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CONTENT – SOMMAIRE – INHALT – CUPRINS

DISCOURSES OF *KORUNK* IN PUBLIC SPHERE ISSUES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000

MÁRIA BOTHÁZI[1]

ABSTRACT: The study attempts to give a picture about the editorial conceptions of the first period in Korunk's third wave – in this context, the research focuses on the articles on public issues (appeared between January 1990 and December 1999) released by this historic periodical. The topics of the study are: the Hungarian press/media in Transylvania; the Church; minorities; coexistence; (Hungarian) university (in Transylvania); Hungarian-conscience in Transylvania. The paper states that there are well observable discourses on these topics in Korunk, it attempts to describe them and to give a picture of that intellectual pathway Korunk tried to follow in the mentioned period.

Keywords: *Korunk, editorial conceptions, writings on public issues, period of transition, the press of minority*

In his seminal study on the Hungarian press in Romania, Attila Papp Z. writes[2] that the Hungarian press in Romania between 1990 and 2000 displays what he calls "grey publicity", not only because it is

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[2] Cf. Papp Z. Attila: *A romániai magyar sajtónyilvánosság a kilencvenes években. A működtetők világa* – PhD Dissertation, ELTE, Budapest, 2005.,
   http://adatbank.transindex.ro/cedula.php?kod=45 – *accessed: 2 June 2012.*

monotonous, but also because the most important messages remain unsaid, linger in a kind of obscure space. Minority journalism was characterized at that time by what Papp Z. termed "framism": the journalist plays by the frames he/she sets for him/herself, and these frames are meant to protect the ethnic group he or she represents. The operation of this frame "may get in contradiction with professional principles, conscience, yet it is constantly upheld."[3] After the dissolution of censorship, self-censorship prevails, and the primacy of the need to preserve the unity of the minority, to confront the majority in common action "frames" the discourse of the Hungarian press in Romania. The press interiorizes and adopts the subjects considered taboo by the state power, therefore the discourse of the press and of the public sphere in general are marked by conflict avoidance.[4]

Starting from this claim, I analyzed the articles of the third period of *Korunk* dealing with the public sphere, for it is clear, looking at the issues of the first ten years of this period, that the *Korunk* is strongly defined by a constant interest in public issues. The numeric aspects were measured by quantitative content analysis, completed with discourse analysis for establishing and describing the discourses used in *Korunk*. The scientific/scholarly articles published in *Korunk* significantly define the profile of the magazine, but as a cultural magazine the articles written in the traditional genres of journalism, the critiques and reviews have an equally important role. Through the overview of the editorial conceptions of *Korunk* in the 1990–2000 period from the point of view of public issues treated in them, I could open up the investigation to much wider horizons and hopefully offer a more comprehensive and nuanced image of the magazine.

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[3] Cf. op. cit., 82-126.

[4] Cf. ibid.

In order to define the corpus of texts examined, I marked six categories on the basis of the thematic survey of the first ten years' issues:

1. Hungarian press/media in Transylvania
2. church
3. minorities
4. cohabitation
5. (Hungarian) university (of Transylvania)
6. identity of Hungarians in Transylvania

Measurements, results

The table below categorizes the examined articles (417) of the first ten years of *Korunk*.

Category	Press	Church	Minority	Cohabita-tion	Univer-sity	Transylva-nianism	Total
1. Genre							
Study, essay	25	34	37	41	25	33	**195**
Journalism	23	12	15	17	9	26	**102**
Interview	5		5	9	1	4	**24**
Reportage	2	3	1		5	6	**17**
Survey		1	2	5	2	1	**11**
Literature	3	1	3	8			**15**
review	4	15	19	5	6	4	**53**
2. Authors							
Foreign language	10	3		16	5	3	**37**
Romanian		6	8	18	1	4	**37**
Hungarian from Hungary	10	4	16	11	7	21	**69**
Hungarian from Romania	42	53	52	35	33	46	**261**
Minority Hungarian			3	2			**5**

Category	Press	Church	Minority	Cohabita-tion	Univer-sity	Transylva-nianism	Total
from other countries							
Emigrated Hungarian			1	3	2		6
Roma			2				2
3. Focus of subject							
Romania as focus	15	12	16	26	2	10	81
Transylvania as focus	20	38	33	16	27	60	194
The world in general	25	13	22	29	19	3	111
Other/none	2	3	11	14		1	31
4. Time reference							
Past	11	19	8	14	10	27	89
Present	40	19	29	25	22	20	155
Future	1		6	3	2		12
Neutral	5	21	26	26	11	15	104
mixed	5	7	13	17	3	12	57
5. Type of article							
Descriptive	43	63	72	76	47	69	370
Polemical	2	1	1			1	5
Dialoguing	7		3	8	1	3	22
Other	10	2	6	1		1	20
Articles, total	**62**	**66**	**82**	**85**	**48**	**74**	**417**

It does not come as a surprise that the subjects analyzed are primarily treated in studies and essays (46%), then journalism (24%). The numbers also reveal that a primary interest of the editors was to inform the readers: reviews were much more significant in the magazine (13%) than traditional genres of journalism. Interviews, reportage and surveys appeared in roughly the same amount (3–6%).

Genre distribution of analyzed articles in Korunk issues, 1990–2000

- Study, essay
- Journalism
- Interview
- Reportage
- Survey
- Literature
- Review

46% — 24% — 6% — 4% — 3% — 4% — 13%
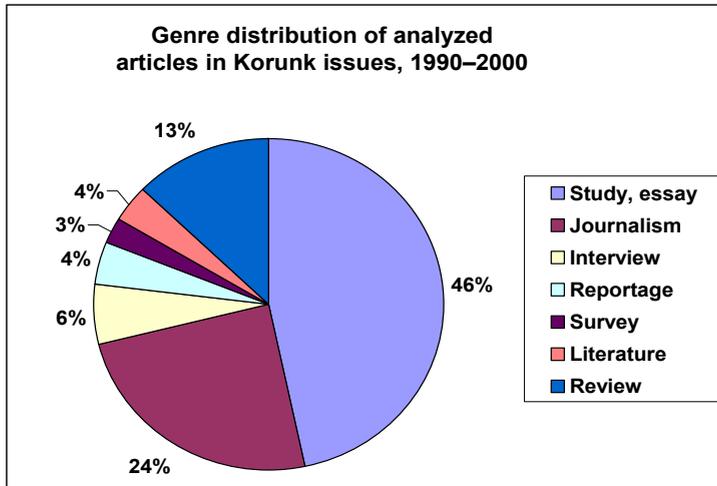
Most articles are written by Hungarian authors from Romania (63%); also, there is a significant presence of Hungarian intellectuals from Hungary (17%), in accordance with the traditions of the magazine. Romanian and foreign authors appear in identical percentage (9 – 9%).

Authors

- Foreign language
- Romanian
- Hungarian from Hungary
- Hungarian from Romania
- Minority Hungarian from other countries
- Emigrated Hungarian
- Roma

0% — 1% — 1% — 9% — 9% — 17% — 63%
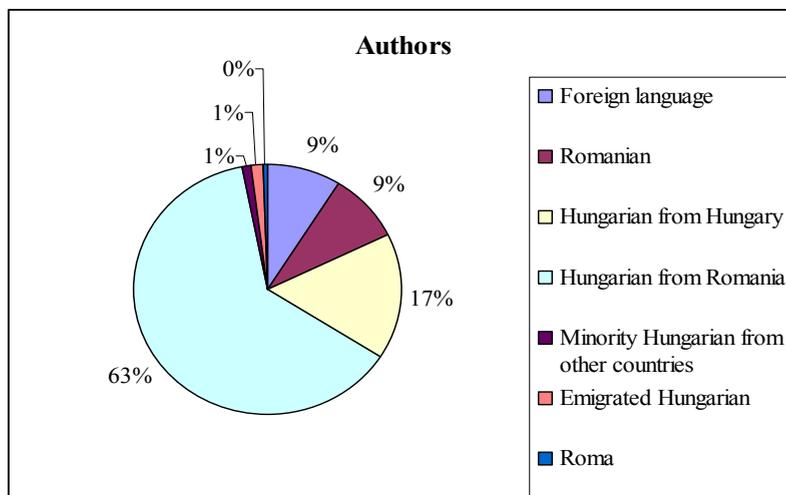
The *Korunk* approaches the subjects primarily in a Transylvanian focus (47%), and interestingly enough, it analyzes these subjects in a wider, global perspective more frequently (27%) than in a national one (19%).

Focus of subject

- 19%
- 7%
- 27%
- 47%

Romania as focus
Transylvania as focus
The world in general
Other/none

Time reference

- 21%
- 14%
- 25%
- 3%
- 37%

Past
Present
Future
Neutral
mixed
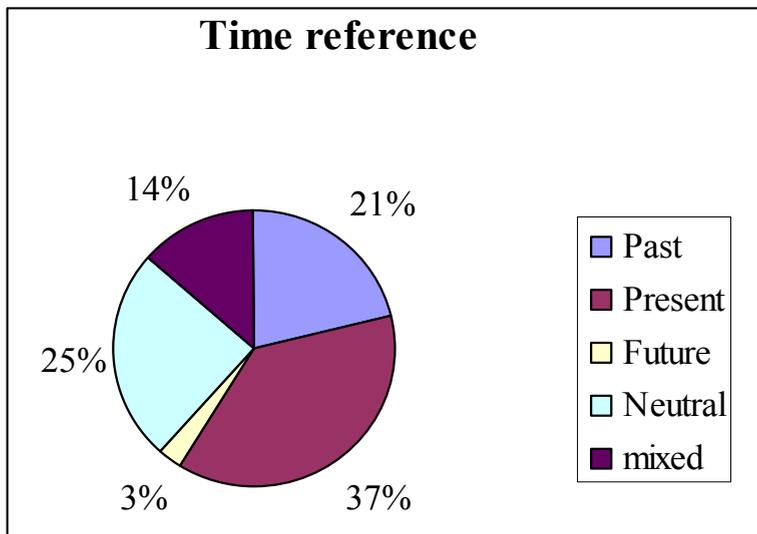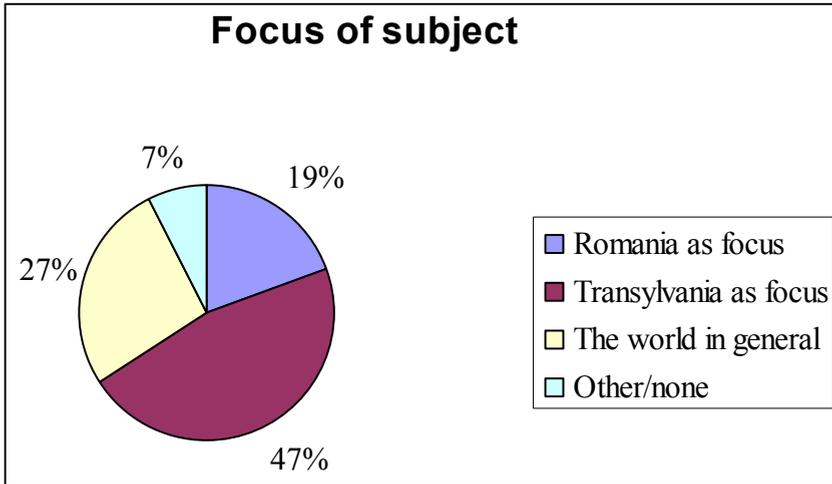
The analysis of the time reference reveals that the subjects are mostly treated in a present time reference (37%), but the need to know one's past, the need for remembering is also significant in addressing urgent matters (21%). Future time reference is not prevalent in these articles, and, since most of these texts are theoretical in their approach, this category does not apply to 25% of the articles.

