict how much you will like a film with a half-star margin of error (Pariser, 2017, p. 17).

Netflix, known as 'house of data', is one of the benchmarks in the use of data intelligence. Recommendation algorithms have been at the heart of Netflix since its inception. Netflix tries to deduce which will be the next title users will like using the data that users themselves provide regarding the content they see and the way they see it.

By 2018, it already had over 120 million users in more than 190 countries around the world. From the users, Netflix extracts data that is applied in the development of different areas of its business. Netflix's business model is based on subscription rather than advertising investment. Therefore, it uses the data to attract and retain subscribers, minimise cancellations, achieve long-term service loyalty, and achieve good satisfaction rates with its product (Fernández, Neira & Clares, 2016, p. 571).

To achieve this goal, Netflix focuses on several aspects: quality control of the content whose rights have been acquired; optimal catalogue size; offer of personalised content recommendations; and production of content considering the preferences of its customers.

In order to be able to manage Big Data adequately regarding company interests and objectives, the definition of the metrics and performance indicators—KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)—is a decisive factor. The establishment of these metrics is what will determine the data to be recorded and subsequently analysed.

In the case of Netflix, data analysis has been added to different processes aimed at improving user experience. Aspects related to three main areas are observed: user activity, streaming quality and personal recommendation system.

Regarding user activity, there are a number of general aspects that Netflix is interested in analysing, such as the type of content played or discarded; the characteristics of playback (normal, forward, backward, pause or exit); the intensity of playback (frequency and number of hours per session); the rating the user gives to the content (previously stars and now likes); or the type of device from which it is accessed (connected TV, tablet, mobile, etc., as users do not see the same type of content on a smartphone as on a TV).

In order to analyse the quality of the streaming experience, a personalised evaluation of the technological situation of each playback is carried out: how it affects the user's behaviour (hours spent on the service); how personalised experiences can be created (according to the technology used or the quality of the bandwidth); how to improve the delivery of content (what content should be placed in the queue of servers so that it plays faster, technical improvements in audio, subtitles, etc.). The goal is to offer the best streaming experience when viewing content. To do so, three aspects need to be considered: creating a streaming experience customised to the user's technical reception conditions; optimising the content cache by retrieving it from the most appropriate location; and improving the quality of the final delivery of content (Carrillo, 2018, p. 178-180).

To optimise the personal recommendation system, Netflix performs online A/B tests, analyses long-term behaviour metrics, predicts customised ratings and rankings, generates pages and search tools, selects images and messages, among other actions. In these processes, technical data is cross-referenced with the metadata that Netflix assigns to all its content. This is one of the best known uses of the Big Data process in Netflix, the targeting of its contents, the algorithm called *Personal Video Ranker*: technical and artistic information, genre attributes or semantic markers, that is, tags related to the narration of that programme or film, etc.

They have managed to define almost eighty thousand new 'micro-genres' of film and series, with which they have achieved greater segmentation, allowing them to have one of the most effective recommendation models on the market. Also, in their production area, data are an essential part of the business. They are present in all aspects of the development of their series, including the design of the promotional poster for their emblematic House of Cards series, which was made by processing data from other posters that had been successful among the target audience (Cerezo, 2018, pp. 87-88).

The work of these *taggers* consists of viewing contents and assigning them labels and categories, *microtags*, which try to capture the spirit of the content with a wide range of nuances for indexing. This process allows finding connections between films and the creation of new categories, or subcategories, based on patterns (origin of the production, year, thematic areas, key roles of the artistic or technical team, adjectives ordered by popularity, etc.). "In a broad sense, most Netflix algorithms are based on the assumption that similar viewing models represent similar tastes" (Carrillo, 2018, p. 184). Among the algorithms used we can highlight: *Top N Video Ranker*, which includes everything the user sees under the heading *Top picks*, which is a selection of recommendations in the main categories generated by this algorithm. *Trending Now*, an algorithm in charge of generating contextually related trend categories. The *Continue watching* algorithm, related to the playback or exit of it. The *Video-video similarity* algorithm, which generates the *Because you watched* category. To these, the recommendations derived from the commercial interests of the platform itself should be added: *Advances*, *Recently added*, or *Available now* (Fernandez, Neira & Clares, 2016, p. 574).

Content Bubbles

Netflix groups users with similar behaviours into what they call *Taste Communities*, and this affects how we see the content in our user interface. The most recommended user titles appear at the top, and within each row of content, the most recommended user titles appear on the left. Each user's visit updates their profile and improves their recommendations.

Recommendation work does not end here, as Netflix also knows that images play a determining role in the way users find and select their content. The Aesthetic Visual Analysis (AVA) system collects static image frames directly from the original videos to provide raw artwork for the creative directors of Network to promote the content. AVA is a collection of tools and algorithms designed to select high-quality images from videos. These tools combine basic principles of film and photography composition (Riley et al., 2018).

To Netflix, it is clear that the images used to illustrate content are key to rousing interest in an unknown recommended title (Chandrashekar et al., 2017). This leads to personalised recommendations being shown alongside personalised images that highlight aspects of the content that are specifically relevant to each user. An actor, a theme, an image of an action, etc. can be factors that help the user to choose the recommended content. Netflix tests on images reflect some trends: the more characters appear in the image, the less attractive it is (no more than three characters); faces that show emotions are more attractive; villains are more attractive, especially for children; the attractiveness of images varies according to the territory, the same image does not have the same effect everywhere. In short, "the digital era seems to bring with it a growing overlap between creativity and technique, as well as with marketing" (Bustamante et al., 2003, p. 335). It is not only a question of improving what is recommended, but also how it is recommended.

Since 2016, Netflix has been available worldwide and this has forced the company to redefine its recommendation system. Until 2015, labelling was done locally in the new countries, but global expansion meant that operational changes were necessary. Now, algorithms operate by individual regions and are processed globally.

Since Netflix's catalogue is different for each territory, usually because of issues regarding rights, recommendations are also different for each one.

In summary, the Netflix recommendation system is based on the following elements: the use of Big Data and complex algorithms; user profile built from the choices made, ratings given, viewing habits and user behaviour; collaboration with customer groups with Social TV dynamics; the catalogue content tagging system; and the commercial and catalogue priorities of Netflix itself (Carrillo, 2018, p. 187).

Netflix Originals

Big Data analysis for recommendations provides a deep understanding of the users, which has also led to improved efficiency in program design. Information extracted from data analysis allows for recommendations on what content to create or license and how best to reach people who have not yet joined Netflix. By associating these ideas with opening up new markets, we can better understand the growth of Netflix Originals.

In-house production on content platforms is associated with the idea of scarcity economics that we discussed at the beginning. Platforms seek to provide original content in order to differentiate themselves from other platforms, build user loyalty and attract new users. Every time Netflix expands to a new territory, it produces original content linked to local interests in those territories. For example, *Narcos* (2015) came at a time of strong consolidation and increase in the Hispanic audience, both locally—from

the United States—and internationally, and shortly after the expansion of the service in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The first success in content production thanks to the analysis of Big Data happened in 2003. Ted Sarandos, Netflix's content director, and his team, through analysis of data from users of the platform, concluded that they should make a series about U.S. congressmen, starring Kevin Spacey and with David Fincher as its director. The result was *House of Cards* (2013). Acclaimed by critics and audiences, the series went on for six seasons. It became the first web series to receive major Emmy nominations in 2013, and it has received over 30 nominations throughout its six seasons.

In the case of *House of Cards*, Michael Smith and Rahul Telan (2016) discuss how Netflix not only knew about the tastes of its audience but had perfectly located its audience in order to promote the series. Data, in this case, were useful for analysis and promotion, but the content was already good. Companies like Amazon and HBO, very competitive in data intelligence, have also used this technique applied to content acquisition and in-house production. Nowadays, it is common to create pilot series conceived with Big Data analysis; these are then tested with the public that uses the platform to assess their continuity.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For Netflix users, the filters of the personalised recommendation systems allow them to have an easier, faster and more comfortable experience. They are willing to offer a portion of their privacy in exchange for convenience and service.

But deep down, the costs of the filter bubble with which they surround us are both personal and cultural.

A world built on what is familiar to us is a world where there is nothing to learn. If personalisation is too specific, it can prevent us from coming into contact with incredible experiences that neutralise our prejudices, as well as ideas that can change the way we think about the world and ourselves (Pariser, 2017, p. 24).

This dynamic that is introduced to us through the recommendation system can lead us to a loop of themes or types of works that might prevent us from discovering other content that will surprise us and makes us question our tastes. Once we have defined the filter, the filter can define us.

The future of Internet searches and personalised recommendation systems will be based more on understanding than on simply searching (Battelle, 2006, p. 30). Algorithms will have to be able to understand what we are really looking for every time we log in to Netflix.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Big Data analysis in the audiovisual sector and its applications for recommending personalised content for users is still a line of work that poses many challenges.

Regarding the streaming VOD platforms, there is much to research and understand about user behaviour, content indexing, content analysis and tagging, efficient catalogue management, decision making in the purchase of content rights, personalisation of the offer, or influence of Big Data on content production.

Content Bubbles

Beyond the platforms themselves, other lines of research work on the relationship with social networks, the measurement of real-time consumption in online media, the definition (or lack of) of new prime time, changes in work routines within the audiovisual sector, and more extensively other collateral areas—such as the selection of content for media, the use of keywords in headlines, the analysis of databases with applications for media or business models for online media.

CONCLUSION

Customisation mediates our user experience. The phenomenon that started with search engines and social networks has spread to most online services, which offer us personalised access to their content and/or services.

Netflix's recommendation system has become the basic method of browsing their content catalogue: in the same way that the Windows interface defined our interactions with the personal computer, or Google defined our interactions with the Internet, the recommendation system defines our interaction with Netflix.

Recommendations are an essential tool to cope with the exponential growth of content available on Netflix. The analytical and predictive algorithms that provide us with recommendations and filter the content we consume satisfy our tastes while limiting our capacity for development, contrast and discovery.

The tools that we shape with a purpose transform us to unexpected limits. User navigation is conditioned by customisation filters.

Once again, we human beings must pay attention to our relationship with new technologies. We must understand the implications of the massive data management carried out on the Internet and its impact on us.

Regarding content production, data and its analysis have proven to be effective today in helping us to break down a problem and understand its elements. Likewise, data are a very useful tool in the generation of content marketing, since they allow us to better locate the target audience. However, currently, they do not seem to be the most appropriate process to put the pieces together again and come to a conclusion on our own. In the creative processes of the audiovisual sector, the combination of brain and risk is still more successful. In this sense, data should be a tool for decision making, but should not lead the decisions.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Algorithms: Sequence of instructions that represent a solution model for a given problem.

Big Data: A set of data whose size makes it difficult for it to be recorded, managed and analysed by using conventional tools.

Digitalisation: Action of digitising. To convert into numbers, digits, data or information of a continuous nature, such as photographic images, documents or books.

DVD: Digital Versatile Disc. Optical disk capable of containing a large quantity of images, sounds or data in a coded form.

HBO: First cable or satellite TV channel that did not use the terrestrial broadcasting network.

Streaming: Continuous sequential transmission of audio or video over the Internet without the need for downloading.


Tags: Labels or sets of keywords associated to a content.

VOD: Video on Demand. Television system that allows users to access content in a personalised way.

Chapter 23

Netflix in Spain, Spain in Netflix

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ABSTRACT

The arrival of Netflix in Spain represents a complete revolution in the distribution and consumption of audiovisual content. The platform has not limited its offer to what is already available in its catalogue, but has boosted the international distribution of some Spanish productions, which were already available on local channels. At the same time the platform has established alliances with relevant production companies in Spain to create new products, providing them with the imprimatur of Netflix. The two-way relationship between Netflix and Spain, to which this chapter applies an ample and up-to-date analysis, offers an interesting glimpse at the penetration and influence of the one of the largest providers of video on-demand in the Spanish audiovisual panorama, which it is essential for understanding not only the sphere of Spanish television but also more broadly the European context.

INTRODUCTION

When Netflix disembarked in Spain in 2015, it did so in a country that “has been relatively late in joining the sociological revolution that the distribution of legal content on the Internet has meant” (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 11-12). Notwithstanding that delay, Spain has become a benchmark for Netflix’s presence and expansion in Europe and essential because of its cultural and linguistic connections with Latin America. Netflix was the first major video on-demand (hereinafter VOD) platform to establish itself in the country, followed by HBO and Amazon Prime, among others. All of these major international over-the-top (hereinafter OTT) services are some of the pieces nowadays making up the complex puzzle of the Spanish audio-visual content industry.

In the audio-visual market, Spain’s current situation is neither anomalous nor disruptive, but a reflection of what is occurring in other countries where the television scene has undergone profound and rapid changes in a few years with respect to the traditional model, with which it had functioned for decades. The current state of affairs would be unimaginable without the growing presence of streaming media providers or the chain of transformations associated with those that have also occurred in audio-visual

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content consumption patterns, which have not only been restricted to television in the traditional and strict sense of the word. Perhaps one of the most eloquent signs of the change in trend is the decrease in piracy, one of the most pressing problems affecting the cultural industry in Spain. According to the last two reports published by the Coalition of Content Creators and Industries (CCIC) in 2018 and 2019, the reduction in losses for the industry owing to piracy has been estimated at 6 per cent in 2017 and 3 per cent in 2018, thus representing three years of gradual decline, with a cumulative reduction of 10 per cent since 2016.