Type of article

5% 5%
1%

■ Descriptive
■ Polemical
□ Dialoguing
□ Other

89%
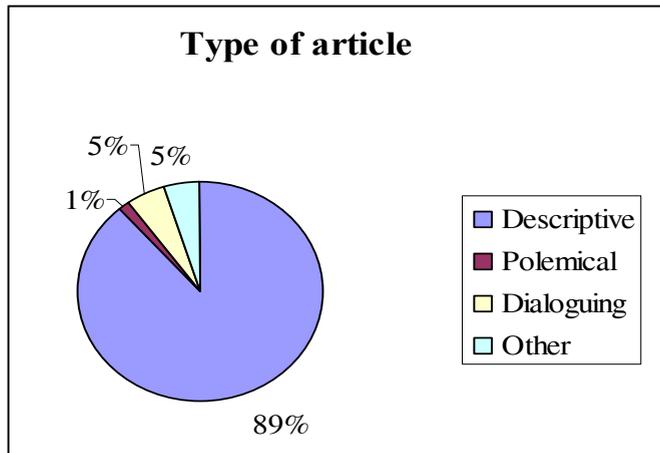
A very interesting result of the analysis is that only 1 percent of the 417 texts surveyed is polemical, and 89% are descriptive materials.

Description and comparison of the discourses

1. The analysis of articles on **media / the press** reveals the following discourses used:
   a) particularities of contemporary Hungarian written press in Romania – writings that outline the characteristics of Hungarian written press in Romania: language use, preferred subjects, ways and methods of writing or structuring of articles, the life of editorial offices, financial and other difficulties, professional competence of journalists;

b) situation of the press/media in the transition period – this discourse contains articles that present the journalistic legacy of the past regime, the press market in the economic situation of the transition period, the influence of the Romanian press, reading habits, and all the problems caused by social, economic and cultural changes in the media;

c) particularities of Hungarian press publicity in Romania – it contains mainly analytical articles, which show the particularities of Hungarian public discourse, the lack of criticism of Hungarian public life and public figures, the poetization of textual media, the intertwining of public life and the press, etc.;

d) effects of television and the internal functioning of television in Transylvania – including articles about the social and cultural effects of television, phenomena connected to it, particularities of Romanian television channels; the Hungarian television in Romania is different from this as presented in the *Korunk*, Hungarian television in Romania is meant to serve the Hungarian public life in Transylvania, and its operation is always hindered by various, primarily financial, difficulties.

2. Discourses on the **church** in the *Korunk* can be described as follows:

a) anomalies of the internal affairs of the churches – collaboration of priests with the Securitate, the need for internal renewal, needs of the congregation, ways to better reach out to the congregation, reform of sermons, description of priests' attitudes to their profession;

b) internal spiritual life of Hungarians from Romania – cohabitation, tolerance of Transylvanian churches, Transylvanian ecumenism, functioning of religious sects, their spreading in Hungary and Romania;

c) presentation of the past of the churches – the creation and life of historical churches in Transylvania in the past, presentation of the values produced by them, presentation of outstanding personalities of the churches;

d) relationship of church and schooling – the role of the church in education, the past, present and future of confessional schools.

3. **Minority discourses** of the *Korunk* can be categorized as follows:

   a) minority history of Hungarians in Romania – historical retrospection and debates on the subjects

   b) crisis of the Hungarian community, caused by the community itself – articles presenting the inner tensions of Hungarian public life in Transylvania;

   c) crisis of the Hungarian community, caused by independent factors – articles on the bad economic conditions of the country, the indifference of the Romanian political elite, intolerance of the majority society, the restricted possibilities of using one's native language, and living one's Hungarian identity;

   d) formation of a multi-layered image of minority in the reader – presentation of the life and conditions of Hungarians in Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine, and in the West, presentation of other minority groups, the life and culture of the Roma;

   e) greatness of the community – presentation of the outstanding personalities and artists, and the spiritual and artistic workshops of the Transylvanian past and present.

4. The subject of **cohabitation** is approached in four distinct discourses:

a) the problem of double identity – articles about the problems of fate, belonging, self-definition, about the situation of people living in mixed marriages;

b) mapping the possibilities of cohabitation in other communities – mainly Hungarians in Slovakia and Serbia;

c) analysis of Romanian-Hungarian cohabitation possibilities;

d) Romania's economic and political situation and its orientation and options between East and West – within the context of cohabitation.

5. The subject of **university** also appears with four discourses:

a) the university from a scientific, historical-philosophical point of view;

b) discourses on the independent Hungarian university in the context of the present situation of Transylvania;

c) the history of Bolyai University, and the past of the Hungarian university in Transylvania;

d) the university life of the world, mainly Western European countries, with help of Hungarian professors or students active there.

6. **Identity of Hungarians in Transylvania** – this subject is treated in the following discourse types:

a) presentation of the identity of Hungarians in Transylvania today, the meaning of being Transylvanian today;

b) the particular issue of being Hungarian in Transylvania today;

c) spirituality and effects of Transylvanianism, explanation and reinterpretation of the concept;

d) Transylvanianism in the context of landscape and environment, based on the concept that every society and culture is defined by its environment;

e) ethno-regional particularities of the Partium, the Banat region, the Sekler region and Inner Transylvania;

f) the Transylvanian past as a condition of a better understanding of the problems of the past and of ourselves.

Conclusion

The results of the investigation show that the issues of *Korunk* published between January 1990 and December 1999 treat the subjects presented above, considered public issues, primarily as studies, essays and journalism, due of course to the pre-defined structure of the magazine. (Based on the knowledge of the issues of the entire third period, I also argue that this tendency, regardless of the subject, is also valid for the entire period). The majority of the articles are written by Hungarian authors from Transylvania, while there is also a significant presence of Hungarian intellectuals from Hungary, in accordance with the traditions of the magazine. Romanian and foreign authors are published to the same extent. The primarily Transylvanian focus of subject treatment is natural in my opinion, while it is also due to the nature of the analyzed subjects; however, it is important to note that the national or international perspective is an attribute of almost half of the materials published in the *Korunk* in the case of the analyzed subjects. This confirms that the magazine cannot be accused of provincialism or narrowness even in the pioneering years of the mentioned period. The results also show, however, that the goals formulated in the programme article introducing the new period, namely that the magazine wishes to tackle the problems of the age in a polemical and dialogical tone, failed to be observed; but let's be honest: is there any magazine on earth that manages to live up to the goals laid down in its programme article? The (social, political, economic and any other kind of) reality often holds

back the chance of multiple voices, dialogue and constructive debates, which is also confirmed by the amount of polemical or dialoguing articles. Such writings are almost completely absent from the *Korunk* (as well) in the analyzed period. As we have seen, this period is what Attila Papp Z. calls the time of pre-professionalism or slow consolidation of the Hungarian press of Transylvania, characterized by a uniform, homogeneous discourse and the avoidance of conflicts. Another practice characteristic for the press of the age is that the timely, often taboo problems of the present are presented via the analysis of similar problems of the past, as if offering the example of the glorious past for the present, understating the current, urgent problem to be solved. The *Korunk* is no exception to this: the statistics show that the focus on the past is prevalent even in case of timely questions.

To conclude, the *Korunk* in the period between 1990 and 2000, if seen from a strictly objective perspective, fits well into the context of the Hungarian press of Transylvania. Also, the *Korunk* is a spiritual landmark in the Hungarian media of Romania as well as the overall Hungarian media, and it stands out as single and incomparable with any other similar press products in the Carpathian basin due to its structure, thematic composition, authors, subject treatment, organizational power, self-definition, renewal capacity, and the acceptance and continuation of its traditions. The *Korunk* of the first ten years of the regime change: a fallible and human, enthusiastic and modern spiritual workshop.

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GRIGORE H. GRANDEA: POLITICS, JOURNALISM AND WAR

**ŞTEFANA-OANA CIORTEA NEAMŢIU[1],
LUCIAN-VASILE SZABO[2]**

ABSTRACT: Grigore H. Grandea was one of the most important and influential Romanian journalists and publishers. He outlined in his biography that he was Lord Byron's grandson, but this is false. Grandea worked for several important publications such as *Dâmboviţa*, *Albina Pindului*, *Timpul* and *Războiul*. He was appreciated by Mihai Eminescu and mocked by Titu Maiorescu. At *Timpul*, Grandea worked with Ioan Slavici, another prominent journalist and publisher, and this happened just before Eminescu joined the editorial staff. Grandea's most important realisation was the daily gazette *Războiul*, the most powerful newspaper of its days. *Războiul* had at a certain point a circulation of 15 000 to 18 000 copies per day, compared to *Timpul*, which had a circulation between 3 000 and 6 000 copies per day. Grandea polemized with the representatives of the Liberal Party, at the time being in power, and especially with C. A. Rosetti, political leader and publisher at the daily newspaper *Românul*.

Key-word: *Grandea, Războiul, Eminescu, Timpul, newspapers*

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"Grandfather" Lord Byron

According to his memoirs, Grigore H. Grandea was born on the 26th of October 1843, in Ţăndărei, Ialomiţa, and died on the 8th of October 1897, in Bacău, where he lived at that time. The publisher and journalist lived a rough, bitter and very adventurous life. His biography included fictional chapters that show an exuberant and surprising phantasy. His genealogy is fantastic, Grandea claiming firmly that he was Lord Byron's grandson, the wellknown English poet! His talent to narrate shows from crayoning this contrafactual story, in which Lord Byron has met Grandea's grandmother on a trip to Greece. He fell in love with her. The amorous adventure with Ianta, the wife of a merchant, is followed by the birth of Haralambie Georgiu, the father of the publicist.[3]. The father died in Grigore's early childhood. Grigore remained with his step-mother with whom he didn't get well along, as he had a suspicious and stubborn character. Later he possessed a consistent part of his father's fortune, but most of it will be spent on his journalistic adventures. Grigore Haralambie Grandea attended approximative schools, including the one for health care agents, founded by Carol Davila. It was a soldierly regime, not easy to endure. In 1859 the young man come accross Dimitrie Bolintineanu who offers him support. In the same year Bolintineanu will publish Grandea's lyrics in *Dâmboviţa*.

Trying to figure out his political affiliations, we observe a small variation, allowing us to believe that Grandea was – like Eminescu – mostly a convinced antiliberal. He also crossed a small period when he attacked the conservators, because Titu Maiorescu provoked him to leave the office of *Timpul*[4], calling him, as Călinescu mentions, "H.

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[3] Pavel Ţugui, *Prefaţă*, in Grigore H. Grandea, *Scrieri*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1974, p. VI.

[4] Lucian-Vasile Szabo, *Un alt Slavici. O geografie publicistică după gratii*, Editura Universităţii de Vest, Timişoara, 2012, pp. 158-164.

Grandea, this total cipher"[5], a subjective and inaccurate assessment, of course. For a long period the journalist manifests himself as a republican, taking part in the campaign against King Carol I. As an admirer of Cuza, he militates in 1866 in favour of a ruler from inside the United Principalities, signing with I. C. Lerescu the paper *Dorinţele a doi români şi mediile de a le vedea realitate* [*The Wishes of two Romanians and the Means to See Them Come True*][6]. He also signs articles at *Strechea*, a gazzette edited by the above mentioned I. C. Lerescu, his targets being C. A. Rosetti[7] and I. C. Brătianu[8].

Accused in the Assassination Attempt against Brătianu

Later, in 1880, he will be arrested and imprisoned, because he was considered to have been part of the group that attempted to assassinate I. C. Brătianu, an involvement which has not been proved, the accusation being somehow delirious. The attack was organised by the "Secret Romanian Committee of 50", which had only three active people. They "sentenced" prime-minister Bratianu to death, the sentence was going to be executed by Ion G. Pietraru. On the 2nd (14th) of December 1880, he attacked Brătianu with a knife at the entrance to the Lower Chamber. He didn't have the strength to stab the prime-minister, who defended himself and suffered small injuries. A member of the Parliament intervened and knocked down Pietraru with his cane[9]. The attacker and his companions were arrested, judged

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[5] George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, Editura Minerva, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 367.

[6] The leaflet appeared in March 1866 exactly in Belgium, where Grandea was a student.

[7] Liberal politician, editor of the daily newspaper *Românul*.

[8] Future liberal prime minister of Romania, from 1876 to 1888.

[9] Constantin Bacalbaşa, *Bucureştii de altădată (1878-1884)*, Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1993, p. 77.

and condemned after a few months. Grigore H. Grandea himself was arrested and spent four weeks in the Văcăreşti prison, being released on the 30th of December 1880 (the 11th of January 1881). Grandea was accused to be part of the conspiracy, who he supported by publishing propaganda material of the "Secret Romanian Committee of 50" in *Războiul*. Afterwards it was proved to have been an abuse of the government and judicial servility; no proof of his guilt was found. Related to this subject, in a polemical article in 1883[10], Mihai Eminescu will discuss important elements in order to understand the events. The journalist from *Timpul* will advance the opinion that the assassination attempt was orchestrated by prime-minister I. C. Brătianu personally, in an effort to victimize himself and to reobtain his lost popularity after a 12 year non-stop governance. Eminescu will refer to the pardon given by King Carol I on the 10th of May (the national day of the Kingdom of Romania, the coronation day of King Carol I) and will suggest that it was an orchestrated event: "This is the reason why his police agent Cârlova, his school inspector from Ilfov, Pătescu, his public official Pietraru, appointed at the Ministry of Finances have done him this pleasure with a kitchen knife rasped in advanced at a point where it was prepared to break in two"[11]. Eminescu's claims seem exaggerated, so it is no wonder that they will be vehemently disputed by the liberal newspaper *Telegraful*, where we can identify the pen of his powerful journalistic and political opponent Nicu Xenopol[12]. Nevertheless, we see Eminescu preoccupied by the techniques of manipulation of the public opinion, recognizing them at governmental level but also capable of using them in his writing.

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[10] Simply entitled *Bucureşti, 14 mai 1883* and attributed to Eminescu by N. Georgescu ('Eminescu despre dreptul de graţie', *Pro Saeculum*, XIII, no. 3-4 (95-96), Aprilie 15th – June, 1st 2014).

[11] *Timpul*, VIII, no. 108, 15 (27) May 1883.

[12] N. Georgescu, 'Eminescu, ultima zi la Timpul (9)', *Cultura*, XII, no. 249, November, 10th 2011.

Should we make a comparison between Eminescu and Grandea, it is evident that the style of the author of the *Luceafărul* was far better. But, as a universal journalist, Grandea has a direct style and a nose for news, especially on miscellaneous events and less for politics. Eminescu will treat them on a serious tone, with arguments and amplifications, whereas his predecessor at the direction of *Timpul* will have shorter articles, without going into depth, but with an opening to a sensationalist approach. He will prefer diversity, sometimes the facile notes, but will surpass Eminescu in newspaper management, *Războiul* being more dynamic than *Timpul*. The two won't be in conflict, moreover Eminescu will write in an appreciative tone about Grandea, which doesn't happen too often. Remembering the police backlashes started after the attempt of assasination of prime minister I. C. Brătianu, Eminescu will opine that the moral authors, the conspiracy can be found in the middle of the governing party: "Instead, the police is using the pretext of the assassination attempt in order to arrest the people who it dislikes: Mr. Grandea for the rigorousness of his writing, Mr. Gălăşescu for being a police inspector in the conservatory government"[13].

It would be wrong to see Grandea as apolitical or above the precise political questions, neither a liberal nor a conservative; because he attacked the first ones and he spared the others. His tone was one of the most balanced at the time, which made him a great journalist. He was passionate about his writing, but didn't make much money out of journalism, not even when his gazettes had sold a lot, had a large circulation. The daily life expenses he will cover with his income as a teacher, same thing that happened to Ioan Slavici. He will cope with Maiorescu, even with some of the liberals, but C. A. Rosetti, the famous republican and eminent publisher of the daily newspaper

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[13] *Timpul*, VI, no. 4, January 6th (18th) 1881.

Românul will stay his permanent enemy. Grandea's anger dated from 1860, when C. A. Rosetti, who became minister of education and cult cut off his 300 lei scholarship, offered by the former minister Ion Ghica, also liberal, for support in school.[14]

He will make a mock of Rosetti in his novel *Vlăsia sau ciocoii noi* [*Vlăsia or Old and New Parvenues*], where he lends him the name of Băboi (one of the chapters is entitled "Băboi's Clique"), his companion in adventures being Sclipici, alias I. C. Brătianu. The novel *Vlăsia sau ciocoii noi* appeared in its first version, as a feuilleton in his newspaper *Războiul*, in 1880. The title used in the newspaper was *Berlicoco*, C. A. Rosetti's nickname. The literary historians, except Călinescu, don't persevere upon Grandea's writings, he is just mentioned sporadically. E. g. Alexandru Piru will underline his propensity to phantastic and mistery, on a popular aisle or with up to date themes like transmigration[15].

Grigore H. Grandea also tried his hand on translations, mainly from classical German literature (Goethe). His translations were published e.g. in *Albina Pindului*[16] and show the preoccupation for accuracy, but Grandea fails in the poetic part – one more sign of his quite "journalistic" nature. Grandea's admiration for Goethe's writings went so far that he created a "local version of *Werther*, the novel *Fulga sau Ideal și Real* [*Fulga or Ideal and Real*] in 1887"[17].

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[14] Pavel Țugui, *op. cit.*, p. XIII.

[15] Alexandru Piru, *Istoria literaturii române de la început până azi*, Editura Univers, București, 1981, pp. 100-101.

[16] Rudolf Windisch, 'Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Faust-Übersetzungen: Dan Mănucă', *Philologica Jassyensia*, IV (1), 2008.

[17] As Alexandru Guțu remarked in an opening speech of a Goethe-symposium on April, 15th 1998 in Romania, when the Goethe-Gesellschaft was founded. See *http://www.ggr.ro/goeanspr.htm* (accessed on 13.07.2015).

Surgeon's assistant, journalist and defendant

After incredibile adventures as a surgeon's assistant in a region or a regiment, the young poet (who published the volume *Miosostis* in 1860) became in 1862 a batallion doctor, viceprincipal of the medicine and pharmacy school, as well as a substitute professor of compared anatomy and zoology. The young man, not even 20 by that time, didn't resist for a year in these functions and in spring 1863 he is dismissed. Then we note Grandea's first outing as a controverter, because in the publication *Reforma* he will address a very harsh letter to general Davila, who protected him until then, but who, because of the indiscipline of the young man was forced to dismiss him from the functions, but also from the army. As Pavel Țugui remarks: "The polemics in the press and the scandal irritates the authorities who ordered Grandea's arrest, his trial by a military commission, demotion in rank to a soldier and, by a high order (in June 1863), signed by Al. I. Cuza, wiping him off the army lists"[18]. He then entered the arena of journalism and became the assiduous contributor of the *Reforma* gazette, afterwards, being encouraged by Bolintineanu, he became a publisher of the periodical *Dâmbovița*. His medical adventure started in 1855 will continue in 1865 with a period at the Colțea hospital where the young guy will be a surgeon's assistant, will assist in surgeries and work night shifts.

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[18] Pavel Țugui, *op. cit.*, p. XV. Grandea will maintain a contradictory attitude towards general Davila, who, as it was quite normal, during the war 1877-1878, had the responsibility to medically assist the soldiers on the field. The generalul will sometimes be criticized for some deficiences, some information also appeared in *Războiul*. In the issue no. 18, from August 9th (21st), the publisher will defend Davila against an attack coming from the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung*, inspired, as Grandea believed, by he editors of *Românul*, and therefore persons from prime minister I. C. Brătianu's entourage. In the issue no. 29 of *Războiului* there was reproduced "below, with pleasure" a telegramm from General Davila being thankful "for defending him".

Between 1868 and 1870, Grandea will be involved, under Bolintineanu's supervision, in editing the first cycle of *Albina Pindului*, a very important cultural publication. He will succeed in catalysing the effervescent spirits of the literary life in Bucharest, as he did with *Convorbiri literare* in Iași (later on also in Bucharest) with which he tried to rivale. Pavel Țugui will consider that "it was the most important publication edited by Grandea"[19]. This is largely correct, but also *Războiul*, his later gazette will benefit from the same consideration. *Albina Pindului* continued to appear in the following years, but the new series or issues won't come near the value or glory of the initial ones. The first issues appeared between June, 15th 1868 and April, 1st, 1970, the second one, this time in Craiova, between 1875 and 1876[20]. 1875 marks an important year in Grandea's career, because, after a long time of collaboration at the conservatory daily *Presa*, the leader of the party, Lascăr Catargiu, gives him the task to edit *Curierul Bucureștilor*. It is the forerunner of the newspaper *Timpul*, which appeared on March, 15th 1876 under Grigore H. Grandea's coordination. One of the main editors of the daily *Timpul* in this period will be Ioan Slavici, responsible for the literary part and the external column.

Grandea left *Timpul* in summer 1877, in July, because he considered the publication had no future[21]. The daily started to slide. In a letter, addressed to Iacob Negruzzi, Slavici mentioned: "For 14 days nobody came to *Timpul*, so that only two persons, Pompilian and me are filling the columns"[22]. Nevertheless, in a note in *Războiul* we found

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[19] *Ibidem*, p. XVII.