The successful establishment of several VOD services in Spain demonstrates that its citizens are willing to consume legal content and to pay competitive subscription fees for services that are, above all, user-friendly. Two years after its arrival, Netflix currently has over 1 million subscribers, representing a penetration of close to 10 per cent in Spanish households with Internet access engaging VOD services. To this should be added the platform's alliances with the main telecommunications operators in Spain, including Movistar, Vodafone and Orange, thanks to which they have included it in their range of services.

As to other aspects, Netflix has promoted several relevant lines of action, although Spain does not figure among the countries where it offers the largest content catalogue. On the one hand, there are its original productions, starting with the film *7 años* (Roger Gual, 2016) and the series *Las chicas del cable* (*Cable Girls*, 2017-), Netflix España's first and largest production to date, bearing the aesthetic and narrative hallmark of the Spanish production company Bambú, which is known for offering by offering romantic TV productions targeted to female audiences.

It has also opted for coproduction, such as the third season of the TV series *El ministerio del tiempo* (*The Ministry of Time*, 2015-), which has also been globally distributed with success. In addition, Netflix España has focused its efforts on the international distribution of Spanish productions previously broadcast on linear television, which it has included in the catalogues of other countries in which it operates. This is the case of *La casa de papel* (*Money Heist*, 2018-), which has been its greatest success to date. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this project was preceded by the good results obtained by other Spanish series like *Velvet* (2014-2016) and *Gran Hotel* (*Grand Hotel*, 2011-2013), available in Netflix's Latin America catalogue since 2014.

In view of the foregoing, this chapter addresses the dual nature of the relationship between Netflix and Spain, with a comprehensive and updated analysis. It offers an interesting vision of the penetration and influence of one of the major VOD service providers in the Spanish audio-visual market, as well as being essential for gaining a deeper understanding not only of the Spanish but also European audio-visual content industries.

BACKGROUND

As Izquierdo-Castillo notes, "traditionally, international markets have been an important niche for the American audio-visual industry" (2015, p. 824). As American company, "Netflix functions under a commercial mandate, meaning that the company's strategic decisions both in general and as a content producer are based on profitability" (Stiegler, 2016, p. 236), aspect that has driven it to its current position. Netflix pioneered the online distribution of audio-visual content and currently has the greatest reach: in April 2019, it already had a presence in over 190 countries and 150 million subscribers, representing a year-on-year increase of 25 per cent, according to its website. A US company founded by Reed Hastings and Marc R. Randolph in 1997, Netflix has imposed a global audio-visual model (Jenner, 2018) at

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an accelerated pace. Despite the fact that it started with a traditional business model, as a DVD rental company, it has moved on since launching

its streaming service on 16 January 2007. It has been a strategic decision for the company and a historical one for the online entertainment industry. This new service makes it possible to watch films and TV series on any personal computer (PC) via online streaming. [...] It formed part of a strategic plan whose aim was to consolidate the company's position as the leader in the film rental business, in both the traditional field and the innovative online rental business. (Carrillo, 2018, p. 36)

Thus, Netflix has consolidated its global position in a relatively short time since initiating its expansion in Canada in 2010, the year in which its streaming service had a greater weight than physical media on the company's balance sheets (Carrillo, 2018). The following year, the company started to operate in Latin America and the Caribbean, initiating its entry into the Brazilian market. Similarly, its expansion into Europe was achieved in several stages:

This started in January 2010 with its entry into the United Kingdom and Ireland, followed by the Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark) in October of the same year. In September 2013, its services were also available in Holland. In the fourth stage, in September 2014 it announced its arrival in France, Germany and four neighbouring countries: Austria, Luxemburg, Belgium and Switzerland. (Carrillo, 2018, p. 135)

This last stage of its global expansion, Netflix's most ambitious to date, was followed by the incorporation of Spain, Portugal and Italy in October 2015.

The new conception of audio-visual distribution that it has pioneered signifies a change of course that underscores "the growing need for companies to be increasing larger, to scale their global business in order to compete on equal terms" (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 92). It is a relentless phenomenon given that new players, like Apple and Disney, have also entered the OTT business. However, Netflix has not only changed the distribution, but also the production, model. In this connection, it has started to include its own productions in its catalogues, some of which are exceptional and have picked up important TV awards, as well being acclaimed by the critics and public—e. g., *House of Cards* (2013-2018) or *Orange is the New Black* (2013-)—, alike, thus transforming the business model that it has been implementing since 2011.

In recent years, much has been written about Netflix as regards both its business model (Izquierdo-Castillo, 2015; Carrillo, 2018) and the new global television model that it has pioneered (Jenner, 2018; McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). This should come as no surprise insofar as it embodies the major changes that have occurred, and are still occurring, in TV and film distribution and consumption, in addition to representing a global online TV paradigm shift. Many of these transformations have their roots precisely in the policies and decisions adopted by Netflix, based on the successful business model that it introduced and which has been copied by other VOD services.

It has been at the fore in implementing an algorithmic recommendation system (Herrero, Medina & Urgellés, 2018), which guides users through its extensive catalogue and, subsequently, allows them to create different versions of Netflix through managing big data based on their decisions, habits and tastes, thus personalising their entertainment experience. Moreover, the big data leveraged by Netflix enables it not only to decide on what to produce as part of its business model aimed at demand (Izquierdo-Castillo,

2015), but also on the way of promoting it in order to achieve the desired effect on different target audiences, with differentiated strategies for each one of them and for each series (Carrillo, 2018).¹

Nevertheless, the changes that Netflix has brought about in television go beyond algorithms: they have led to transformations in cultural consumption habits. This is the so-called “Netflix effect”, which is not only limited to the field of television and cinema:

This “all the TV you can watch” flat fee model of media consumption can be compared to the “all you can listen to” streaming music service on Spotify, the “all you can play” monthly gaming subscription model on GamePop, the “all you can read” e-book membership plan on Scribd, and the “all you can flip through” magazine app NextIssue. This “Netflixification” of media forms encourages consumers to binge watch (or listen, game, or read), to discover and explore new digital cultural productions, and to share the experience online with all their iFriends. At the same time, young consumers’ preferences and media practices influence television program design and distribution greatly, as well as video-on-demand platforms, production, and promotions. (Matrix, 2014, p. 133-134)

As a whole, the major international OTT players “have made the industry much more dynamic and sensitive to change and new business opportunities. The competition between them has favoured the development of the market” (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 27).

Netflix was the first platform to release its own original productions directly. Since the premiering of its first Netflix Original, *Lilyhammer* (2012-2014), all the episodes of each season of its series have been made available to subscribers as soon as they have been released. This programme strategy, known as the binge model (Jenner, 2018), is possible in part thanks to a new form of production: the straight-to-series model, i.e., the commissioning of a complete series, without a pilot episode, which cuts project development costs. For Jenner (2018), the release of *Lilyhammer* on Netflix at the end of 2012 highlighted a structural change in the audio-visual industry: the media industries, what we define as television, has changed with the increased possibilities of online streaming”, that not only points to Netflix, but also “Youtube, the BBC, Hulu, iTunes, as well as others, played a part, but none of them is more “responsible’ for shifts in our understanding of television than the others” (p. 2). To this she adds that the release of Netflix’s and Amazon Prime’s first original productions was a challenge to the major media corporations that also hoped to be able to modify their business models in order to cash in on the phenomenon, what position the company from Reed Hastings as “a powerful player in the reorganisation of what television is” (Jenner, 2018, p. 3).

Netflix now releases its original productions simultaneously in several of the countries in which it operates, thus converting them into a global phenomenon. This has now become a key strategic element in the new global market for audio-visual content distributed over the Internet, involving the adaptation of content to many different languages. Nor has the new global dimension of the audio-visual market come out unscathed by the recent cultural changes and the influence of social media, on which TV series are commented on the world over, including spoilers (Jenner, 2018). In turn, this has favoured the spread of binge-watching, the practice of viewing several episodes of a series in a single sitting, as it were a marathon. Although the term has rather imprecise nuances, as the fact that “the number of episodes needed to constitute a binge is subjective and heavily depend on individual circumstances” (Jenner, 2018, p. 111), it has become a popular form of consumption. It is a model that “is very popular among the creators of audio-visual content because their work does not depend on a weekly audience” (Rufete, 2016, p. 7). At the same time, it converts users into programmers: they choose what they want

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to watch and when and how they want to, thus undermining the traditional television model. As a result, the empowerment of viewers has become the hallmark of the new television era.

Binge-watching is a term that has largely been associated with Netflix, albeit not exclusively so. It has become a structural element of the platform, to the point that it is now one of the factors employed by its recommendation algorithm and which is reinforced by the fact that, when watching the episodes of a series, viewers are advised to skip the intro (Jenner, 2018). However, the consolidation of binge-watching is not the only factor affecting the decisions adopted by Netflix:

The need to create one's own content so as not to depend on those produced by TV channels, to link audiences to the series format by using multiple plots and through the creation of characters that replicate the structures of the great novels and to "hook" them were the reasons why Netflix decided to produce its own "binge-watching" formats. (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 54)

Netflix uses its original production "as a factor to market itself. [...] The extension of its in-house productions led to a redefinition of its brand from delivering 'quality' television for the purpose of binge-watching to emphasising diversity" (Jenner, 2018, p. 171). Netflix Originals are a wake-up call for television production and consumption. The platform has sought the quality characterising cable productions, but in the field of online television, for which reason "it replicates the role that networks have played during the past few years, as the main drivers behind the creation of audio-visual content" (Izquierdo-Castillo, 2015, p. 822). And all this with the novelty of not including advertising either between content or during its consumption, which offers "viewers a more sustained and immersive viewing experience" (Cornejo, 2016, p. 273). Compared to traditional television networks, Netflix positioning as "online television means that it has to integrate itself not merely as new channel, but distinct media form, within most markets" (Jenner, 2018, p. 187).

There are several reasons why Netflix has become involved in the creation of original productions, which can be summarised in the following five proposed by Carrillo (2018):

- To retain subscribers and to attract new ones.
- To reduce its dependence on the audio-visual content providers supplying its catalogue.
- To increase revenues by selling its most successful productions to other providers.
- To retain complete control over the exploitation of its original productions.
- To contribute to the prestige of the Netflix brand.

In light of this, it can be seen how the picture in the audio-visual industry has changed, thanks to the endeavours of players like Netflix that "have known how to adapt and to gain the advantage in the convergent model" (Heredia, 2017, p. 283).

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Even though it was founded in the United States, Netflix has positioned itself both globally and locally, controlling all actions relating to the production and promotion of its content and entering national media markets. As it is stated by Marieke Jenner:

We cannot assume the United States as a 'centre' for Netflix as cultural object. One of Netflix's central markets is that it is descentred, that it takes television away from its national context, appealing to global audiences rather than national ones. Yet, at the same time it also attempts to integrate itself into national television landscapes, offering indigenous content and producing Spanish, Japanese, or French in-house content. Thus, Netflix integrates into national media practices while also acting as (American) global actor. This tension is inherent in the way Netflix can be conceptualized as global actor (2018, p. 187).

From this perspective, i.e. its national and transnational character, Netflix's current relationship with Spain will now be analysed below.

Netflix in Spain

The Spanish Audiovisual Market and the Position of Netflix

As in the majority of European countries, the Spanish television industry has followed a mixed model since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, with public channels and an increasingly more relevant group of private media outlets, plus a number of OTT platforms that appeared on the scene some years ago. Four hundred VOD platforms and services of all types are currently operating in Spain, with a global offering of over 90,000 unique films and 8,000 series (Neira, 2019).

The arrival of Netflix in Spain in 2015 was followed by that of other major VOD players, including HBO and Amazon Prime in 2016, thus triggering the country's particular VOD boom. To all these platforms should be added others that were already operating in Spain beforehand, like Filmin and Rakuten TV (Wuaki TV), plus those linked to TV channels, which offer viewers the opportunity to watch content already broadcast on the first screen (Atresmedia's Atresplayer, Mediaset's Mitele, RTVE's A la carta), and even other specific ones with content produced for its direct consumption on the Internet (RTVE's Playz, Atresmedia's Flooxer and Mediaset's Mtmad). Furthermore, there are the online portals of the main telecommunications operators in Spain, namely, Movistar+, Vodafone and Orange, which were joined by other VOD service providers like Sky in 2017, Flixolé in 2018 and Acorn TV and Lite in 2019. Lite is Movistar+'s OTT service that offers non-customers of the operator its catalogue of original series, programmes and channels, together with a selection of content produced externally. Thus, the current situation tends to be one of saturation, despite the fact that Spain is one of the most interesting markets with the greatest growth potential at an international and European level, as evidenced by "the proliferation of optical fibre and the fact that there is still plenty of room in the pay and subscription television market" (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 70). Taking the study performed by Liberal-Ormaechea and Cabezero-Lorenzo (2018, p. 165) as a departure point, the differences between the main platforms operating in Spain will now be examined in further detail.

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Table 1. Comparison between platforms

Platform	Subscription	Quality	Offline mode in mobile devices	Catalogue	Original productions
Acorn TV	4,99 €/month 49,99 €/year	HD	No	No information	No
Amazon Prime Video	36 €/year	HD	Yes	More than 700	Yes
Filmin	7,99 €/month 14,99 €/month	HD	Yes	More than 10.000	No
Flixolé	2,99 €/month	SD	Yes	More than 7000	No
HBO	8,99 €/month	Full HD	No	More than 500	Yes
Lite	8 €/month	HD	Yes	More than 1000	Yes
Movistar+	From 65 €/month	HD UHD	Yes	More than 6000	Yes
Netflix	7,99 €/month 11,99 €/month 15,99€/month	SD HD UHD	Yes	More than 2000	Yes
Orange	From 9,95 €/month	HD UHD	Yes	More than 10.000	No
Rakuten TV	5,99 €/month Payment for vision	HD UHD	Yes	No information	No
Sky	6,99 €/month	SD HD	No	No information	Yes
Vodafone	TV packs from 5 €/month	HD UHD	Yes	No information	No

At a global level, more than 60 per cent of adults are connected to VOD platforms (Blackburn, Eisenach & Soria, 2019). As to the specific case of Spain, the country occupies second place in the international ranking, after China (a country that Netflix has yet to penetrate), where 66 per cent of the adult population avail themselves of VOD services. One of every four Spanish households (specifically 26 per cent) are connected to VOD platforms, totalling 4.8 million (Barlovento Comunicación, 2019), an aspect unequivocally linked to the wide availability of broadband access. This does not directly account for the number of users, insofar as these services are usually provided simultaneously on multiple screens, which allows several people living in the same household to use them. On the other hand, the usual practice of sharing the password among several people who all contribute to pay the monthly subscription fees should also be taken account. VOD is most popular with the young (between 16 and 24 years old), accounting for 83 per cent of the subscribers to these platforms and representing 37 per cent more than the average number of adults using these services. The two most popular online VOD platforms are Netflix (54 per cent) and Amazon Prime (25 per cent) according to Kantar Media (2019), which means that the former is the VOD with the largest share of the Spanish market.

In Spain, Netflix's impact should not only be measured by its current market share, for it has also changed the traditional way of watching television. It has been demonstrated that viewers subscribed to some or other streaming VOD platform dedicate 80 minutes less to TV channel broadcasts on a daily basis. The average Spaniard spends 4 hours and 18 minutes watching television every day and those subscribed to Netflix and/or HBO dedicate this time preferentially to viewing pay TV, versus viewers

without subscriptions who, by and large, opt for the general free-to-air channels (Barlovento Comunicación, 2019).

The subscriber data provided by the Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores (CNMV) for May 2018 reveal that the platform with more subscribers among households with Internet access is that of the telecommunications operator Movistar+, with a presence in over 2.16 million (a penetration of 13.5 per cent, practically doubling the figures for the year before). Movistar+ is followed by Netflix, which, with nearly 1.5 million (9.1 per cent), has tripled its number of subscribers in one year, Vodafone’s online service (5.9 per cent) and Amazon Prime Video (3.5 per cent).

Netflix and its Subscribers

Netflix implements the subscription business model that, albeit its main source of revenue, is not the only one. The platform’s Spanish catalogue is not its most extensive, not even when compared with those of the rest of the OTT platforms and players operating in the country. Nonetheless, this has not prevented it from covering all the genres offered by others: feature films, series and documentaries, in addition to shorts, which provide hours of entertainment. Clients have unlimited access to the full catalogue with all of its subscription plans, can cancel their subscription whenever they like and new subscribers are given a free month-long trial period, with no strings attached. At present, Netflix offers three subscription plans with flat rates, which differ in the number of concurrent streams and image and sound quality. These three plans are summarised in the following table:²

Table 2. Subscription plans

Subscription mode	Simultaneous Screens	Picture and sound quality	Mobile devices for downloads	Monthly subscription
Basic	One	Standard	One	7,99 €
Standard	Two	High Definition	Two	11,99 €
Premium	Four	High Definition and Ultra High Definition	Four	15,99€

Source: (Netflix Spain webpage, 2019)

Netflix has agreements in place to include its content in the packages of the main pay TV services in Spain: the telecommunications operators Vodafone, Movistar+ and Orange currently offer their clients access to Netflix, along with other OTT services such as HBO and Amazon Prime. This strategy has allied Hastings’ company with the major pay TV operators, “which have stopped competing and have become partners to offer their clients all the available services on the same platform and on one bill” (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 79). It has thus enhanced its presence and reach in the national market, while also being used by these operators as a key strategy for attracting new subscribers. Netflix implements its business model in Spain, the same that it employs in other countries, “through global distribution agreements with approximately 50 telecommunications operators” (Carrillo, 2018, p. 83).

The First Production Centre Settled in Europe

While Netflix's headquarters serving Europe, Africa and the Middle East are located in Amsterdam, the company chose to set up its first European production centre in Spain, i.e. the Ciudad de la Tele (Tres Cantos, Madrid), which opened in April 2019. This specialised TV production centre is a project promoted by the Spanish group Secuoya, which has arrived at an agreement with Netflix to participate in the production services of the projects developed there. It is significant insofar as it serves as a springboard for Netflix's expansion in both the Latin American and European markets. This will doubtless go a long way to helping the company to comply with the European Union law stipulating that there must be a 30 per cent minimum of European content in its catalogue. To that end, Netflix has plans to enlarge its Madrid production centre, which currently has a surface area of 22,000 m² and five sets, plus 13,000 employees, in a few months' time. Another decisive factor is that Netflix has leveraged the experience, growth and creativity of the Spanish audio-visual industry, especially those production companies specialising in series, some of whose productions have become authentic global phenomena thanks to the visibility that the platform has given them, as is the case with *La casa de papel* and *El ministerio del tiempo*.

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Before disembarking in Spain, Netflix had already produced original series in Spanish: the Mexican *Club de cuervos* (2015), the first, was followed by others in English and Spanish like *Narcos* (2015-2017). In parallel, some of the productions of the Spanish media group Atresmedia were already being distributed internationally, for which reason Spanish (in audio and subtitles) was one of the languages that Netflix had already worked with before entering the Spanish market, as a result of its international expansion that "led to a large number of non-English language texts to widen its transnational appeal" (Jenner, 2018, p. 171). Spanish speakers comprise its largest non-English speaking audience, as Netflix acknowledged to its shareholders in 2017 (Carrillo, 2018). Its catalogue also has a specific category for Spanish films and series, which allows users to have easy access to them. Netflix employs a hybrid model for creating its catalogue, which hinges on its own local production, with the aim of attracting subscribers, and on the acquisition of the international distribution rights of different Spanish productions that have already been broadcast on TV channels. Netflix's presence in Spain encompasses these two aspects, thus conforming the so-called "golden age of content" (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019, p. 71).

Netflix Originals Made in Spain

In 2018, Netflix invested €10,300 million in original productions, five times more than HBO, resulting in 700 new catalogue entries (Doncel, 2018). According to the information available on the company's website, this budget item had been gradually increased since 2016. Netflix's production efforts 'are aimed at growing in terms of hours of viewing, which is key to attracting new subscribers. The "polar star" is not the financial plan but customer satisfaction' (Carrillo, 2018, p. 70).

The main objective of this investment in Netflix Originals is to achieve a global production based on the local production of each country. This commitment to local content not only leverages local talent but also serves to position Netflix in the global market. At the same time, the company's advertising campaigns, some of which have been controversial (like the *Narcos* campaign featuring a large billboard

in Madrid's Puerta del Sol which read, "O, white Christmas!")³ are adapted to each country and designed to have an impact on social media.

The online services operating in Spain have expanded their presence through their own productions or those coproduced with free-to-air operators as a way of building brand value on the basis of the concept of quality. It is a strategy that leads to greater customer satisfaction, in addition to offering a way to retain subscribers hooked on these productions for which the platform has exclusive distribution rights. In the case of Netflix, moreover, it is possible to observe how its algorithm tends increasingly more to recommend its own content at the expense of that produced by others.

In Spain, Amazon has produced the comedy series *Pequeñas coincidencias* (2018-), while HBO is currently working on the series *Patria*. In the case of Netflix Originals, the company has been successful thanks to the gradual implementation of a strategy for creating its own content: "It started to explore the possibility of producing original series, both on its own and employing coproduction formulas" (Cascajosa, 2019, p. 183).

Las chicas del cable, Netflix's first Spanish series, was released on 28 April 2017 and, since then, has run for four seasons. The platform entrusted the production company Bambú with the task of repeating the winning formula with *Velvet* (Antena 3, 2014-2016), another of its original productions and very popular on Netflix Latinoamérica. In *Las chicas del cable*, a period drama set in the 1920s, the youthful main characters start to work at a telephone company in Madrid, where they become friends and, at the same time, experience the heartaches caused by their love affairs. This series exemplifies the concept of "transnational appeal" that Netflix applies to its original productions, which is constructed from resources such as "genre, a version of history that relieves heavily on postmodernism, aesthetics, a commitment to liberal humanism or a negotiation of translations languages that takes diversity in skills levels and cultural preferences into account" (Jenner, 2018, p. 231).

Moving on, *Élite* (*Elite*) is a teen mystery series created by Carlos Montero and Darío Madrona, who have also been behind other popular teen fiction series in Spain, including *Física o Química* (*Physical or Chemical*, Antena 3, 2008-2011) and *Los Protegidos* (*The Protected*, Antena 3, 2010-2012). Specifically, it is a "teen thriller, like other series produced by the company in Europe, including *The End of the F***ing World* in the United Kingdom, *The Rain* in Denmark and *Baby* in Italy" (Cascajosa, 2019, p. 206). It is common knowledge that Netflix does not offer audience figures. However, as Clares-Gavilán, Merino and Neira observe, in the letter that it sent to its shareholders with the results for the last quarter of 2018, it informed them that *Élite* had been viewed 20 million times (2019, p. 122). To these Netflix Originals should be added *Alta mar* (*High Seas*), released on the platform on 24 May 2018, which replicates some of the key aspects of the series *Gran Hotel* (Antena 3, 2011-2013), distributed globally by Netflix and highly acclaimed in Latin America.

As to feature films, Netflix's first original production in Spain was *7 años* (Roger Gual, 2016), which was globally released on the platform on 26 October 2016 and whose impact has led to the acquisition of the rights to make it into a play in several countries (Carrillo, 2018). This was followed by *Fe de etarras* (*Bomb Scared*) (Borja Cobeaga, 2017), also released globally after being premiered at the San Sebastian Film Festival and a few cinema screenings. As with other original films produced by Netflix, like *Roma* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2018), *Elisa y Marcela* (*Elisa & Marcela*) (Isabel Coixet, 2019) was first premiered in commercial cinemas. And all backed by the reaction of the audience:

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The growing popularity of Spanish content, particularly among the younger audiences, is at its highest ever. [...] The small digital screen is contributing to popularise a new generation of actors and directors who have proven to have a lot of power to convene the public. [...] Whereby the commitment to content designed to be consumed in different countries and by audiences with different cultural traditions. (Neira, 2019, p. 329)

Netflix's original film production in Spain, which brings together the VOD platform and Spanish cinema, is completed so far with the generational portrait *¿A quién te llevarías a una isla desierta?* (*Who would you take to a desert island?*) (Jota Linares, 2019) and Bambú's production *A pesar de todo* (Gabriela Tagliavini, 2019), which shares common aspects with the first collaboration between the Spanish production company and Netflix: the already mentioned series *Las chicas del cable*.

The platform's other original productions in Spanish include the docuseries on one of the country's highest-profile crime cases, namely, the disappearance and murder of three teenage girls from Alcàsser (Valencia) (*El caso Alcàsser (The Alcasser Murders*, by Bambú Producciones), the TV series *Hache* (Weekend Studio), *White Lines* (Vancouver Media in coproduction with the English company Left Bank Pictures), and the supernatural teen drama *Alma*, together with the feature film *Diecisiete*, directed by Daniel Sánchez Arévalo.

Co-Financed Productions and International Distribution

Netflix's entry into the Spanish audio-visual market has also led to its participation in the production of several series, some with a certain tradition on free-to-air television, thus promoting new seasons, in addition to co-financing others, in all cases negotiating their global distribution. The continuity of *El ministerio del tiempo*, one such series, was uncertain after its second season. But the series' impact on social media, its proactive fandom (the most important of all Spanish series), the drop in the average age of the viewers of the channel on which it was broadcast (TVE1, belonging to the country's public broadcasting corporation) and its popularity with the public—both linear and deferred TV audiences—were all factors that encouraged the making of a third season. Be that as it may, it would require a larger budget in order to be able to include more ambitious plots. After months of uncertainty, Netflix decided to participate in the series' production, while also acquiring the international distribution rights for all of its seasons.