[20] George Munteanu, '*Familia*, *Tribuna* and other Transilvanian publications from that time', in Șerban Cioculescu (coord.), *Istoria literaturii române*, III, Epoca marilor clasici, Editura Academiei, București, 1973, p. 545.

[21] Lucian-Vasile Szabo, *Un alt Slavici. O geografie publicistică după gratii* [*Another Slavici. A Geography of Journalism behind Barrs*], Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2012, p. 161.

[22] I. E. Torouțiu, *Studii și documente literare* [*Studies and Literary Documents*], II, Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina, București, 1932, p. 280.

out that by the end of August 1877, Grandea appeared before the jury exactly because of his articles from *Timpul*: "A new trial for a journalist: Mr. Grandea, editor of the daily *Timpul*, was sued again. As they didn't manage to convict him at the court of jury, now the Court in Ilfov will judge him on October, 15th. Just to make sure! Why shouldn't be justice in Bucharest?"[23] He won't be condemned here either. The tactics of the authorities should be remarked, after being discharged by the jury, Grandea will appear in front of a criminal court, by this it moved from press misdemeanour to another more serious level. There were even more harassments from the authorities. From the issue 11 (23) noiembrie 1877 of the daily *Războiul* we find out that "two police agents" searched for Grandea at the print office bringing him a citation. Because they didn't find the editor, who stayed at home, being sick, and because they didn't want to come again, the agents threw the citation at the feet of the institution's concierge.

From *Timpul* to *Războiul*

The dismissal from *Timpul* will be announced in *Războiul*, where also the date is pointed out: October, 1st. One of the reasons is that he believed that he will be spared the "thoughts necessarily imposed by a political party"[24]. Under these circumstances, Dimitrie Vatamaniuc's consideration isn't valid, that Grandea would have left *Timpul* during summer: "In July 1877 even Gr. H. Grandea will leave the editorial department, in order to edit *Războiul*, an illustrated daily newspaper, which gained large popularity in the beginning"[25].

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[23] *Războiul*, I no. 37, August, 28th (September 9th) 1877.

[24] *Războiul*, I, no. 72, October 2nd (14th) 1877.

[25] Eminescu at Timpul (1877 – 1883), România liberă (1888) and Fântâna Blanduziei (1888 – 1889), an introduction to M. Eminescu, *Opere, X, Publicistică, 1 noiembrie 1877 – 15 februarie 1880* [*Works, X, Journalism, November 1st 1877, February 15th 1880*], Editura Academiei, București, 1989, pp. V-XXI.

Regarding *Timpul*, after a month, Maiorescu, because of Slavici's insistencies, will bring Mihai Eminescu at the newspaper. Slavici was left almost alone at the paper and was preparing it with two or three collaborators, all of them being underpayed.

One of the reasons of this desastruous state of facts, besides the disinterest of the grand conservatories, is, doubtless, the vivid competition by Grandea's *Războiul*, although he continued his good relations with Slavici and Eminescu and it is possible that he even helped them for a while. Despite Eminescu's amazing articles, *Timpul* won't recover; moreover it will continue to pass moments of downfall. The edition will drop, while the edition of *Războiul* will rise at an amazing rate. In his correspondence, Slavici will note: "During Maiorescu's directorship at *Timpul*, the newspaper was printed in 6.000 copies. Now it turned down to 2 000. Hopefully it will soon rise again, because the real reason was the war and *Războiul*[26] that prints 12 – 18.000 copies, an extraordinary thing in Romania"[27]. On another occasion I showed that Slavici underestimated war as a topic in journalism, especially because during the War of Independence the United Principalities of Romania didn't implement measures of censoring the press[28]. Grandea will once publish a *Note*, where we can read that: "Until today over 1.715.440 papers were printed out of the issues of this newspaper. We have the right to be proud of that and meanwhile the duty to thank the public for supporting us in accomplishing this difficult and delicate mission we imposed on us under these serious circumstances".[29] These numbers show an average of 11.600 copies per issues, which is quite impressive, the newspaper being on the market only for five month.

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[26] It's a pun: "războiul" means "the war".

[27] Letter addressed to Iacob Negruzzi, in I. E. Torouţiu, *Studii şi documente literare* [Studies and Literary Documents], II, Institutul de Arte Grafice Bucovina, Bucureşti, 1932, p. 267.

[28] Lucian-Vasile Szabo, 'Obiectivare, reguli şi polemici' [Objectification, Rules and Polemics], in Ilie Rad (ed.), *Obiectivitatea în journalism* [*Objectivity in Journalism*], EdituraTritonic, Bucureşti, Bucureşti, 2012, pp. 199-217.

[29] *Războiul*, I, no. 146, December 15th (27th) 1877.

The glory days of the daily *Războiul* were between July 1877 and June 1879, when between the newspaper and the printers Thiel and Weiss existed a good communication. The sponsoring printers will start to believe that they can make profit without sharing it anymore with Grandea. It will be a mistake, of course, because the journalist was the soul of the gazzette, meaning a skilled journalist, energetic, full of passion. Thiel and Weiss won't care for and will chase him away, forcing him to edit another paper. It will enter the market on March 25th (Aprilie, 6th) 1880 and it will be named... *Războiul*[30]! It will be another piece in the process with the printers. Grandea will fight on two fronts, at two publications, in this period, as he did in 1877, until Eminescu's arrival at *Timpul*.

The journalistic impetus fades out

Constantin Bacalbașa remembers in his memoires that Prince Grigore Sturdza (also known as beizadea Mitică or beizadea Vitello, because he trained himself by lifting a calf!) financed the printing of a big format daily named *Democrația națională*[31]. The newspaper survived until September 1880. Gr. H. Grandea will be placed as the editor of this publication with Russian friendly accents, surprisingly because his position of denouncing the abuses of the Tzarist Empire was well known. Moreover, his journalistic qualities will be questioned: "The newspaper, low-pitched and flat, will have as an editor-in-chief the poet and publicist Gr. H. Grandea"[32]. Tiberiu Avramescu considers

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[30] Pavel Ţugui, *op. cit.*, p. XXI.

[31] Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureştii de altădată (1878-1884)* [*Former Bucharest (1878-1884)*], *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 71.

[32] Tiberiu Avramescu, note in Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureştii de altădată*, (1871-1877) [*Former Bucharest* (*1871-1877*)], Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1987, p. 79.

even *Războiul* as a shallow newspaper, stating that "the publication coordinated by G. H. Grandea occupies a modest place in our press history"[33], an allegation we cannot subscribe to.

The period after the War for Independence will be one of intense journalistic activity for Grandea, during the long liberal governance, with which Grandea's *Războiul* was at permanent... war. In 1886, the newspaper had great problems and appeared with intermitencies having on its frontispiece the denomination *Războiul român*. This happened until 1889, when Grigore H. Grandea's daily journalistic activity comes to an end. It will appear ephemerously, until 1892, sometimes under the name *Războiul vechi*. I. Hangiu states precisely that for a short period, between May, 6th and October, 24th, the publication appeared as *Steaua Dunării*, apparently at M. Kogălniceanu's recommandation, who had edited a gazette with this name before[34]. Around 1887, Grandea published for a short time (July, 2nd – August, 3rd), the daily *Sentinela*.

Slowly his polemics with his old enemy C. A. Rosetti and the team around *Românul* will rise. Rules of journalistic behaviour are established and published in these cases: "We receive articles on contestations on a daily basis, which we refuse because they contain polemics. The newspaper *Resboiul* imposed on itself not to start any polmic with anyone, only in important cases and upon things of interest to the public"[35]. In the issue no. 5 we register a first reply to the accusations of the liberal newspaper: "By announcing the publishing of our gazette, *Românul* accuses us of fighting a hard war with the liberal party, although we promise to be without passion or

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[33] *Ibidem*, p. 147.

[34] I. Hangiu, *Dicționar al presei literare românești (1790 – 1982* [*Dictionary of the Romanian Literary Press (1790-1981)*]), Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1987, p. 259.

[35] *Războiul*, I, no. 129, November 28th (December 10th) 1877.

interest for one of the parties. We admit that we didn't expect such an unjust accusation"[36]. Later he wants to make another clarification, starting from a probably intentional confusion made by Rosetti, because swearing at any time doesn't mean the liberty of the press[37]. Constantin Bacalbaşa, a journalist and memorialist with evident liberal affinities, notes, while making a panorama of the press in that period: "*Războiul*, the most widely spread newspaper at the time, a paper of fearsome opposition, published by the typographer Weiss, but edited by the poet Haralambie Grandea"[38]. The information about a "fearsome opposition" isn't exactly right...

He made up with Maiorescu, who, at the beginning of 1889, appointed him as substitute teacher at a school in Bacău[39]. Here he meets the widow Fotinia Bâcu, who will become his third wife. He starts hiking, and life seems calmer, but he's constantly threatened with his withdrawal, because he cannot get a permanent teaching job. Grigore H. Grandea accomplished University studies at the Faculty of Philology and Philosophy in Bucharest (despite he didn't finish college), and in 1866 he came to Liège. He had good results here again and came close to a Ph.D. He got sick and didn't come to the last exams. This put him into a somehow awkward situation, because he was always at the mercy of the government for the position of a substitute teacher, because his journalistic activity as well as the one as a writer brought him just a small income. At the age of 54, G. H. Grandea prepared for degree examination at the University in Bucharest, planned for autumn 1897. He didn't come to give it. In

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[36] *Idem*, I, no. 5, July 27th (August 8th) 1877.

[37] *Idem*, I, no. 11, August 2nd (14th) 1877.

[38] Constantin Bacalbaşa, *Bucureştii de altădată*, (1871-1877) [*Former Bucharest* (*1871-1877*)], Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1987, pp. 264-265.

[39] Titu Maiorescu became minister of education and cults again in the conservatory government that followed the long liberal domination from 1876 to 1888.

summer he fell severely sick, being partially paralysed following a stroke. He suffered dreadfully, so that death was a relief when it occured on November, 8th. This is how one of the greatest Romanian journalists ended almost completely forgotten.

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POST-PROCESSING ERRORS IN ADVERTISING PHOTOGRAPHY

IOANA-ANDREEA FILIPAŞ[1]

ABSTRACT: In order to be appealing and therefore increase the chances of the product to be sold, advertising photographs must be of a high quality from a compositional and technical perspective. For that level of quality to be reached, the raw photographs are most of the time retouched. As the post-processing technology evolved, the possibilities of photo editing became infinite. However, the more complex and advanced the post-processing operations are, the higher are the chances of making errors. This study aims to identify the most frequent post-processing errors in advertising photography, the reasons which lead to these errors, and the way in which they affect the advertising campaigns.