A different case is *La catedral del mar (Cathedral of the Sea*, 2018), coproduced by Diagonal TV, Atresmedia and Netflix, since the platform acquired the international distribution rights a month before the filming of the series began, in addition to financing 20 per cent of its budget. The series was ultimately released on the platform after having been broadcast on Antena 3. Netflix has also partnered with the media group Mediaset to coproduce *Brigada Costa del Sol (Costa del Sol Squad*, 2019) and the second season of *Vivir sin permiso (Unauthorized Living*, 2018-). Thanks to Netflix's international distribution channels, *La casa de papel*, which was first broadcast on Antena 3, has become a global phenomenon since being released on 25 December 2017. "According to the TV Time app, it became the most binge-watched series in under a few weeks" (Neira, 2019, p. 379), while also achieving a high impact on social media. The series revolves around the robbery of the National Mint, following a plan that has been painstakingly devised by "The Professor", who, nonetheless, has failed to take into account a number of factors. It is currently the most viewed non-English series in the platform's history (Clares-Gavilán, Merino & Neira, 2019), for which reason Netflix has been quick to produce a third season. Its

unexpected success has lent wings to Netflix's Spanish productions, which is evidenced by the fact that Álex Pina, its creator, has signed a contract with the platform to develop content, including the drama *Sky Rojo*, a project about which there has been little information to date. For its part, *Paquita Salas* is further proof of the confidence that Netflix has in Spanish creators who have introduced original themes and new approaches, in this case Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi, known as "Los Javis". The success of the first season, released by the platform Flooxer, on social networks prompted Netflix not only to acquire the international distribution rights, but also to produce the three subsequent seasons to date.

Likewise, Netflix has given other series, which were discontinued some time ago, after being broadcast on television, a new lease of life in other markets. This is the case of *Velvet* and *Gran Hotel*, whose success in Netflix's Latin American catalogue since the beginning of 2014 has led to original productions inspired by them, as already noted, following a pattern that caters to the tastes of viewers on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the same vein, there are other more recent series that Netflix has included among its international offerings, after having first been broadcast on several Spanish TV channels, including, among others, *Tiempos de guerra (Morocco: Love in Times of War)*, Antena 3, 2017), *Fugitiva* (La 1, 2018), *Vivir sin permiso* (Telecinco, 2018-), *Mar de plástico* (Antena 3, 2015-2016), *Fariña (Cocaine Coast)*, Antena 3, 2018), *Apaches* (Antena 3, 2018), *El sabor de las margaritas (Bitter Daisies)*, TVG, 2018), *Merlí* (TV3, 2015-2018) and *Bienvenidos a la familia (Welcome to the Family)*, TV3, 2018-), and *Vis a vis (Locked Up)*, Antena 3, 2015-2016). As to this last series, Netflix only distributes the first two seasons, previously broadcast on Antena 3, since the third season was produced by the channel Fox España.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to promoting Spanish audio-visual productions and their creators on the international stage, Netflix has also given the industry an important boost. La Ciudad de la Tele, its production centre for Europe and Latin America, should be closely monitored because it will determine Netflix's future expansion into several national and continental markets. At the same time, it will also be interesting to keep tabs on its positioning in the Spanish VOD platform market, in light of the fact that it is uncertain whether or not it will continue to maintain its status as industry leader given the impetus of other international giants operating in Spain, like HBO and Amazon Prime. Both have duly noted the lessons learnt by Netflix and, among other strategies, are now producing their own series in Spain.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Netflix is signing agreements with production companies and TV channels to increase its production capacity in Spain. These include Bambú Producciones, responsible for producing *Las chicas del cable*, Netflix's first original production in Spain, another series *Alta mar*, the film *A pesar de todo* and the docuseries *El crimen de Alcàsser*; Zeta Audiovisual, responsible for *Élite*; Vancouver Media, which is behind *La casa de papel*; Apache Films with *Paquita Salas*; Onza Entertainment and Cliffhanger, the producers of *El ministerio del tiempo*; and Diagonal TV with *La catedral del mar*.

In the coming years, another area for research is to deepen the consumption profile of Netflix in Spain (age, gender, purchasing power, cultural consumption habits and viewing time per day, among

Netflix in Spain, Spain in Netflix

other aspects), in order to gain a deeper understanding of Netflix's presence in Spain in aspects related to its audiences.

This state of affairs will doubtless open up a new line of research on the relationship between Spain and Netflix in the context of the country's audio-visual industry. To this should be added the monitoring of Netflix's growth in Spain as regards subscriber numbers and market share, as well as its impact on the country's audio-visual content industry in general.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has offered an updated overview of Netflix's relationship with Spain regarding two aspects: as an international player involved in the production and coproduction of original content and in the international distribution of feature films, series, documentaries and shorts that, in many cases, have had a huge impact on audiences and social media. This facet of Netflix's presence in Spain has been supplemented by its penetration and presence in the Spanish OTT video market, in which it now occupies a leading position. It has been suggested here that its arrival in Spain, followed by that of other major international content distribution platforms, has coincided with a drop in piracy, which opens the door to the possibility that this may have marked a change in trend in cultural consumption in general. At any rate, Netflix has introduced a singular culture of consumption of online audio-visual content that has certainly taken on, as borne out by the official subscriber figures presented in this analysis of the current state of the question. As already noted, both dimensions of this topic are open to constant revision and updating.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- Big Data:** Massive data whose process complexity requires computer systems.
- Binge-watching:** Action to watch several episodes of a series in a row, in a marathon mode.
- Ciudad de la Tele:** Specialized television production complex located in the city of Tres Cantos (Madrid, Spain).
- Straight-to-series:** Commissioned for the production of the season of a complete series, without a pilot test chapter.
- Video on Demand:** Video distribution system based on the request of each content by the client.
- Video Over the Top:** Internet video service on which no specific management of the telecommunications operator operates.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For further information on Netflix's recommendation system and its use of big data, see Antonio Gómez-Aguilar's chapter entitled, "Content bubbles: How platforms filter what we see."
- ² The current rates were introduced in June 2019.
- ³ For a more detailed discussion on Netflix's advertising campaigns in Spain, see Irene Raya and Mar del Mar Rubio-Hernández's chapter entitled, "Online engagement as a publicity strategy: Netflix advertising campaigns in Spain."

Chapter 24


An Analysis of Netflix España Campaigns: *Paquita Salas* Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Since entering the Spanish market in October 2015, Netflix has engaged in several advertising campaigns, deployed online, which are designed to appeal to some aspects of Spanish culture. The obvious aim has been to promote Netflix programming and to establish a connection to the Spanish audience. The strategy, which alludes to recognisable elements from the culture of the target audience, has been developed to promote both international productions as well as national ones, in which cultural references are reflected in the context in which they emerge. This chapter analyses the trajectory of Netflix Spain's marketing campaigns over the last three years, focusing on Paquita Salas as a case study, and determining to what extent the advertising exploits current local social and cultural situations in order to gain more engagement on the part of the spectator.

INTRODUCTION

The Video OnDemand (VOD) media giant Netflix has bet on the creation of original, even controversial, advertising strategies, as well as on the experimentation with new formats (e.g. the use of GIFs or Face Swap in its campaigns) during the last years. They have tried to continue this tactic in every country (by adapting to their idiosyncrasy) as part of their gradual and titanic internationalization process.

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Since its introduction in the Spanish market in October 2015, the entertainment company has developed several online advertising campaigns, which take advantage of diverse aspects of the national culture to promote its products with the goal of establishing a link with the Spanish audience. Said strategy, based on references to cultural elements recognizable by the target, has been used for the promotion of both national and international productions. Concerning its international products, TV shows such as *Glow* (2017-) or *Stranger Things* (2016-) are reviewed with the aim of understanding which Spanish cultural elements have been used to advertise Anglo-Saxon products in the local market. On the other hand, the promotion of Spanish products such as *Cable Girls* (Las chicas del cable, 2017-) or *Bomb Scared* (Fe de etarras, Borja Cobeaga, 2017) are analysed due to their cultural allusions that reflect the context in which they are born.

Not only the content is analysed, but also the techniques, since in opposition to other traditional media, Netflix campaigns are fundamentally issued through social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, building a closer relationship with users and taking advantage of public interest news to interact with them. In the same way, several street marketing campaigns have taken place, especially in Madrid, by placing stage props in the streets or displaying big billboards in the center of the capital with controversial subtexts.

This chapter is specifically focused on the TV series *Paquita Salas* as a case study, since its promotion not only takes advantage of a strategic use of social media, but it also employs storytelling techniques from the audiovisual context. Therefore, our main goal is to analyse the marketing and advertising campaigns launched by Netflix España in the last years, especially on the online context. Our objective is to study the extent to which the company takes advantage of the social and cultural situation of the country in order to engage Spanish spectators.

NETFLIX AS A GLOBAL BRAND

Netflix started its internationalization process back in 2010 with its arrival to Canada, despite the slow domestic growth in the United States competitive market. Its global expansion would go from Latin America first to Europe in 2012, to finally arrive to Asia in 2015. Nowadays, as the result of an ambitious and solid project, the company is available almost worldwide, except for several countries that had been sanctioned by the U.S. government, like China. As a result of facing new challenges in a growing international market, the company went through a global rebranding in 2014, by which they acquired the new logo with a minimalistic design, in order to adapt to every format and device and to create a clear, consistent, recognisable image. During this process, Netflix consolidated its personality based on innovation, creativity and focus on the consumer's enjoyment. Actually, the key in its positioning relays in personalization; a great effort is invested in order to fully know their subscribers' preferences and motivations so they can customize their content offer.

When it comes to international commercialization, companies deal with a crucial decision: whether to follow a uniform strategy globally (standardization) or design an adapted strategy to each local market (García, 2002, p. 97). Despite the fact that each strategy has advantages and disadvantages, García points out that the acknowledgement of cultural diversity is essential in a global endeavor; the symbolism associated with cultural features is especially meaningful, and that is why counting on local experts turns out fundamental (García, 2002, p. 299). This decision also concerns the communication and advertising strategy. In transnational advertising, standardization shows several benefits (like creating a consistent

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brand image), but it does not take into account local cultural sensibilities. On the other hand, localization implies that advertisers “change the models, background, language, and appeal to take into consideration local cultural sensitivities and tastes” (Viswanath & Zeng, 2003, p. 77). In this sense, culture seems to be a meaningful factor; thus “whatever commonalities might exist are overshadowed by variations in local market and cultural conditions” (Viswanath & Zeng, 2003, p. 79). García also agrees with this stating that each country has its own idiosyncrasies, and advertising is different based on this (2002, p. 304). Culture is conceived as a key element in the codification and interpretation of advertising messages which affects the level of understanding and, hence, its efficiency.

Like other global brands, Netflix opted for a localization strategy but not without some struggle first. Lobato compares the company’s evolution with MTV strategy in terms of internationalization. Back in the 90’s, MTV executives plan was to launch a “one-channel-for-all” (2019, p. 108), but they soon learned that interests were different outside the United States and they consequently changed the orientation by including local programs, which suited the preferences of each country. Thus, two important conclusions rose by this experience: “localization matters in television markets, and the global will not simply displace the local” (Lobato, 2019, p. 109).

According to some researchers (Chalaby, 2003, 2005; Moran, 2009), localization is the key in transnational television industries. Therefore, “serious broadcasters understand that global audiences have distinctive tastes, preferences, and expectations. Local expertise—including staff with a deep understanding of a country’s media landscape—is necessary for success. Tailored strategies and programming are needed for each market” (Lobato, 2019, p. 111). Even though Netflix had to modify its initial internationalization strategy, they have assimilated the need to acknowledge and understand cultural differences and adapt their contents and communication strategy to each country particularities, creating a successful model. That is the reason why they count on native teams that know the preferences and appeals of the population, not only when designing the programming, but when looking for themes and insights to create effective and suggestive advertising campaigns.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF NETFLIX ESPAÑA

The arrival of Netflix to Spain in 2015 can be understood as the result of structural, technical and legal changes that meant fundamental transformations in the Spaniard’s consumption patterns. The approval of laws such as the Law 10/2005, June the 14th, of Urgent Actions to Launch Digital Terrestrial Television, Liberalise Cable Television and Promote Pluralism implied the effective liberalization of the service, while the following General Law on Audiovisual Communication in 2010 results “a generic framework to embrace the reformed Spanish Audiovisual field, meant to construct a powerful public broadcasting service and a reliable free-view digital television” (Peña, 2016, p. 9). Ultimately, its implantation entailed an important diversification of the channels available for the audience as long as its correspondent segmentation in niches. This process of decentralization of the broadcasting of TV contents in Spain reached its climax with the arrival of this company, which offers the possibility of instant access to a vast number of works from a wide variety of countries, allowing films and TV shows proceeding from territories traditionally excluded from the global networks of content distribution to be watched all over the world (Aguar and Waldfogel, 2017).

With its entrance in the national context, Netflix revolutionized the traditional way of consuming audiovisual products, and also innovated with advertising strategies to promote series and films. Netflix

partners with several advertising agencies to develop its communication strategy in Spain. Pixel and Pixel has worked for the company since 2016 and it is known for creating some of the most controversial campaigns that have generated controversy (e.g. *Narcos*, 2015-2017). The agency, specialized in digital communication, has received several awards in recognition of its innovative campaigns for global and national brands. Netflix also works with the agency Bungalow25, which is responsible for the promotion of *Cable Girls* or *Glow* and has also been recognized with several prizes in different festivals for its creative work in social media and branded content. Besides, the company has collaborated with MEC, a planning agency that obtained an award for its campaign to promote *Orange is the New Black* (2013-2019).

What they all have in common is their creative, innovative and provocative character, that is reflected in their campaigns, in line with Netflix's personality and positioning. One of the defining features of the company's business model is the optimization of the user experience and the personalization approach, something that is also transferred to their communication strategy. Thus, they address an active consumer who also participates in the communication process through different means. The so-called prosumer shares promotional videos, responds to their posts on social media and makes their campaigns go viral.

They combine some traditional media, like the placement of big format billboards in crowded spots of big cities, with non-conventional media, like street marketing actions and digital campaigns. Moreover, they create engaging stories by applying the storytelling technique and expanding the narrative through several advertising channels. Furthermore, in their attempt to generate engagement, they turn to several techniques that make their communication unique and personalized to the Spanish context. One of their characteristics is their ability to make reference to relevant topics and profit from them in order to stand out in the challenging and competitive media scene. Thus, some of the actions carried on by Netflix can be considered as examples of "real-time marketing", which is defined as "the practice of creating content inspired by a current topic, trend or event" (Kerns, 2014, p. 15). By doing so, the company takes advantage of an occasion to interact with its consumers and attract the media attention when participating in a social debate, whether it is a solemn event or a popular affair.

In much the same way, what makes their campaigns unique is their constant reference to the Spanish culture, in a wide sense of the term culture. On the one hand, they take into account the events happening in the political context to promote their products or to generate an interactive conversation, interpellating politicians or public institutions. Therefore, ideological issues and public affairs take part in Netflix advertising campaigns, introducing social debates within commercial communication. As a consequence, these actions tend to create some controversy among certain collectives, who find them offensive, in opposition to those consumers who consider them refreshing, daring and audacious. On the other hand, their campaigns are also featured by famous figures who belong to the popular audiovisual culture of Spain, combining stars from previous decades with current celebrities. These campaigns rescue well-known topics and by doing so, they create a special connection with the audience, who celebrate TV memories and shared moments full of nostalgia. Both techniques will be studied in the following sections.

Campaigns About Ideological Transgression

The first group of campaigns that will be analysed refer to those that relate to the political context or involve an ideological issue. Some of the most provocative campaigns were made to promote the TV show *Narcos*. In December 2016, a large billboard was placed in Puerta del Sol of Madrid during the holiday season, portraying its main character, Pablo Escobar, and the slogan: "Oh, blanca Navidad" ("Oh, white Christmas"). The double reference to both the Christmas carol and the cocaine caused confronted

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strong reactions. On the one hand, it was celebrated by some spectators, who applauded this action for its creativity. On the other hand, it also provoked social scandal and some petitions were made in order to move the billboard away from associations fighting against drug dependence or the Colombian population in Spain (specifically, the Colombian Embassy requested its withdrawal to the City Council) (“Narcos se burla...”, 2017). Netflix España also received an original response from the National Police, who photoshopped the scene and included the message “Oh, azul Navidad” (“Oh, blue Christmas”), to encourage the collaboration of citizens in their fight against drug trafficking (“La irónica respuesta...”, 2016). Just some months later, the same placement was chosen to unfold another banner to promote the 3rd season of the TV show. This time, the message was displayed in a text balloon, similar to the instant messaging application ones, that said: “Sé fuerte” (“Be strong”); a clear reference to the message that the former President of the Government, Mariano Rajoy, sent to Luis Bárcenas, the treasurer of his party (Partido Popular, PP) back in 2013. The fact that a national corruption scandal was used in an advertising campaign also caused a variety of responses, from admirers to opponents, who expressed their opinion in social media. Surprisingly, it also received a response from the National Police. These previous interactions encouraged Netflix to address the National Police in 2018, when one of the bodies that they placed in a MUPI (urban furniture designed for advertising) as if being cryopreserved inside a glass cabinet to promote the TV show *Altered Carbon*, was robbed. The company designed an innovative promotion campaign based on street marketing actions; the most remarkable one took place in Madrid, where they recreated a futurist scenario inspired in 2384 (the year when the action takes place).

In the same line, the company turned again to the scandal issue to promote *Narcos*. This time, they used the so-called “Bárcenas papers” (extracts of the handwritten accounts which involved several party figures, including Rajoy) as the main image of a poster that covered the wall streets in Madrid. It also appeared in a teaser video featuring the Spanish actor Javier Cámara, who plays Guiller Pallomari in the TV show (an accountant who works for Pablo Escobar). In said video, “Cómo llevar una caja B”, he gives indications about how to manage a parallel bookkeeping system, thus the allusion to the PP was again clear (Netflix España, 2017). By addressing such a matter from an ironic perspective, the company launched a message to its consumers and the rest of society, that got divided among the ones who enjoyed their satirical communication and the ones who considered that they went over the line when trivializing certain topics.

The technique of alluding to real events has been used by the company on many occasions. In fact, it is one of the strategies that define their communication style. To promote *Black Mirror*, they created a video where scenes from the TV series were mixed with real images of latest Spanish political events, such as Mariano Rajoy talking about technology, or fragments of the police charges in Catalonia on October the 1st, 2017 (dealing with the independent process affair). Thus, it was a mixture of fictional and real images under the slogan: “¿Qué fue antes: la realidad o #BlackMirror?” (“What came first: reality or #BlackMirror?”) (Netflix, 2018, January 12). In much the same way, they take advantage of current events in order to connect with their audience. They used the account of the TV show *House of cards* to send a supporting message to Pedro Sánchez (the leader of the PSOE, Partido Socialista Obrero Español) when he was going through tough moments within his own party back in 2016, and they did it again during their primary elections in 2017. Therefore, it seemed that the main character, Frank Underwood, addressed the politician to offer his help, and to congratulate him for his victory over his rival (Susana Díaz). Some months later, when Pedro Sánchez turned into the President as a result of the motion of censure against Rajoy, they presented his ascending political career as a TV show with several seasons. They also expressed their opinion during the televised political debate on December 2016, by giving

advice and directly addressing the participants. The company also referred to the controversy about the way Pablo Casado (who was the vice-secretary of the Popular Party in 2018) obtained his postgraduate in Harvard by doing a course in Aravaca, Madrid. They replaced the sign of the TV show *Stranger Things* “Welcome to Hawkins” by a new one: “Welcome to Aravaca”. Taking all this into account, it could be said that they might show some preference for the left-wing parties. Back in 2016, in order to promote the sale of the 4th season DVD pack, Frank Underwood starred in another campaign. He was the image of four different posters that parodied the communication style of the four main Spanish parties: PP, PSOE, Podemos and Ciudadanos, as if he was another candidate. These banners, which were placed in Madrid streets, included a link to a video of Underwood in front of the Spanish Lower House, presenting him as the future President (#UnderwoodPresidente). However, Spain is not the only country where the company alludes to the political context, they also made the same in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and of course, the United States (López, 2017). Thus, this is an example of their effort in adapting to every country and connecting with its audience in every specific area.

The campaign to advertise the Spanish comedy film *Bomb Scared* was especially controversial, since it referred to the territorial conflict in the Basque country and the attacks from the terrorist group ETA. The billboard, placed in the downtown area of San Sebastián, showed the sentence “Yo soy español, español, español” (“I’m Spanish, Spanish, Spanish”) crossed out in red ink. This phrase is usually recited together as a hymn in international sport competitions to reinforce the national identity; in fact, the story of the film is set during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Thus, this message became more meaningful in said context, turning into offensive to some users (who showed their disagreement on the social media platforms) and collectives, such as the Terrorism Victims Association whose president claimed that the topic shouldn’t be taken lightly because there are still broken families. Furthermore, the Union of Civil Guards presented a complaint to the National High Court since they considered that the billboard was an offence of humiliation of the victims (Soage, 2017).

The promotion of the 4th season of *Orange is the New Black* turned into an activist action, due to the company’s desire to join the celebration during the World Pride Madrid 2017 by changing the name of the show: “Rainbow is the new black”, and wallpapering the subway stop in Chueca (known as Madrid’s gay neighborhood) with the rainbow flag. The company also sent a clear message with this action: proclaiming its firm advocacy for love and sexual freedom. In fact, it was so successful that it encouraged thousands of individuals to sign a petition through Change.org asking for its definitive continuation (“El arcoiris de...”, 2016). The company got also involved in the parade with a sponsored float in partnership with the LGTB magazine *Shangay*, using the campaign slogan and graphic design (“Rainbow is the...”, 2016).

Campaigns That Rescue Popular Spanish Culture

Spanish culture has become one of the main references to create promotional campaigns, rescuing numerous figures of the musical and television panorama from the last 50 years. The election of Spanish characters and programs, that gained popularity through the traditional TV and belong to different generations, obeys a strategic function since, “to be popular, the television text has to be read and enjoyed by a diversity of social groups, so its meaning must be capable of being inflected in a number of different ways” (Fiske, 2006, p. 66). According to John Fiske’s concept of popularity, the goal is that diverse and large audience niches feel interest for audiovisual products (in this case, advertising campaigns) that take advantage of what was done in the “old television” era. Paradoxically, these campaigns that refer to

the audiovisual tradition are distributed in innovative ways through social media networks and are also promoting the video on demand, a new media consumption.

Among all the popular events that have been used as inspiration, the Eurovision contest has become an essential annual meeting within national campaigns. The interest for this European musical festival has reappeared due to social networks, especially Twitter, turning into a success of social audience that generates fervent fan communities (Highfield, Harrington & Bruns, 2013; Claes & Deltell, 2014; Márquez, 2017). Being aware of its potentiality, Netflix has elaborated specific audiovisual material for social media that combines the promotion of one of its products with the history of the festival in Spain. In 2017, the set design of the telephone office from *Cable Girls* was used to promote both the TV show and the event, featured by some Spanish young representatives of the festival dressed up like telephone operators and lead by the veteran artist Massiel, who won the contest in 1968 (“Las chicas del televoto”, Netflix, 2017, May 13). In “Betty Missiego, Eleni Foureira y María Villar en un plan para que Miki gane Eurovisión” (Netflix, 2019, May 18), the festival immediate present merged with the iconography of *Money Heist* (La casa de papel, Antena 3, 2017; Netflix, 2019-), representing the opening sequence of this TV show first episode, featured by several participants of different Eurovision editions.

In much the same way as controversy has been used in those campaigns based on ideological issues, polemic has been a useful tool to simulate quarrels among characters that have drawn the audience’s attention. This is the case of the promotional campaign of the TV show *Glow* 2nd season, featured by the singers Marta Sánchez and Vicky Larraz (Netflix, 2017, June 27). Both artists have been considered as rivals since the 80’s by the public opinion, thus their supposed enmity was used by Netflix to confront them in a ring. Some digital media (“Vicky Larraz carga...”, 2017; Molina, 2017) even pointed out the re-emergence of the two pop divas confrontation, without being aware that they were contributing to Netflix’s marketing campaign.

Likewise, other popular figures of the Spanish television idiosyncrasy have been brought for recent campaigns based on referentiality. Consequently, it is necessary for the viewer to know the recreated discursive context to understand it properly. In the video “Respuestas desde el Cosmos” (Netflix, 2017, March 30), Esperanza Gracia, who is a famous astrologer, provides an advance of the platform new launches using the horoscope foretell in the piece; Jaime Peñafiel analyses the goodnesses of the Queen Elisabeth II to promote *The Crown* (Netflix, 2016, November 10). Controversy has also appeared in campaigns based on television referentiality, like the recent one to promote the 3rd season of *Stranger Things*, that alluded to the mythical children’s program *La bola de cristal* (TVE1, 1984-1988). Given the rejection of Lolo Rico’s heirs (the show’s screenwriter and producer), who accused Netflix of “instrumentalizing the work of a great creator with commercial purposes” (Nagua, 2019), the company decided to withdraw the campaign. These examples can be considered as efficient cases of adaptation to the target, in the same line as other global brands develop their strategy focusing on the target market.

In short, as mentioned before, all these campaigns are developed around the concept of referentiality, thus, it is indispensable that the spectator recognizes the vinculation of said texts with other texts to which they refer in order to fully understand them (Genette, 1989, p. 9). In this case, the reference alludes to a vast popular cultural inheritance more than 50 years old, establishing connections of “intertextuality” (Kristeva, 2001), “transtextuality” (Genette, 1989) or “thematic recurrence” (Tous, 2010), the term specifically employed in television. This strategy is crucial to strengthen the engagement between the content producers and the audience, since the spectator feels accomplice for being able to decode all the references. With this, the distance between the content creators and the consumers decreases. It is not perceived as an intrusive advertising blitz with obvious intentions, but users enjoy the consumption

of said promotional material instead and they even search for it and share it (being this idea related to the concept of “pull marketing”).