Keywords: advertising photography, digital post-processing, photo editing

I. Post-processing in advertising photography. Overview and theoretical considerations

Advertising photography

Before the First World War, drawing was the main type of illustration used in advertising. Shortly after the war ended, photographs

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slowly started to replace the drawings, becoming more and more appreciated for their abilities to transmit "the joys and benefits of consumerism" (Johnston, 1997). While visualizing an advertisement, the image is the first element which captures attention. Depending on how attractive or intriguing the image looks to them, the consumers decide whether they will go through the rest of the advertisement or move on. The photograph "should help more than anything else could do in like space, else use that something else." (Hopkins, 2007), which is why it should be carefully prepared, starting with the subject choice, the props, and the setup, and ending with the selection and the post-processing.

As time passed, advertising photography became more and more cosmeticized, becoming a strong catalyst for imagining an ideal universe and for projecting wishes which, thus, started to seem achievable. "Advertising promises to fulfil the parts of the viewing individual that are still unfulfilled" (Bate, 2009), making it look like beauty is only one cream jar away, family lunches are happier when there is a Coca-Cola bottle around, and the differences between social classes vanish once the housewives start using the same cheap and efficient detergent. "Advertising is a domain of social fantasy that exists to provide for and exploit the gaps, the 'voids', in the social structure. Advertising promises to fulfil the parts of the viewing individual that are still unfulfilled." (Bate, 2009), which is why the advertisements are very persuasive into convincing one to purchase a product or a service. Obviously, a soda bottle is not expected to solve the family malfunctions, but many times the good feeling, the positive vibe, and the social fantasy Bate mentioned, transmitted by the advertisement, are enough to determine the purchase.

In *Scientific advertising* (2007), Claude Hopkins highlights the importance of transmitting a positive message through the advertisement. The main aim of the advertisement is to attract the

customer, to make them interested in the product, to make them wish to own it, in order to later purchase it. If it doesn't interest the client from the very beginning, it will most probably not do it afterwards, either. If the advertisement is illustrated, it becomes the task of the illustration to arouse interest. The practices of the advertising agencies and the standards of the industry led to the current situation, where a photograph must go through several post-processing operations before becoming part of an advertisement.

In *Killing us softly*, Jean Kilbourne analyses the image of women in advertising and presents countless gender stereotypes developed and encouraged through advertisements. "I've focused on advertising because I've always considered it to be a very powerful educational force.", Kilbourne states (*Killing us softly IV*, 2010), highlighting the fact that, considering the spreading of the ads, in various forms, which makes it impossible for the audience to ignore them, the message transmitted through advertisements becomes an even bigger issue. Another important fact to consider, she states, is that most of the images and messages are processed subconsciously: "Ads sell more than products. They sell values, they sell images, they sell concepts of love and sexuality, of success, and perhaps more important, of normalcy. To a great extent they tell us who we are and who we should be." (ibid.) The standards created, however, are not reflections of reality, according to Kilbourne, but there is a lot of effort put into creating them, and post-processing has an important role in this.

Post-processing the photographic image. Instruments and functions

If photographic genres such as travel, street, or even fine art leave room for and sometimes even encourage small imperfections in the photographs, this does not apply for advertising photography,

where the images must be flawless and there is no room for overexposures, underexposures, improper cropping, unwanted items in the image, or subjects out of focus. When the raw photographs contain errors or this kind, retaking them is not an option; besides, the photographs should be of high quality from a compositional and technical perspective, they should have strong colours and sharpness, and they should be dynamic and appealing - and all of these improvements and corrections are to be done with photo editing software.

Therefore, post-processing is considered one of the decisive stages of the creative process, ″because of its capacity to change both the vision and some aspects of the photographs″ (Asaftei, 2010). Although photo editing is subject to constant debates, when it comes to advertising photography, its importance and necessity are, most of the times, obvious: ″There is (…) another category of photographs, where the collateral interests throw a shadow of suspicion over any image – advertising. In this case, however, we meet them with precaution, knowing they were created and manipulated to present an idealized hypostasis of the product.″ (Hurn & Jay, 2012).

Digital photography post-processing is made with special programs, which can be either RAW editors (Adobe Lightroom, Aperture) or pixel by pixel / raster editors (Adobe Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, PaintShop Pro). Adobe Photoshop is a raster graphics editing software created in 1988 by Adobe Systems, and it has been the most used software of this kind at a global level ever since. Over twenty versions of Photoshop have been launched in the past twenty-seven years, each one bringing significant improvements to the previous ones.

With user-friendly interface and tools which allow various editing actions, Photoshop is designed for both amateurs and professionals, offering the possibility to apply basic adjustments (exposure, contrast,

tones, cropping, straightening etc.) and also to create more complex editing (adding / removing elements from a picture, creating collages, applying effects, dramatically changing the appearance of an object etc.).

"Digital is fundamentally different from analog because there is no original image. The RAW file is just data. To even see an image requires processing." (Campbell in Alexander, 2014). There is a series of basic photo editing functions out of which many are tolerated when it comes to photography competitions and press photography, if used properly: cropping and straightening (used to eliminate unwanted items and to reframe the images), lighting adjustments (brightness, contrast, exposure), colour temperature / white balance adjustments. Aside from these, there are several more advanced and more intrusive functions, with a stronger effect on the final image: increasing or decreasing saturation, dramatically changing the colours and tints, adding or removing items from an image, blurring, applying various filters etc.

Post-processing errors. Case study: Photoshop Disasters

Founded in 2006, *Photoshop Disasters* (*psdisasters.com*) was the first website focused entirely on presenting post-processing errors in commercial photography (advertising photography, fashion photography, press photography, product photography etc.). The so-called "Photoshop abuse" (About, n.d.) of the media is penalized by the editors, who analyse and criticise all the photographs of this kind identified by them and by their readers.

According to the statistics published by the representatives of *psdisasters.com* (ibid.), in 2014, the website had an average number of over one million monthly unique visitors. The *Photoshop Disasters* team members and also some of the contributors are themselves

photographers, editors, or graphic designers, therefore their experience with visual communication and visual products makes it easy for them to spot post-processing errors in photography.

The *Photoshop Disasters* team has frequently criticised, over the years, fashion giants such as Victoria's Secret, Gucci, Ralph Lauren, and also famous fashion magazines, such as *Elle* and *Vogue,* for their misuse of photo editors in some of their advertisements and pictorials. Several articles published on psdisasters.com were taken and reproduced by media institutions such as *The New York Times, AdWeek, BBC World News, The Huffington Post, The Daily Mail* etc. (ibid.).

The website has been shut down in September 2015, but it was put back in the spring of 2016, with a new layout, new structure, and new materials. Currently, the posts are divided into eleven categories: *NSFW, Questionable, Body part, Clone stamp, Disproportionate, Lorem Ipsum, Perspective, Reflection, Shadow, Watermark,* and *Other.* The archive from 2006 to 2015 has not been entirely preserved, therefore a great majority of the old posts is now inaccessible. The website used to publish annual hierarchies of the biggest Photoshop disasters, based on the reach and impact of the articles published throughout the year on *psdisasters.com,* until 2013, when they published the last *Top 10 Photoshop Disasters.*

Given the recent changes in the structure and content of the website and also the fact that no new hierarchies were published during the past three years, we have decided to analyse all the advertising photographs which are currently to be found on the website. Out of the 285 posts published by May 14th, 2016, 73 featured advertising photographs – including posters (event, movie, theatre play) and advertising materials of any kind, retrieved from both print and online. There have not been taken into consideration magazine pictorials, CD and DVD covers, magazine covers, catalogue

photographs, and any other photographs which were not used for advertising purposes, but to illustrate products.

This paper is based on an older unpublished research on *Photoshop Disasters,* from 2013, when we have analysed the post-processing errors from the advertising photographs included in *Top 10 Photoshop Disasters 2010, 2011,* and *2012.* The analysis grid used back then to determine the frequency of the different types of post-processing errors identified has now been adapted and reused for the same purpose (Appendix). We have now identified the following categories of errors: incompletely exposed bodies and objects (the bodies and objects are lacking significant parts), disproportionalities (some parts of the bodies are bigger than they should be, compared to the rest of the bodies), overlapping / combined layers errors (several images combined create an unrealistic or disproportional collage; e.g. objects in the foreground are partially covered by objects in the background), extra elements left in the image (unnecessary or unwanted items, usually parts of objects and bodies, remain entirely or partially in the final collage), reflections (the reflected image does not correspond to the reflected object), lights and shadows, colours (while creating the collage, some of the layers have not had the lights and shadows, respectively the colours, adjusted accordingly), and unrealistic positions (the changes of the body shapes and proportions have led to unrealistic and unnatural postures).

Most of the posts' titles do not reveal any information regarding the types of errors, but instead consist of short, sarcastic comments, more or less hint-offering, such as: *Did they even try?; Half man half boy; Santa's mutant hand; Great concept, badly executed; Nightmares are made of these; Beer commercial; It's all in the hips; Perfume, a lion, Kirsten Dunst, oh, my!* etc. Some titles, however, give stronger hints regarding the errors encountered: *Huge head; Hard to get the soda without feet; Photoshop*

haircut; Long thumb; They didn't teach you this lighting setup in art school; Be yourself (except thinner); Replay ad long arm weird waist; Lose weight by chopping off legs; Whose body is it? etc. Things are slightly different when it comes to the captions of the images, which are mostly descriptive, with an emphasis on the errors: *Crazy perspectives, bizarre shadows, and all-around creepy feelings abound in this Fancy Feast ad…; As can be seen, there's some crazy photoshopped sucking-in of the midriff going on here.; How did they make it look like he was wearing heels?; Is her arm webbed? What's up with her waist? And that awkwardly turned leg?; It would be awesome to find out why the head was changed for the Korean Basic Instinct 2 poster. Problem is they forgot the mirror in the back.; Parents watch out she might swallow your kids.; For anybody not familiar with a 'tark'. It is basically a small woman that makes everything look big! Imagine what you could make big all of a sudden…The possibilities are endless!.* Other captions do not highlight the errors, nor offer hints on what might be wrong with the images, but instead are just sarcastic comments: *Their commercials are hilarious…not sure if they did this one on purpose or just got lazy.; I've seen worse mistakes, but still worth posting here.; - Hi, we need your ad in 2 minutes. – Ok sh*t, but I got an idea! I'll just merge a few pictures and put some yellow background and it's perfect…; This German movie Im Juli (In July) shows quite the impossible.; First picture: I'll accept that. Second picture: Try again. Third picture: No way!; Where do you want to fly today?.*

We could observe a great variety of products in the analysed advertisements: perfumes, clothing products, cosmetics and personal care products, electronic devices, drinks, movies, plays, medicines, services, food suplements etc. Human characters are present in most of the analysed materials (66 of 73), and their bodies are usually the areas of the advertisements where the post-processing errors occur, their anatomies being dramatically and unrealistically changed. The most frequently encountered errors were related to unrealistic positions

(48 of the 66 photographs of people), disproportionalities (46), and overlapping / combined layers (42). 40 of the images include layers with unadapted lights and shadows, 22 have unadapted colours, whereas 12 include reflection errors, and 5 include extra elements. The incomplete exposure of the bodies led to unrealistic – sometimes even grotesque – images, the fact that parts of the bodies are missing becoming very obvious. The lighting errors led to obtaining volumeless photographs that look artificial and present no credibility. The disproportionalities created strong asymmetries which also led to artificial-looking images, and so did the overlapping layers errors. Six of the analysed ads feature women whose bodies have been modified in order to make their waist, thighs or legs thinner – which leads back to Jean Kilbourne's statements about the ideals of beauty created through ads. Luckily or not, in these analysed cases, the consumer can easily tell how the real bodies look like and can get an idea about how dramatical the changes of the human features are in the post-processing stage.

Basically, every type of post-processing error – or the combination of several errors, which can be found in most of the cases analysed – led to the occurence of so-called *Photoshop disasters*, one way or another. There are, still, commentators who consider the errors either unexistant or subtle and harmless, sometimes pointing out that that certain images shouldn't be considered Photoshop disasters. When talking about disproportionalities and unrealistic positions, however, nobody argues about the disastrous post-processing. It is often that users (visitors) leave comments describing the error, if the post itself doesn't do it.

The general conclusion of this analysis is that the post-processing errors lead to a diminution of credibility, the images becoming flat, implausible, and unrealistic for whoever has a minimum of visual common sense. However, there is a question that remains: in which way do these errors affect the advertising campaign?

Advertising photography in the perception of Romanian photographers

We wanted to learn what photographers think about the importance of post-processing in advertising photography, about the causes which lead to post-processing errors, and about how these errors affect the campaigns. The brief interview consisting of these three questions was emailed to twenty-five Romanian photographers in May 2013. While choosing the respondents, we decided to stick to experienced photographers (who have, among others, done fashion, product, or wedding photography for clients), considering they have enough knowledge in the fields of visual communication and photography to provide us with pertinent opinions regarding our topic. They are specialised in various photographic genres and have different levels of expertise, most of them working with commercial photography: fashion, wedding, portrait, product etc. Another important aspect to consider is that they all use post-processing on a constant basis. Another aspect worth mentioning is that we decided not to choose photographers from advertising agencies, because we wanted to avoid the opinions based on revenues, turnovers, analysis, and evaluations of advertising campaigns and agencies.

 Out of the twenty-five photographers, ten (40%) have answered our questions: Tudor Platon, Vlad Eftenie, Andreea Retinschi, Andrea Blaga, Călin Ilea, Monica Murgu, Alex Vâncu, Rareș Pulbere, Christina One, Oana Celine. Their answers helped us in pulling some conclusions regarding our concerns with advertising photography.

First of all, our respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of post-processing in advertising photography (Q1: *How important is post-processing in advertising photography?*). They have all agreed it is a highly important step in the creation of advertising photographs, and that it is vital to the advertising campaign. Some

have concluded that the advertising industry raised a standard in this regard, post-processing becoming then a mandatory phase in the creation process. Monica Murgu believes that it might be „as important as the photo session itself", opinion shared by Tudor Platon, who refered to the „photographing phase" instead of „photo session", while Andrea Blaga believes that it represents „more than 50% of the final value of a photograph".

The respondents were also invited to express their opinions about the factors which lead to serious errors in advertising photography (Q2: *In your opinion, what are the reasons which lead to serious post-processing errors in advertising photography?*). The most common reasons the photographers have identified are the lack of experience of the post-processing team, time pressure, lack of attention, lack of interest, rush, lack of visual communication education, encouraging quantity instead of quality. Rareș Pulbere mentioned it is often that the client does not „fully understand the process behind a photograph", which might lead to „budget cuts or uninspired choices". Oana Celine states there are cases in which „the artist's vision is fanciful, far from the real product", which, combined with a poor expertise in post-processing, might lead to errors of which the editor is more or less aware. Vlad Eftenie believes that in cases like this, "the person who executes the post-processing does not care much about the context and the details, fails to see the full picture, […] does not have a sense of a parallel reality." While analysing the answers to this question, we could notice substantial differences in the approach of the respondents. They all acknowledge the gravity of the situation, but, while some think these are isolated cases, others mentioned they often spot post-processing errors in advertisements. For example, while Alex Vâncu states that "the advertising campaigns are full of serios post-processing errors.", Rareș Publere and Călin Ilea believe the number of errors is low and insignificant, and Andrea Blaga believes that these errors occur less often now, because "the people who are in charge with post-processing usually have an eye for detail".

She added that, before going to print, the image has to be authorised by a team which "will definitely observe the inaccuracies, if they have a minimum visual culture or at least visual common sense".

Through the last question we wanted to hear the respondents' opinion regarding the effect of the post-processing errors on the advertising campaign (Q3: *In which way do you think these errors affect the advertising campaign?*). On the one hand, we had the photographers who did not think that these errors can bring severe damage to the campaigns, whereas on the other hand, we had the photographers who think that if these errors go unnoticed, they can discredit the whole campaign. "Any publicity is good publicity", stated Călin Ilea, while Rareș Pulbere went even further and stated that a badly post-processed image that becomes viral "could be a solution for a very smart guerrilla campaign". Monica Murgu believes that this kind of mistake "can become nothing more than subject to jokes, shows lack of professionalism, but does not affect the campaign too much". She added that the consumer's interest is in the products, not the advertisements. In contradiction to this idea, Oana Celine recalls situations of this kind when the errors were widely publicized, and the blame was assigned to "the clients, and not directly to the editors". While other four respondents believed that the post-processing errors reveal the lack of professionalism, Alex Vâncu stated that "the attention given to these errors is directly proportional to the respect that a company shows to itself and its customers". Tudor Platon is the only one who took into consideration the effect that the dissemination of such a post-processing error might have on the photographer or the editor: "if the errors are noticed by the public, they create a feeling of unprofessionalism, which is pretty bad for any photographer in this field".

Conclusions

As mentioned in the previous sections of this paper, the standards imposed by the advertising industry have led to the situation where post-processing the advertising image became mandatory. The images are more and more cosmeticized, in order to induce the consumer a feeling that they need a certain product or service. "[…] make-up ads just can't accept the […] true colours (or body parts)." (Photoshop Disasters, n.d.), so they dramatically change them in order to picture an ideal universe which, they suggest, could be reached through their products. Bate (2009) stated that "how far a photograph corresponds to pre-existing conceptions of reality is partly to do with how far it fits with pre-existing beliefs about 'reality'". If we consider this statement to be true, we should also consider the media-induced perspective on reality (where advertising has had a very important impact), which might or might not coincide with the actual reality.

We have seen a large variety of post-processing errors in advertisements, some more obvious than others. We have also seen how errors occur even when it comes to the advertisements of big companies, such as Coca-Cola, Samsung, Burberry, Prada, Bulgari, or H&M. In order to determine the reasons of the occurrence of these errors, we have asked Romanian photographers to share their opinions on this subject. Lack of expertise and attention, lack of time, and unrealistic visions were only some of the reasons enlisted by our respondents. Whereas these errors affect or not the advertising campaign, it is still subject of debate and it depends on several factors.

A P P E N D I X

TOTAL	66	21	46	42	5	12	40	22	48
#73	Human characters	Incompletely exposed bodies & objects	Disproportionalities	Overlapping layers errors	Extra elements in the image	Reflections	Lights and shadows	Colours	Unrealistic positions
1	X		X		X				X
2	X	X							
3	X		X						X
4	X			X					
5	X		X	X					X
6	X		X						X
7	X		X						
8	X	X	X						X
9	X		X						X
10	X	X	X						X
11	X		X						X
12	X		X						X
13	X			X					X
14	X	X							
15	X		X	X			X	X	
16	X		X	X			X		X
17	X		X						X
18	X	X	X	X					X
19	X	X		X		X	X		
20	X		X	X			X		X
21	X					X	X		
22	X	X							
23	X	X	X	X			X		X
24	X			X			X	X	X
25	X	X	X	X					X
26	X		X	X			X		
27	X	X	X	X					X

28	X		X						X
29	X			X	X			X	X
30	X		X	X	X		X		X
31	X	X							X
32	X	X	X				X		X
33	X		X	X			X		
34	X		X	X			X	X	X
35	X		X	X			X	X	X
36	X	X		X			X	X	X
37	X	X	X	X			X		X
38	X	X	X						X
39				X			X		
40	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
41	X	X	X				X		X
42	X		X	X			X	X	X
43				X			X	X	
44	X		X				X		X
45	X	X	X	X			X		X
46	X			X			X	X	
47	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
48	X		X	X			X		X
49	X		X	X			X	X	X
50	X		X						
51	X			X			X	X	X
52	X		X	X			X		X
53	X		X						X
54	X		X	X	X				X
55	X	X	X	X					X
56	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
57	X	X							
58	X		X	X			X	X	X
59	X			X		X	X	X	X
60						X			
61						X			
62	X		X	X			X	X	
63	X			X			X	X	X
64	X		X	X			X		

65	X						X		
66	X			X			X	X	
67	X			X			X	X	
68						X			
69	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
70						X			
71	X		X			X	X		X
72	X				X	X	X	X	X
73						X			

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THE SELF (RE)PRESENTATION. SELFIE AS CULTURAL ARTEFACT AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

ANDREEA ALINA MOGOŞ[1]

ABSTRACT: The issue of self (re)presentation rose over the time the interest of psychologists, sociologists, art historians and other social scientists. The current study will focus on clarifying the concepts of self-presentation and self-representation using the symbolic interactionism paradigm, and the dramaturgical approach, followed by an overview of the visual self-representations phenomenon in social networking systems. The analysis focuses on selfies as photographic objects (artefacts) and cultural practices.

Keywords: cyber-self, self-presentation, selfie, SNS

"*Selfie is the portrait of a moment and an experience*"
Gunthert (2015)

The self (re)presentation. Concepts and analytical approaches.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Cooley (1902) coined the concept of the "looking-glass self", which defines the self as the reflection generated by the 'generalized other' that is coupled with

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that generalized other's' judgment. In Cooley's terms, our sense of self is really our perception of society's evaluation of us. In this process, through imagination we "perceive in another's mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it "(Cooley, 1902:17). The concept of the looking-glass self is based on three elements: first, the self imagines how it appears to others; second, the self then imagines the other's judgment; finally, the self develops an emotional response to that judgment. Thus, the looking-glass self is the result of interaction; it is not static but a continuous process of self-evaluation through the imagined eye of the others.

Mead (1934) equally considers that the self is a social emergent. The social conception of the self entails that individual selves are the products of social interaction and not the logical or biological preconditions of that interaction. It is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity. Mead (1934:139) sees the self as the product of a process in which "one does respond to that which he addresses to another and where that response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hears himself but responds to himself". Mead further explained that the self is developed through three activities: *language, play*, and *game. Language* allows individuals to take on the "role of the other" and allows people to respond to his or her own gestures in terms of the symbolized attitudes of others. During *play*, individuals take on the roles of other people and pretend to be those other people in order to express the expectations of significant others. This process of role-playing is central to the generation of self-consciousness and to the general development of the self. In the *game*, the individual is required to internalize the roles of all others who are involved with him or her in the game and must comprehend the rules of the game. Mead considers that the self has two sides: the "I" and the "me". The

"me" represents the expectations and attitudes of others (the generalized other), and it is the organized set of attitudes of others that the individual assumes. The "I" is the response to the "me," or the person's individuality. The generalized other (internalized in the "me") is the major instrument of social control for it is the mechanism by which the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members. (Mead, 1934:71)

According to Cooley and Mead, through interaction, individuals interpret each other's language, gestures and actions as symbols; this interaction both reflects and constitutes the self.