Finally, the crossing between products is also another tactic by Netflix to doubly promote the platform content, as a crossover. The concept, traditionally used for the comics, implies the crossing between two separate universes contributing to a merging of texts and intertextuality (Geraghty, 2007, p. 108). For example, “*Las Chicas del Cable* homenajea La Casa de las Flores” (Netflix, 2018, September, 18) is a spot in which the Spanish actresses imitate the accent of the Mexican TV show characters. And some of the actors from several series have a meeting in the promotional video: “Bienvenidos a la Casa Netflix” (Netflix, 2019, July 29), in which they pretend they are going to be housemates in an imaginary house and they establish their conditions to do so. Due to the fact that they are independent products with a differentiated brand identity merging in a new space, a “transbranding” strategy is applied, since these campaigns mash up different franchise storyworlds and brands (Hills, 2016, p. 8-9). By doing so, they can arouse the consumer’s curiosity for another product of the catalogue, bringing together “elements common to both franchises creating a unique market for both audiences” (Geraghty, 2007, p. 108) and ultimately reinforcing the brand.

ANALYSIS OF PAQUITA SALAS ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Among all the Spanish cases, especially the ones that reflect the popular Spanish culture, *Paquita Salas* is the national product that better summarizes Netflix marketing strategies in Spain. The series uses different engagement resources related to the sociocultural present and the exploitation of storytelling techniques applied to advertising. Undoubtedly, the creative flexibility of these campaigns, more oriented towards extending the narrative universe of the fiction than using traditional promotional techniques, is correlated to the TV show referential nature, since it contains numerous allusions to the Spanish contemporary popular culture.

Paquita Salas is a mockumentary, a hybrid genre that combines different variations such as the documentary, the parody and the deconstruction, transgressing the boundaries between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ (Roscoe & Hight, 2001; Campbell, 2017), which became popular as a comic format on TV due to shows like *The Office* (NBC, 2005-2013). The show is built based on metafiction or self-conscious fiction; thus, it proposes situations of self-referential nature where the limits between reality and fiction blur (Waugh, 2001; Gil González, 2005; Pérez Bowie, 2005) and where actors usually perform as themselves (e.g. Lidia San José, Macarena García, Belinda Washington, Mariona Terés).

The show, written and directed by Javier Calvo y Javier Ambrossi, known artistically as “Los Javis” was launched in 2016 in the streaming platform of audiovisual content Flooxer, which belongs to Atresmedia group and is oriented to the creation of modest budget TV series exclusively focused on the attraction of a juvenile target (Korta, 2019). The project was first planned as a five chapter web-series that, due to its successful preview, was distributed in a conventional TV channel (Neox) which is also oriented to a young audience and belongs to the same media group. In 2017, Netflix bought the broadcasting rights, included the first season in its catalogue and produced two more seasons released in June 2018 and 2019. The acquisition of the show makes total sense from a commercial perspective, since the show is in conjunction with Netflix brand identity. *Paquita Salas* shares certain features with other Netflix female characters; they can be identified with the “disastrous women” stereotype, making emphasis in a peculiar feminist argument that implies the reconciliation of women with their conflictiv-

ity and transgression as a way of moving forward, in opposition with good, perfectionist or impeccable girls (Marín Ramos, 2019, p. 44).

The campaign to promote the 2nd season of *Paquita Salas* consisted of audiovisual clips, featuring the main character, that expanded the content of the show; thus, it was closer to branded content than to traditional advertising. This way, the transfer from Flooxer to Netflix was presented through short audiovisual pieces aired from October 2017 in YouTube and other social networks (e. g. “Paquita Salas llega a Netflix”, Netflix, 2017, October 4). Said videos merged fiction and reality, in line with the series personality; for example, Reed Hastings, Netflix founder, appeared apologizing to Paquita for not meeting with her (“Reed Hastings envía un mensaje a Paquita Salas”, Netflix, 2018, April 24). The series internationalization was also included in the narrative, since Paquita featured these promotional videos, among others: “Paquita Salas llega a México” (Netflix, 2018, August 28) and “Paquita Salas nos habla de Los Ángeles” (Netflix, 2018, February 27).

The extension of Paquita’s story in a group of audiovisual clips as part of its global promotion strategy, responds to the transmedia storytelling technique which expands the fictional universe through different means (Jenkins, 2003, 2006, 2013) being simultaneously distributed in social networks. Moreover, the broadcast audiovisual pieces that simulate small episodes in Paquita’s life, complement the central story without narrative fractures (Scolari, 2013). Nevertheless, it is possible to find the same repeated contents in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram; thus, they are not distributed strategically in several means, responding to a conventional transmedia planning, in which every media should present a different message.

In the same way as other campaigns, some of the promotional videos or commercials of *Paquita Salas* can also be considered as “real-time marketing” examples, since they have taken advantage of current news. On May 2018, Netflix released “Paquita Salas representa a Amaia y Alfred” (Netflix, 2018, May 12), a 3-minute video in which Paquita gave some advice to the Spanish contestants before their performance, making multiple allusions to former Spanish singers who also participated in the festival. Not only international events with such a global impact like Eurovision are referred in Netflix campaigns, but also “pink press” news are used to create audiovisual pieces that extend the diegetic universe of Paquita. For instance, the wedding of the popular television figure Belén Esteban (who gained fame thanks to celebrity journalism) has favoured the creation of several clips, prior to the event and after the celebration (“Paquita Salas está invitada a la boda de Belén Esteban” and “Paquita Salas llega de la boda de Belén Esteban”, Netflix, 2019, June 19 and 23). This case turns out to be especially interesting since it implies a collateral promotion of the media group Mediaset, in particular the private free-to-air TV channel Telecinco, since these videos are only understandable if the spectator knows the members of the program *Sálvame Diario*; thus, they profit from the content of the media competence. It is not the first time that Paquita makes media allusions which are external to Netflix; for example, they parodied *The Handmaid’s Tale* in a piece titled “Bendito sea el torrezno” (Netflix, 2019, June 6) and that is surprising since that TV series is distributed by HBO in Spain, a direct competitor. As happened with other cases, intertextuality and thematic recurrence become distinguishing marks of the series and its promotional campaigns.

Following current audiovisual trends, other characters playing in the series have starred in campaigns designed as *spin-off*, a narrative formula based on the diegetic continuation of a story through a secondary character who takes the main role (Cascajosa, 2006, pp. 87-150). This is the case of Noemí Argüelles (Yolanda Ramos) who, according to Los Javis (Hergar, 2018), has potential to play a leading role in her own series; in her YouTube channel, she analyses the social media culture from a comic

perspective. In this sense, the video “Noemí Argüelles habla sobre Netflix” (Netflix, 2019, July 15) is especially remarkable due to its clear metafictional component; in this clip, she reviews her favourite Netflix series, pointing out that Netflix is “the queen of the streaming platforms”, despite the fact that it doesn’t broadcast *Game of Thrones* (HBO, 2011-2019), as she admits.

Likewise, as it happens with other cases that have been mentioned before, several crossovers -or transbranding strategies from an advertising perspective- have been made between *Paquita Salas* and other products from Netflix by merging Paquita’s diegetic universe with other series promotional events. In this line, Paquita has burst into interviews with actors from *Stranger Things*, *Élite* and *La casa de las flores*. Magüi (Belén Cuesta) has also promoted *Money Heist* in “Úrsula Corberó habla de Tokio con Magüi” (Netflix, July 19), playing a metafictional game by blending fiction and reality.

In short, *Paquita Salas* and its promotional campaigns take advantage of one of the key factors of television success, since “to be popular, then, television must be both polysemic and flexible”, employing “irony, metaphor, jokes, contradiction, excess” (Fiske, 2006, p. 84) in order to create a recognisable universe that can also be enjoyable in several levels.

CONCLUSION

As a global brand that has been immersed in an ambitious international expansion process for years, Netflix has experienced the advantages of using the localization technique as a way to adapt to its target markets in terms of its programming offer and its communication strategy. Culture is a key factor in the localization approach. Thus, in Spain this adaptation implies the incorporation of national products within its catalogue according to the consumers’ preferences. Moreover, regarding the promotional material, Netflix includes constant references to the current context and the audiovisual popular culture to create attractive and effective campaigns in order to engage the Spanish subscribers and society.

The company attracts the audience by two tactics: on the one hand, the traditional television spectator is allured by the recovery of the Spanish TV historical memory, linking “the old” and “the new”. On the other hand, the young target is drawn by these campaigns, distributed digitally, due to the use of narrative techniques coming from cinema and television - referentiality, transmedia, metafictionality, crossovers and spin-off- that favor the storytelling technique. Therefore, Netflix products are immersed in universes that are not limited to the series, but that are extended in an extradiscursive (or discursive in the case of *Paquita Salas*) ways.

Another key factor is the, apparent, absence of direct competence with other media groups, since external products and discourses are understood as opportunities to generate content for its connection with immediate reality. This self-confidence, or even insolence from the company, can be considered as a challenge since it indicates a lack of concern about the competence and reaffirms Netflix self-awareness concerning its own appeal.

The analysis of the entertaining promotional campaigns of *Paquita Salas* not only reflects Netflix bet on this series, but also shows the attributes that the platform wants to strengthen as a brand in Spain. The series promotional strategy synthesizes the company positioning: focus on the subscriber’s preferences and enjoyment, revaluation of the local (since culture is a meaningful factor), the use of humor as a main tool, transgression in different levels (in the case of *Paquita Salas*, the concept of fiction is even challenged) and the reinforcement of one of its best attributes: its apparent ease derived from its young personality (a very exploited feature by the brand).

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Crossover: Storytelling strategy based on the crossing between two separate narrative universes within the same discourse contributing to a merging of texts and intertextual relationships.

Engagement: Psychological process that consists of several phases, through which a consumer's commitment turns into loyalty towards a brand by living meaningful experiences.

Localization: In opposition to standardization -the other option that a company has when going through an internationalization process- this strategy implies the adaptation to each target market, thus cultural conditions are taken into account when designing the product(s) and promotional campaigns in order to suit the consumers' preferences.

Pull Marketing: Opposed to push marketing, focused on providing the audience with commercial messages without them having an interest in a product, this strategy is less intrusive since it is based on consumers' active search for a specific brand or product.

Real-Time Marketing: The creation of content that is used to promote a product or to reinforce the brand positioning by making allusion to real events or issues of different nature happening in a current context.

Thematic Recurrence: An inheriting concept of intertextuality or transtextuality, this one is specific of the audiovisual context (specifically the TV) and it defines those references that a text makes about other text.

Transbranding: Strategy that consists of the crossing of several brands or franchises which come together in a creative dialogue through co-branding.

Chapter 25


The Expanded Story From Transmedia as a Business Model: The Case of *Stranger Things*

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ABSTRACT

*It is the creation of transmedia stories that drives the business model and not the business model that drives the stories. In other words, the transmedia narrative is the means and not the end; it is the essential step for transmedia marketing. This chapter is centred on the study of the Netflix series *Stranger Things* (2016-) as an example of the redefinition of a transmedia strategy without a truly transmedia story. The recent Netflix campaigns have managed to make the beginning of the second season of the show into a viral campaign in Spain, thanks to its connection to Spanish pop-culture personalities. The series relies on an obvious aesthetic; themes and narratives from the nineteen-eighties. This makes an intertextual analysis of the story interesting. In this chapter, we propose an analysis of marketing strategies as an expansion of the diegetic universe using various supports.*

INTRODUCTION

That the cultural landscape of the early 21st century is dominated by nostalgia is a fact. Between the baby boomers of the 1950s and the millennials - also known as Generation Y - born in the 1980s and 1990s, came the children of the former and the parents of the latter: Generation X (born in the 1960s and

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1970s). This generation experienced the welfare state in its youth and adolescence, entered adulthood just as an international economic crisis took hold, and were teenagers or young adults in the 1980s. This is the generation, currently at the peak of middle-age and on the verge of becoming part of the ageing population, which has been responsible for romanticising that decade when they were happy and care-free. The fashion, video games, music, cinema and all kinds of popular culture from that idealised era are back with a vengeance: adding to the music festivals, retro clothing, themed parties and events, and the cult status given to blockbusters of the time, is the recreation of the seventies and eighties in many of today's films and television series. This is the context into which the Netflix series, *Stranger Things* (2016 and 2017), fits. A homage to a golden age for its viewers that is drenched in nostalgia, and well-designed from a strategic point of view by its production team, this series became a global phenomenon after just one season.

Its effective platform integration and business model takes this a step beyond a postmodern television drama, as Mollet (2019) states, classifying it as “hyper-postmodernism”, thanks to how it breaks through the limits of cinema, television, literature and geek culture through both the story and audience interaction: the viewers hunting for what the author terms “Easter eggs” on various media and platforms in order to complete the tale. In other words, this is a transmedia television drama.

BACKGROUND

While there is still a lack of consensus regarding terminology in this field, we consider transmedia to designate a narrative universe that cannot be completed without drawing together the fragments scattered over a range of platforms that audiences interact with in a preconceived, directed manner. In this sense, there are many audiovisual products that are not transmedia phenomena from the outset. Many scholars believe that transmediality should not be measured in terms of plans but results; in other words, it may come into existence due to unforeseen circumstances. There are therefore “two ways to bring transmediality to a piece: the strategic modality - following a temporal and spatial expansion strategy that is planned in advance; or the tactical modality - working progressively, without a pre-prepared strategy, sometimes on the basis of the external inputs the producer receives” (Ivars-Nicolás & Zaragoza-Fuster, 2018, p. 259).

Whichever of these circumstances applies, there is a strategic process of organising or reorganising the consumption experience of the resulting product. All transmedia architecture includes a main product and multiple derivative or secondary products. It should be noted that there are also subcategories of derivative textual products, “text” not being all that it may seem. This is not only because their narrative content breaks free from the parental canon, but because their function is primarily that of a bridge between the main and secondary texts or between the secondary texts, their purpose being more “behavioural” and promotional than simply narrative. As Gray explains, there are texts containing a central narrative and paratexts where promotional value adds to and overshadows their potential narrative contributions, serving to facilitate audiences' access to the desired text (entryway paratexts) or to guide their exit out of it (in media res paratexts) (2018, p. 35).

It is no longer the character that is important, but the entire world in which the events take place, as is the ongoing creation of news combining several formats, both in fictional stories and factual or non-fiction narratives. As such, it is impossible to produce or find a textbook or research paper on transmediality that fails to reference economic factors and the business model. While, in other media, formats and genres, it is possible to talk about production, direction or scriptwriting in isolation when analysing a product (a

film, series, music video, video game, a news item from the press or TV news programme, etc.), when it comes to analysing a transmedia product, it is impossible not to mention that which conditions and shapes the architecture of the universe and all its main and derivative products from the outset. This does not only occur in analyses of products that have already been created and distributed, but also in the canonical textbooks on the subject. Both the pioneering works by Jenkins (2006) and more recent texts always end up discussing the business model, however interesting the fictional universes and their architectures may be from a narrative viewpoint. The studies of Long (2007), Giovagnoli (2011), Hayes (2012), Scolari (2009 y 2013), Ciancia (2015), Kurtz y Bourdaa (2016), Albadalejo y Sánchez (2019) give proof of that, besides those referred to transmediality in journalism and information in general (Gosciola y Campalans, 2013).

This focus on business intensifies when transmedia products operate at a global level, as part of a potent business model with plans for international elements (the majority) but also local or national paratexts (fewer in number, but equally effective for creating audience loyalty). It is at this point that we can talk about a Universal Transmedia Brand, of which there are already numerous examples (as found in the research of Albaladejo-Ortega and Sánchez-Martínez, 2018).

This is the context within which we must consider *Stranger Things*, whose international repercussion, as noted at the beginning of this article, is no coincidence but was strategically designed for universal consumption by an entire generation. And while it is true, as some authors point out, that in spite of this concept's modern nature, there are articles that apply it to products and stories from many years past, as in Freeman (2014)'s work on *The Wizard of Oz*, the breadth of audience reached nowadays points to a much more precise and nuanced commercial strategy that is able to reach market niches with a watchmaker's precision, this being something that the technological contemporaneity around the turn of the millennium naturally called for, as a sign of the multi-screen times (Thon, 2016).

Following Bourdaa (2013)'s example in her case study of *Fringe*, this text will enumerate the strategic resources employed by Netflix with *Stranger Things*, as another example of the intentions of the platform itself, which has a very well-defined personal identity. This implies that double the branding work is applied to the series: the branding of the series itself and its transmedia universe, and that of Netflix and its brand identities.

NETFLIX - ITS NARRATIVE AND COMMERCIAL STRATEGIES

Netflix symbolises the contemporary paradigm shift in how we consume audiovisual content. Despite the fact that other companies began the transition from video club to VOD earlier, the North American platform has become symbolic of this shift. Meanwhile, in Spain it was the first international VOD company to launch operations, after an enormous investment in advertising "followed subsequently by HBO España (November 2016), Amazon Prime Video (December 2016), Sky (September 2017), AXN Now (June 2018) and Fox Now (December 2018), the last two offered exclusively through the Vodafone pay TV platform" (Cascajosa, 2019, pp. 182-183).

Netflix transitioned from a video-club business model to a content-generating platform on the basis of two distinct productions - *House of Cards* (2013-2018) and *Arrested Development* (2003-2013) - that nevertheless shared several common features. The time that the company was in the film rental market enabled it to learn about its users' preferences, identifying which works were in most demand and which were least popular. *Arrested Development* was already a well-known series that it would bring back to

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life, capitalising on the nostalgia and the opinions that fans left online. By so doing, they guaranteed that the series would be a phenomenon before it was relaunched. All of this created online conversations at an early stage. This was combined with an innovative strategy that would change how viewers consumed content, who no longer had to wait a week to see the next episode, given that the entire season of the series was uploaded to the platform at once. In this sense, *House of Cards* became the paradigm for success of the renowned algorithm and big data. Collecting a wide range of data on consumption enabled the platform to anticipate, design and (re)shape user preferences.

This strategy is evident in the development of a series like *House of Cards*, through which Netflix chose to focus on political drama (the genre in demand by the audience at the time), in combination with one of that moment's most sought-after actors, Kevin Spacey, and its most coveted director, David Fincher. This, alongside the success of its British predecessor, led to predictions of a bright future for the new production. Its notoriety not only served to introduce users to the platform, but the series also became the first television series produced by a VOD platform to be nominated for Emmy awards in 2013. Its first episode alone received four nominations; Eigil Bryld won the cinematography award and David Fincher was awarded best director, meaning that it also became the first online-only series to win these awards. Later, the same series would be nominated for such prestigious awards as the Golden Globes.

There are many examples of commercial strategies being transformed into narratives, such as the creation of social-network campaigns that have fostered conversation among followers of the series. Nevertheless, there is one case which worked the opposite way, when it was narrative innovation itself that drove an entire debate around commercial strategies. This can be illustrated with the interactive episode of the TV series *Black Mirror* (2011-) titled "Bandersnatch". In this episode, which was promoted as Netflix's first interactive film, it was the users who could make different decisions that would affect how the narrative of the production played out. Although this was not the first incursion into interactive content by the platform, which had already experimented with *Puss in Boots* (2017) and *Buddy Thunderstruck* (2017), with "Bandersnatch" it managed to create and focus social-network discussion on the significance of the production for weeks. The piece centres around a young programmer who designs a video game inspired by a fantasy novel, which leads him to settings that takes him closer to that fantasy. The film is set in 1984, in a firm nod to the work of Orwell. It has five different endings that depend on the decisions taken by the user along the way, from something as simple as whether to have cereal or not, to decisions that more directly shape the narrative development of the character. This provides another example of the platform's interest in narrative innovation, in an initiative which closely recalls the "choose your own adventure" books, where the reader can make certain decisions throughout the story, to such an extent that the company that owns the literary rights - Chooseco - has sued Netflix for trademark infringement by promoting the episode through association with the well-known stories. In spite of this, the release of the film has been an undeniable success.

The system for commercial expansion of the platform has not been limited to television series, as evidenced by Netflix's recent production of the film *Roma* (2018), which swept the board at a multitude of international film festivals, including the Oscars, where it won best foreign picture, best cinematography and best director for Alfonso Cuarón, the Mexican filmmaker. The production has managed to open up a debate about screening, as it had a theatrical release and was also available for free to subscribers of the online platform. Consolidation of the film through its awards success has reopened the debate about cinemas and the emergence of other types of audiovisual productions. We should note that this is a fairly paradigmatic case, given that more than double the budget of the production itself was spent on advertising and promoting it.

The Case of *Stranger Things*: Product Architecture

To date, the transmedia architecture of *Stranger Things* comprises:

1. The fictional web series. Distributed and coproduced by Netflix, with scriptwriting and direction by Matt and Ross Duffer and executive production by Shawn Levy. Two seasons: 2016 (8 episodes) and 2017 (9 episodes), with the third season expected to be aired in 2019.
2. Discussion shows on the production of the series. *Beyond Stranger Things*, with 7 episodes, was first aired at the launch of the second season, in October 2017.
3. A free RPG game for iOS and Android, launched in October 2017, called *Stranger Things: The Game*. A *Stranger Things* Monopoly game was also put on the market by Hasbro in 2018.
4. The publication of books and comics, launched at the end of 2018: *Stranger Things: Worlds Turned Upside Down: The Official Behind-The-Scenes Companion* and a series of prequel novels written by Gwenda Bond, for Penguin Random House, the first of these called *Suspicious Minds* and published in February 2019. A line of *Stranger Things* comics began publication by Dark Horse Comics in September 2018.
5. Teasers for the two seasons.
6. Promotion on the Spotify platform in October 2017 of the launch of the second season, including Easter eggs that changed the normal colours of the platform to those of the “other side” in the series, with surprise elements for followers who listen to the end of the audio.
7. Teletext page created by Netflix Spain in collaboration with the artist Raquel Meyers with previews of the second season, also launched in October 2017.
8. The series does not have its own website or YouTube channel (which are Netflix-branded), but it does have profiles on social networks: @Stranger_things (Twitter), @officialstrangerthings_ (Instagram) and StrangerThingsTV (Facebook).
9. Interaction of the child protagonists with the title character of the web series *Paquita Salas*, by Netflix Spain, in April 2018.
10. Fictionalisation of other programmes and celebrities from Spanish television of the 80s in promoting the second season, such as the adverts with Paco Lobatón and Leticia Sabater in October 2017.
11. Events. Tour of the immersive exhibition in several cities from 2018 to 2019: a recreation of the Hawkins decorations that attendees can visit, to begin promotion of the July launch of the third season.

There are two important questions raised by this complex picture. Firstly, looking at the list chronologically shows that everything is generated on the basis of the first season’s success, meaning that this transmedia universe, which to date has a short time span, is not of the first type but the second: unplanned, rather than planned. Further, of the eleven elements described (the number eleven is coincidental), not even half provide additional information about the parent series’ narrative, thereby expanding the universe. Most are closer to paratexts than subtexts, in that their ultimate purpose is to promote, rather than expand. On the other hand, the effort to maintain the interest of local-viewer niches is interesting, not only through the immersive exhibition tour but through other elements - paratexts - which make references to well-known celebrities in each country: Leticia Sabater and Paco Lobatón in Spain, who were at the height of their professional careers on Spanish television in the 1980s. This local alignment is also seen in the interconnection of Netflix Spain products, such as when the child stars are visited by

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Paquita Salas, the protagonist of the Netflix series with the same name and a cult web series that used the children's appearance to promote its second season. This is an attempt to balance creating audience loyalty from a global perspective with achieving the same objective with local viewers.

The Series

At the time of this article's publication, the series consists of two seasons that have a total of eight and nine episodes, respectively. Belonging to the genre of science fiction and fantasy, it is a creation of the Duffer brothers, who are also authors of the thriller *Hidden* (2015) and some episodes of *Wayward Pines* (FOX, 2015-2016). With an approximate length of 40 to 60 minutes per episode, it was initially envisioned as an independent or anthology series until, after the success of the first season, a continuous narrative was decided upon. The keys to the success of *Stranger Things* can be grouped into two categories: the keys to narrative success and to cultural success.

Regarding the keys to its narrative success, one might argue that the most important factors are simplicity and the use of recognisable narrative structures whose success has been demonstrated beforehand in other audiovisual products:

- The mixed genre of science fiction/fantasy and adventure.
- The open-ended series structure that is divided into episodes and has a climactic ending.
- A powerful main storyline with few secondary storylines.
- An ensemble cast of varying ages that may interest a range of audience niches.
- Use of stereotypes in building characters, especially those within the gang of child protagonists, who are supported by some teenage brothers and sisters and cause problems for the adult characters. Each of the characters corresponds to a clearly differentiated stereotype.
- Representation of certain non-white races to reflect the United States' multiracial nature and foster identification with different groups.
- Setting in a small, rural location in which most of the characters know each other.
- Surprising, unprecedented conflicts that have never been experienced by the characters before.
- Uncontrollable evil forces, even though they have been generated by humans.
- Dangerous governmental sectors or state forces.
- The relationship of night-time to rule-breaking and danger.

Regarding the keys to its cultural success, the series is a veritable 'greatest hits' of nostalgia for the 1980s. All the cultural references detailed by Guy (2017) and Pallás and Pérez (2018) form part of a universe that has been recreated for viewers who were young in the 1980s and are now adult viewers, but which has the ability to interest many other young-adult, teenage and child viewers who have grown up with other magical references, such as the Harry Potter or Twilight sagas. There are other 1980s popular culture references, but the key ones are:

- Cinematographic sources in the genre by directors Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, John Carpenter and Wesley Craven.
- Literary sources in the genre, the iconic author being Stephen King, one of whose novels - *Needful Things* - inspired the very title of the series (Fuentefría, 2017).

- References to video games of the time: early arcade games and the nascent consumption of technology.
- References to musical hits of the 80s.
- Representation of a way of life in the midst of transition to a distinct modern ethic, both from the ethical and aesthetic points of view, regarding the costume - and the characterisation, in general - sets and props.