Goffman (1956), by using the imagery of theatre, attempted to how meaning is constructed interactively - the *dramaturgical model of social life*. Similarly to Berger & Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality*, Goffman's work is an attempt at analysing our daily life world from the perspective that all of our actions we perform - and the interpretations and meanings we give to these actions - are fundamentally social in nature. Goffman compares social interaction to a theatre, people in everyday life to actors on a stage, each playing a variety of roles. The audience consists of other individuals who observe the role-playing and react to the performances. The main concepts in the dramaturgical framework are: *performance, setting, appearance, costumes, props, manner, the actor's front, scripts and Front Stage, Back Stage, Off Stage*.

Performance refers to all the activities of an individual in front of a particular set of observers - «*the audience*». Through this performance, the individual - « *the actor*», gives meaning to themselves, to others, and to their situation. These performances deliver impressions to others and information is exchanged to confirm identity. The actors may or may not be aware of their performance or have an objective of their performance, however the audience is always attributing meaning to it and to the actor. The performance is the

equivalent of the *social role*, which entails a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face and fulfil. The model is based on the observation that people behave in a predictable way, and that an individual's behaviour is context specific, based on social position and other factors. The theatre is a metaphor often used to describe role theory.

The *social role* conceptualisation belongs to Mead (1934). The author proposed several categories for the social roles: *cultural roles,* given by culture (e.g. priest); *social differentiation* (e.g. teacher, taxi driver), *situation-specific roles* (e.g. eye witness); *bio-sociological roles* (e.g. as human in a natural system); *gender roles* (as a man, woman, mother, father, etc.). Role behaviour is influenced by the norms determining a social situation, by the internal and external expectations connected to a social role, and the social sanctions (punishment and reward).

The *setting* for the performance includes the scenery, props, and location in which the interaction takes place. Different settings will have different audiences and will thus require the actor to alter his performances for each setting.

The *appearance* functions to portray to the audience the performer's social statuses and gives information about the individual's temporary social state or role, for example whether he is engaging in work (by wearing a uniform), informal recreation, or a formal social activity. Dress and props serve to communicate gender, status, occupation, age, and personal commitments.

The way people dress and what they wear are regarded as *costumes* when using a dramaturgical analysis because the attire is highly influenced on different situations (Eg. Business Suits, Doctor's Lab Coats, Police Uniforms, and School Uniforms.) Costumes are what are most apparent and obvious for first impressions and can show much of the internal thought processes of individuals regardless of the situation.

Props are a big part of a production; they are mainly used as tools for actors to use and abuse while playing their roles. Props can be large or small, but no matter what they are key points in keeping the "story" alive.

Manner refers to how the individual plays the role and functions to warn the audience of how the performer will act or seek to act in role (for example, dominant, aggressive, receptive, etc.). If inconsistency and contradiction between appearance and manner occur, it will confuse and upset an audience. (eg. when one does not present himself or behave in accordance to his social status or position – military man who is crying).

The *actor's front* is the part of the individual's performance which functions to define the situation for the observers, or audience. It is the image or impression he or she gives off to the audience. A social front can also be thought of as a *script*. Certain social scripts tend to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations it contain. Certain situations or scenarios have social scripts that suggest how the actor should behave or interact in that situation. If the individual takes on a task or role that is new to him, he or she may find that there are already several well-established fronts among which he must choose. Individuals commonly use pre-established scripts to follow for new situations, even if it is not completely appropriate or desired for that situation.

The *scripts* are documented verbal replies and statements that actors say while acting. While most of conversations in life are not premeditated, rather improvised, people that are engaging in conversation have a pretty good idea of what they want to say and how they want the verbal exchange to go overall.

The *frontstage, backstage, offstage* are three regions, each affecting differently an individual's performance. *The front stage* is where the actor formally performs and adheres to conventions that have meaning

to the audience. The actor knows he or she is being watched and acts accordingly. In *the back stage*, the actor may behave differently than when in front of the audience on the front stage. This is where the individual truly gets to be himself or herself and get rid of the roles that he or she play when they are in front of other people. *The off-stage* is where individual actors meet the audience members independently of the team performance on the front stage. Specific performances may be given when the audience is segmented as such.

Individuals are controlling their behaviour, thus guiding and controlling how others see them. They act different in social settings than alone, so that that can be considered social *con artists* (a person adept at lying, cajolery, or glib self-serving talk; a person adept at swindling by means of confidence games; swindler.)

How people conceptualize and experience self, identity, and social experience is nowadays affected by convergence, mobility, and always-on patterns of use. The dramaturgical approach is challenged, yet functional, because Goffman's perspective helps to make sense about how digital devices and interfaces enable individuals to perform multiple roles on multiple simultaneous stages with a globally distributed range of actual and potential audiences. (Markham, 2013:280) The author explains that in the digital environment the *setting* or *'stage'* may not only be distant from the body of the performer, but may continue the performance without the actor's presence or knowledge. Actions we might have traditionally separated as *public/private* or *frontstage/backstage* are blurred, if not fundamentally imploded.

The cyberself (re)presentation

The cyberself is formed and negotiated in the same manner as the offline self. But the cyberself is an emergent product of social interaction in which the self masters the ability to be both the subject

and object of interaction. Robinson (2007:94) explains that in creating online selves, users do not seek to transcend the most fundamental aspects of their offline selves. Rather, they bring into being bodies, personas, and personalities framed according to the same categories that exist in the offline world. Following the same idea, Meza (2015:167) showed how the self-presentation strategies of "gangsta" type individuals on social networks relies on the *frontstage* construction that implies the use of props, a certain setting and appearance (eg. wads, fake heroin or marijuana etc.)

The digital interaction influences presence, self-presentation, and sociality. Certain unique aspects of virtual and networked practice complicate and blur conventional dramaturgic categories such as the individual, the interaction, and the situation. (Markham, 2013:281)

In *Seeing ourselves through technology: How we use selfies, blogs and wearable devices to see and shape ourselves*, Rettberg (2014:20) introduces the term *filter* as an analytical term to understand the algorithmic culture of new media: "the filter become a pervasive metaphor for the ways in which the technology can remove certain content and how it can alter or distort texts, images and data." Filters can be *technological* (Instagram filters, used by search engines, applied to social media feeds), *cultural* (norms, expectations, normative discursive strategies) or *cognitive* (mind's ability to perceive certain things and not others).

Digital media influences the enactment of self, the interplay of self and other, and the construction of meaning in context. Internet features and digital mobile devices impact how people experience space, place and time, how the self is constructed and presented, how interaction takes place, and how individuals make sense of both local and global situations.

The self-portrait (or the *selfie*) shared on social networks became over the last years one of the most prominent online self-presentation tools. According to Oxford Dictionaries, *selfie* is "a photograph that one

has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website." Over the last few years, the word *selfie* use showed "a phenomenal upward trend" and for this reason, it was declared 2013 Word of the Year. (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013) The increasing popularity of this word is tightly connected to everyday social practices determined by Internet access, mobile devices (mostly smartphones) and the use of social media.

Selfie as a *photographic object*

A selfie is an artefact that enables the transmission of human feeling in the form of a relationship (between photographer and photographed, between image and filtering software, between viewer and viewed, etc.). Ever since Joseph Nicéphone Niépce succeeded in 1827 to fix the photographic image, photographers around the world were preoccupied to capture their own image in self-portraits:

Self-portrait made by
Robert Cornelius (1839)[2]

Autoportrait tournant,
made by Nadar (1865)[3]

Figure 1 – Famous early self-portraits

[2] *Photograph source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Cornelius*
[3] *Photograph source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nadar_photographer*

But the technologies available at that time - big, slow and heavy cameras - were only permitting two types of self-portraits: the ones that were capturing the image reflected in the mirror and the ones made using a wired remote shutter button.

Kodak's Brownie, launched in 1888 – a small camera with a 100 frames roll-film - triggered a revolution in the way pictures were taken and thus leaded, among others, to a democratization of the portrait, which was not longer made only by few professionals in their studios. Wajcman (2012:25) suggests that technological change is itself shaped by the social circumstances within which it takes place: Kodak invention was quickly adopted by people who were starting to discover holidays and leisure time; women started having access to an easy to operate memory keeping technology.

The more than 100 years that followed the development of photographic processes, techniques and equipment continued. Faster films, smaller and cheaper cameras, better lenses made photography more and more popular. Susan Sontag (1977:8) writes about the popularity of photography in the 70s as a personal practice: "photography has become almost as widely practiced an amusement as sex and dancing".

Beginning with the 90s, the advent of digital photography, confirmed that some of the cultural conventions of traditional photography remained intact and shaped the reception and use of digital image-making technologies, whereas other aspects have been completely transformed and introduce new modes of creating photographs which rely on interactions between software, file formats and protocols for information exchange that contribute to the meaning and use of photographs. (Hand, 1994:142)

Selfie as cultural practice

Photographic meaning is found in the technical, cultural and historical processes in which photographs are used (Tagg, 1993:118). Thus, digital photographs could be evaluated using concepts like *media convergence*, *connectivity*, *ephemeral* and *performed*. (Bushey, 2014:36)

Bushey invokes the smartphone as an example of *media convergence*. Most smartphones now combine a camera, a phone and a personal computer, which enables the user to transmit and receive data as audio, image and text. Media convergence affects the routine use of different devices and processes at each stage in the creation, management and storage of digital photographs. For example, the real-time viewing option on the smartphone screen has altered the process of taking a self-portrait. Users rely on smartphone screens rather than themselves to compose photos. Elements such as composition, camera angle, depth of field, exposure time play a significant role in the final look of a photograph, but "when we pose ourselves according to how we see ourselves on screens or in reflective surfaces, we take a less active role in composing our digital self-portraits." (Wendt, 2014:34)

Photo-sharing and management sites (eg. *Flickr*) are encouraging individuals and organizations to share and manage their digital photographs. In the context of photo-sharing communities and online image making practices, members acting as *produsers* do not aim to create a complete product. (Bushey, 2014:39). The social networking platforms are encouraging visual production that can be tagged, rated, shared.

Digital photographs have a short life-span (they are *ephemeral*), because new technologies and social practices are changing the temporality of images, resulting in photography as a form of visual communication (eg. *Snapchat*), but without any expectation of permanence

(Van House cited in Bushey, 2014:41). Images can be made any time, any place and they can be instantly uploaded and shared. But digital images are often seen as both fragile and of short-term interest.