It is impossible not to have an effect on the feelings of a whole generation by using these elements. The same insights made by Piñeiro (2018) about the music in the series can be extended to all these other resources, while

in those cases in which the past is invoked, lived by the audience, or by a part of it, the inclusion of songs of the time as well as an ingredient for the realism of the series is a call to reminiscence and to the emotion of the spectators. So the selection of songs from Strangers Things (Netflix, 2016-) is a revival of the 80s with themes like Africa by Toto, Hazy Shade of Winter by The Bangles or Sunglasses at Night by Corey Hart -among others-that mix with the original scoring composed by Michel Stein and Kyle Dixon (2018, p. 104).

And beyond, as Fariello also says, it demonstrates that “examples of a reoccurring sound in recent media, what I term the techno-historical acoustic. It has four main characteristics: it is diegetic, comes from a technological source, works as a catalyst to memory, and provides a mediation within the diegesis between the ‘real world’ and a mysterious alternative space” (Fariello, 2019). In several respects, as Wetmore (2018) argues, the series is a hymn to the decade that could be summarised as ‘I love the 80s’. When it comes to popular culture of the time, a representation of Stephen King’s child protagonists can be found in the show (Carranza, 2018) and even references to series like *Alf* (NBC, 1986-1990) (Uribe & Roncallo, 2018) or *Dungeons and Dragons* (CBS, 1983-1985) (Wetmore, 2018), as well as role-playing games.

In addition to all this, the series has added value as a phenomenon, given that it has enabled and fostered a kind of cultural revision of the era through a contemporary lens, revaluing it with the distance that time brings. As a result, academic articles have analysed the series from a very wide range of perspectives, rather than limiting themselves to strictly audiovisual aspects. The series has been analysed from a social perspective, highlighting the positive values and negative afflictions of the society in which many or all of the adults who are currently aged around 50 grew up. The social profiles represented by the characters has also enabled the series to be explored using the most cutting-edge methodologies, such as gender studies and queer theory. Such research has explored feminine strength and the connection of monstrosity and femininity, in relation to the character played by Winona Ryder (as a pin-up icon for children and teenagers in the 1980s), as well as the taboo surrounding the queer appearance of female child protagonist, Eleven, and her androgyny (along with the sexualisation of the same character in the second season) at the historical moment when the story takes place (Roach, 2018), while other burning issues have included hands-off parenting, bullying (Pagnoni, Rodríguez and Zárate, 2018) and white supremacy in that decade (Lozenski, 2018). Taken together, this comprises a veritable battery of reflexive academic research on the value system of the Reagan era in the United States.

Derivative Products

As discussed earlier, many derivative products have been created on the basis of this production. Development of most has been driven primarily by commercial or sales interest rather than narrative concerns. In many cases, the objective is therefore to market the television production more than to expand the narrative universe created. A clear example of this can be found in the exhibition that toured through Spain, with stops in cities such as Málaga, Seville and Madrid, in which visitors were able to walk around some of the series' sets in an immersive experience. Attendees could also interact with a virtual reality set, in which you have to take calls in the house and discover the Demogorgon. The creation of discussion shows that explained the series' production system, titled *Beyond Stranger Things*, was timed to coincide with the launch of the second season. However, its function is more that of a 'making-of' show than a narrative continuation of the series.

The gamification of the universe has been achieved through a free application, for both iOS and Android, whose users can interact with an RPG game called *Stranger Things: The Game*. This specific case does more than promote the series, given that the player is able to access a whole host of maps, puzzles and new enemies that are very similar in design to the traditional *Zelda*. Fully translated into Spanish and with a very eighties aesthetic, this is undoubtedly a good opportunity for players of classic RPGs to expand the Hawkins universe. The success of this game has led to the announcement of a new game, *Stranger Things 3: The Game*, even before the launch of the third season. This time the game will be available for PCs and consoles, broadening the range offered by the previous one, which was only available for mobile phones and tablets. Within the same realm of gamification but with a purely commercial interest, the Hasbro brand has distributed the classic Monopoly board game with *Stranger Things* branding that, beyond its visual design, does not really offer any new content. These are two versions of the same type of expansion opportunity that the series has employed in its derivative products.

The range of derivative products continues to be extended with the publication of both books and comics, which have different functions in the story map of the series: In the case of *Stranger Things: Worlds Turned Upside Down: The Official Behind-The-Scenes Companion*, the book acts as a kind of guide for followers. In it can be found extra information on the characters that is not given explicitly in the series, but which has been used by the scriptwriting team in developing the narrative, as well as the original script and some notes on the production. This guide provides readers with information that they won't find in the series or the 'making-of' shows, as they are given access to original working material. Novels have also been written for the Penguin Random House publisher, which function as prequels. The first of these was written by the well-known author, Gwenda Bond, under the title *Suspicious Minds*, and expands on the past of the Eleven character. In literary terms, the *Stranger Things* comics written by Jody Houser and published by Dark Horse comics are another important addition, which have been on the market since September 2018. The comics focus on the story of Will and the events that occurred in the first season. Reading them gives people access to more details that were intentionally omitted from the series.

The Spotify platform released a list with 58 hits from the eighties to create atmosphere in the gaps between viewing of the series. This list contains not only the theme music, but some of the characters' dialogues between each song. An Easter egg specifically aimed at the series' most dedicated followers is also included. This is simply an aesthetic effect in which the software interface changes into a blue mist and a torch moving around in the centre; the effect disappears when the user starts using the computer again, but has managed to continue creating loyalty for the series among its followers.

Aiming to extend the vintage aesthetic, the creation of a hidden teletext page on extension 643 of all channels was another part of the expansion campaign for the production. It was used as a promotion strategy prior to the launch of the second season. Below the text “you have accessed classified information belonging to Hawkins National Laboratory”, the user can access four documents that provide some clues about the second season. The information was also published on the official Twitter account of the artist Raquel Meyers, who was involved in the project. The crossover between *Paquita Salas* and the *Stranger Things* children took place through a genuinely surreal conversation (very much in line with the fictional character of Salas), which again referred to young groups from the eighties and nineties such as Parchís, Bom Bom Chip and Santa Justa Klan. While this was made with the intention of promoting the series created by Javier Ambrossi and Javier Calvo, it also works as a piece of derivative and expanded content for the whole transmedia universe. However, if we are to single out one product for its success on social networks, it is the viral campaign that fictionalises and incorporates celebrities from the eighties into the American production. The campaign was adapted to include much-loved Spanish figures, using the local to legitimise the global, and showing a sense of humour and irony in how it parodied the stars within the context of the series. It is interesting to analyse these promotional pieces from the perspective of fans, and in terms of their presence on social networks. It is also significant that the series does not have its own website or YouTube channel, given that social networks and fandom are precisely the main sources of narrative expansion, focused on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Fandom and Social Networks

One of the main reasons behind the success of the Netflix platform is its work on its algorithm and Big Data: we can see evidence of this in the effective mailing campaigns Netflix uses and in one of the best strategies it has employed on social networks. The use of memes and gifs increases its interaction with followers. This, combined with sarcasm, irony or parody, as well as a rapid response time, has led the platform’s presence on social networks to grow considerably. Currently its account has a total of 769,000 followers. The following text appears over the set image on its profile: “One day you’re young and the next day you’re standing in front of the computer, hands on your hips, demanding another season”, which makes use of the comic tone we referred to, as do the continuous jokes that can be found on social networks. The series’ success on social networks is obvious: the extent of this can be estimated quantitatively simply by observing the number of followers. There is an official account (@Stranger_Things) that provides updates on the third season of the series and currently has 2.04 million followers. An account even exists (@strangerwriters) specifically for users to write comments about the production’s script. It is particularly important to take care of social-network communications for audiovisual work, given that “sometimes, content that is merely promotional can be rejected by users. Above all, social networks are conversation,” as Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018, p. 1293) argue. For this reason, conversation needs to be encouraged, as it is the most important element of communication on social networks. To achieve this, creating communities of fans is essential, who will not only mobilise the content generated officially by the television series but who also have the capacity to generate their own content.

The platform’s commercial strategies have capitalised on conversation to gain followers and comments on its promotional campaigns using outdoor billboards, such as that produced for the *Narcos* series, which was placed in the well-known Puerta del Sol square in Madrid, generating discussion in the press and an active conversation on social networks. Next to the words “Oh, white Christmas”

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from the Spanish version of the famous festive song, Wagner Moura - the actor who plays Pablo Escobar - appears, the play on words alluding to the cocaine trafficking of the well-known Colombian drug dealer, who gave his season's greetings to the residents of Madrid. The advert received reactions from thousands of anonymous users, as well as the official Twitter account of the Spanish police (@policia). They responded with a fake advertisement using the same billboard showing a Spanish police officer and the phrase "Oh, blue Christmas", accompanied by the following tweet: "This Christmas, things are also going to get very ugly for the narcos... Keep drugs well out of your life. Join the #tweetraid antidroga@policia.es". This demonstrates, from the promotional point of view, how successful the campaign was on social networks, with over 3,300 retweets and 4,300 likes.

The success of many of its social-network campaigns is due precisely to such segmentation of global content by country. In this way, the successful series is not only used as a narrative excuse, but the community managers of the official account make use of any current viral topic or trend to gain followers. They therefore rarely include direct sales messages, but talk about the series' return with a sense of humour or by touching on more local elements. In the case of *Stranger Things*, it is significant that they have alluded to Leticia Sabater, a famous Spanish television presenter and singer from the eighties, the decade in which the story and the aesthetics of the series are based. They also used one of this celebrity's latest music videos, "Salchipapa" ("Sausage and Chips"), which led it to go viral on social networks, generating conversations and jokes about the video. The promotion of the second season of the series has over 12,000 retweets and more than 18,000 likes to date. A similar phenomenon occurred with Paco Lobatón and the reference to the Spanish television programme that he presented, *¿Quién sabe dónde?* (Who Knows Where?) (1992-1998), although in this case there was significantly less interaction than there was with Leticia Sabater.

A series of posts called "The 80s References You Missed" worked by locally adapting content in a similar way. A video was included in these comments that referenced Spanish cultural elements from the 1980s. These included the title music from the series *Verano Azul* (1981-1982), dialogues from the comic double-act "Martes y Trece", music by Mecano, Juan Señor's famous goal against Malta with the Spanish football team, the cultural TV programme *La bola de Cristal* (1984-1988), television sets on which the programme *Un, Dos, Tres* (1972-2004) could be seen, references to *Sesame Street* (1979-2000), in which Espinete (a pink hedgehog that only appeared in the Spanish version) imitated the Demogorgon, and the cinematic premiere of the Pedro Almodóvar film, *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?* (1984). These references appear before the name of the series is shown, which is loosely translated in a Spanish subtitle reading "cosicas raras."

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fully classifying or categorising the productions created by followers of the series is a particularly difficult task. "Traditional methods and forms of taxonomy were designed for a much more static and less fluid textual environment than the current one. As in a biological ecosystem, the existence of numerous 'textual species' that circulate rapidly through the semiosphere make the appearance of new hybrid formats more likely" (Guerrero-Pico, M. and Scolari, 2016, p. 195). It is not within the scope of this article to create a catalogue of the multiple strategies employed, although it is true that most of the original content created by the platform fits into the engagement techniques defined by Fernández-Gómez and

Martín Quevedo (2018), considerably increasing the number of comments, shares and likes in order to intensify the fandom around the production.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This text focuses on the case study of the *Stranger Things* television series; it would be interesting to confirm whether the trend for creating transmedia products is evident in other Netflix productions. It is also important to analyse whether other platforms include or are developing productions with this level of transmedia integration.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this series is an example of how to achieve success with an audiovisual work of fiction by capitalising on the opportunities and synergies of the market, using a mobile strategy that has no predetermined endpoint, with the agility and responsiveness that a large company can allow itself, in order to adapt to both expected and unexpected successes. It is an example of how to expand a story in a simple and effective way, merely by identifying a market niche that yearns for memories or connections to all that is vintage: a lifestyle summarised by “things were better in the old days”. We can find evidence of this not only in the success of the series and its derivatives, but also in the repercussion it has had on research and teaching, of which this chapter is proof. It has inspired a wide range of Bachelor’s and Master’s dissertations, as well as research of a less reflexive, more pragmatic nature, such as translating the sound universe of the series into sign language (González López, 2018) or exploring the challenges that the slang used by youth tribes of the 80s poses for translators (Ruiz and Pérez, 2019) and how this may affect dubbing, for example.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Stranger Things: Fictional series, produced by Netflix (2016-)

Transmedia Branding: A transmedia product that becomes a solid, continuous and successful form can be considered a brand in itself.

Transmedia Business: A business model envisaging that a complete product will only be distributed, sold and consumed over several platforms, rather than just one.

Transmedia Storytelling: Storytelling that involves the design of fiction, non-fiction, advertising and entertainment universes, which are produced in different formats and media.

TV Series: An audiovisual format characterised by its fragmentation, in that it is composed of various episodes of distinct lengths and genres.

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