The *performed* practice is expressed in relation to how digital photography is used and the rhetoric of representation. At this point, the dramaturgical approach proposed by Goffman becomes of interest, because "the performance of photography is traditionally considered in relation to the staging of the event in front of the camera prior to image capture, and in relation to the 'show-and-tell' of presenting an album of family photographs to another person." (Bushey, 2014:42)

A selfie is a performative practice, a gesture that can send different messages to different individuals, communities, and audiences. This gesture may be modified by "social media censorship, social censure, misreading of the sender's original intent, or adding additional gestures to the mix, such as likes, comments, and remixes."(Senft & Baym, 2015:1589) Making, showing, viewing and talking about images are not just (self)representational issues, but they contribute to the ways that individuals and groups enact themselves, and reproduce social formations and norms.

Selfies represent a new way not only of representing ourselves to others, but of communicating with one another through images (Rawlings, 2013). A study made by Van House (2011:131) shows that most of the participants made considered, purposeful use of their online photographic representations, including images of themselves but also friends, possessions, spaces and activities and many treated their online images as expressions of their viewpoint and aesthetics. Though, there is an alternate aesthetics of the *ugly selfie*, which is explained by a form of self-derision (mocking), where aesthetic criteria do not apply. These selfies should be ugly in order to be funny and thus socially successful. (Gunthert, 2015) The famous "duck face" is

considered a selfie posing trend that is to be replaced by the "fish gape" (Markovinovich, 2015), which shows that the visual stereotypes of self (re)presentation change, too.

Duck face selfie[4]   Fish gape selfie[5]

Figure 2 – Cliché selfies

One individual may have the internet multiple identities, which was described by Turkle (1995:14) using the *window metaphor:* "The life practice of windows is that of a decentred self that exists in many worlds and plays many roles at the same time . . . The experience of this parallelism encourages treating on-screen and off-screen lives with a surprising degree of equality." Those individual identities are deeply enmeshed with social identities, because people build their self-representations by linking to others and what they communicate about them.

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[4] *Photograph source: http://fashionandbeautyinc.com/category/selfies/*
[5] *Photograph source: www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/10/14/fish-gape-selfie_n_8296498.html*

Selfies have turned into a favoured mode for celebrities to express themselves and communicate with fans and followers. The *celebrity culture* emerging over the past few years, puts on display the "authentic" and "private" persona in celebrity selfies (Jerslev & Mortensen, 2015). Celebrity selfies provide the illusion of being – posed, produced and disseminated by celebrities, who invite us into their private lives. Whereas celebrities seem to have lost control in paparazzi photographs, celebrity selfies suggest that they reclaim control of how, when and where they are depicted.

The celebrity culture affected not only celebrities' behavior, but that of anonymous individuals, too. "Microcelebrity" (Senft, 2013:346), which is a new form of identity, linked almost exclusively with the Internet. People have now access to audiences that were only available to politicians and celebrities, and this affect the identity presentation and the social interactions of the individuals. As a social practice, microcelebrity changes the game of celebrity. In this case, audiences and communities, two groups traditionally requiring different modes of address, blend. Senft (2013:350) considers that "Audiences desire someone to speak at them; communities desire someone to speak with them." Identity, once believed to be the property of the bearer, now belongs to the perceiver. Those who perceive have historically unprecedented opportunities to establish whose identities, communities, and stories will matter to the rest of the world. (idem, 353)

Post-feminist approaches of the self-presentation practices in the digital media era suggest that "the young women themselves often characterize the selfie (on social media sites) as a radical act of political empowerment: as a means to resist the male-dominated media culture's obsession with and oppressive hold over their lives and bodies." (Murray, 2015:490)

But selfies could also reflect diverse psychopathologies, such as narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy – the *dark triad*. Studies begin to explore the relationships between personality traits and social media use and self-presentation. For example, Fox & Rooney (2015:163) examined the relationship between the SNS use, the selfie posting and the photo editing behavior among a nationally representative sample of U.S. men. They concluded that "men who self-objectify spent more time on SNSs than those lower in self-objectification, and more narcissistic individuals reported spending more time on SNSs. Those higher in narcissism and psychopathy reported posting selfies more frequently. Narcissists and individuals high in self-objectification more frequently edited photos of themselves that they posted to SNSs."

The digital photograph affordances come with the questioning of what is socially and morally acceptable or what should be reproduced, published and endlessly circulated online becomes questionable, invoking the issues of taste, decency and invariable ethics and morality around imaging. Selfies from funerals and disaster selfies have emerged as genres, invoking the moral censure of the public and the social norms about sacredness of life and death. (Ibrahim, 2016:215)

Figure 3 – Selfie at violent protests[6]

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[6] *Photograph source: http://www.20minutes.fr/web/1561739-20150313-obsedes-photos-reconnaissent-passer-cote-vie*

Gibbs *et al.* (2015:260) analysis identified that many of the #funeral photographs they categorized as selfies were associated with hash-tags such as '#likeforlike', '#sexy', '#fashion', or '#follow me' and seemed to be more about the subject's self-presentation and self-promotion than an acknowledgment of the solemnity and gravitas of funeral rites. Posing and smiling and inadequate contexts has to deal with attention economy where the self is constantly produced and exhibited. On the other hand, funeral selfies' functions are to signify and communicate presence (Gibbs *et al.*, 2015:266), and thus share an important event and affective experience to a wider social network. Contemporary funerals are social experiences, and mourners are sharing photographs to create a sense of proximity, connection, and co-presence with friends, family, and acquaintances that may not be present.

Funeral selfie[7]

Nelson Mandela's funeral selfie (James Cameron-Helle Thorning-Schmidt – Barack Obama)[8]

Figure 4 – Funeral selfies

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[7] *Photograph source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_sIDMzjHeM*

[8] *Photograph source: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/nelson-mandela-world-leaders-selfie*

Conclusion

Selfies' popularity has had a transformational influence on contemporary culture. Selfies invoke important issues in communication, photography, self-presentation, psychology, and digital media studies. This study provided an interdisciplinary overview of the selfie as both an *artefact* (photographic object) and a *practice*. From these perspectives, *selfies* are connected to concepts such as authenticity, consumption, celebrity and self-presentation, as well as practices of art history, media forms, and self-portraiture.

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MAD MAX: NARRATIVE MASCULINITY

MÜJDAT DENIZ [1]

ABSTRACT: The *Mad Max* series enshrines the cinegoers' memory for many years and it has been considered as a cult classic. Along with the new sequel of *Mad Max*, Max's got a new face. Despite the fact that, it's not the only thing which has been changed with the last film. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) came in for criticism about the new Max and his manliness, and it draws a considerable amount of media attention to the gender representations. As long as the representations of men and masculinity is analysed within the context of gender studies and any other interdisciplinary approaches of the media outputs will raise the awareness of public about gender representations on the media.

Keywords: Mad Max, masculinity, violence, hegemonic masculinity, representations of men.

Introduction

Action cinema contains a wide range of adaptations from comics to science fiction films. Mostly, it's considered as a "male genre." The action genre films are, occasionally, followed by the sequels based

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on their commercial success. The intention of making action film sequels is to address the male audience. George Miller's *Mad Max* is one of the action films which is followed by its sequels. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) is the fourth sequel of George Miller's *Mad Max* films (1979, 1981, 1985). The fourth film sequel of the *Mad Max* series brings up its protagonist for discussion as how the male protagonsit Max Rockatansky has been changed and overshadowed by its female protagonist Furiosa. Even though the film gets credit by the majority of people and feminist audience, it's also criticised that "This is the Trojan Horse feminists and Hollywood leftists will use to (vainly) insist on the trope women are equal to men in all things, including physique, strength, and logic" (Clarey, 2015) and it has recently become a subject of a boycott campaign by some men's rights activists[2]: "Why You Should Not Go See "Mad Max: Feminist Road"[3]

The story of the first *Mad Max* takes place in an almost post-apocalyptic world where everything is about to change: "A few years from now" the story centers in Max's life (played by Mel Gibson) as police officer who fights against criminals. When Max's wife and son are haplessly murdered by a biker gang, he looks for revenge. The second film, *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*, follows in a wasteland where there's anarchy and chaos. After Max takes his revenge upon the gang, he hits the road as a lone wolf with his car and dog. Soon enough he encounters with a group of survivors where they live/being trapped by reason of the oil refinery they've occupied. The group had surrounded and threaten by a biker gang led by a masked man, Lord Humungus. Max helps them escape from where they stucked and were under siege. The *Mad Max* series worldwide popularisation and

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[2] However Clarey and the crew who's supporting him are refusing to be called as "men right's activists."

[3] *http://www.returnofkings.com/63036/why-you-should-not-go-see-mad-max-feminist-road*

its cult status ensue of the second film's success. The third film, *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* occurs in a post-apocalyptic place in the aftermath of a nuclear disaster. Max drops by a city where it looks like a civilized middle age town and find himself into a power struggle. Not long after, he becomes a knight in shining armour to a tribe of lost children.

The last sequel of the series, *Mad Max: Fury Road* was released in 2015 after thirty years with starring caracter Tom Hardy as Max, on the contrary to the first three films of the series. The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where there's lack of water in an almost uncivilized wasteland town called "Citadel" ruled by a tyrant, Immortan Joe. Imperator Furiosa, the right hand of Joe, goes out of his commands and helps "the Wives" to escape from Citadel and to set them free from being not Joe's sex slaves and breeder bodies anymore. Max, who's captured by "the War Boys" of Joe, escapes War Boys' clutches and shortly after Max happens to encounter with Furiosa and he devotes his life to their cause. The story of the last film shows a slice of Max's life.

Believing that getting down to a research like this, by using content analysis method may provide some information about Max Rockatansky's masculinity through his actions and inactions within the context of narrative and spectacle during the entire series of *Mad Max*. Moreover, to discuss what's been really changed in Max's character along with the series (based on Clarey's severe argument and its followers). The last film becomes an object at issue due to fact that not only because of the aforementioned name's arguments, but also some of the mainstream media outlets such as *CNN*[4],

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[4] Lorena O'Neil: "Men's rights activists call for boycott of 'Mad Max: Fury Road,' citing feminist agenda." *http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/15/entertainment/mad-max-fury-road-boycott-mens-rights-thr-feat/*

Guardian[5], Daily Mail[6] initiated a discussion as making it an item for the news agenda of Clarey's boycott call.

Theoretical Framework: Masculinity Studies and Violence of Men

Masculinity Studies

Traditionally, the sex of a person has been defined by biological duality. From this poin of view, to what defines a person as female or male is the genitalia which the person borns with. The gender roles are based on the biological dycotomy of sex. Masculinity has been a research object of biology, anatomy and partially psychology, but once after the feminist theory has attained its place in the social science, the concept is accepted as well as something which takes shape in the social context. In the sense of social sciences now, the term masculinity has become more difficult to define:

> When speaking of masculinity, it's indefinite whether it has been referenced to behaviors of men, or to the masculinity which's established as identity, masculinity which's represented as attitudinally, masculinity which's presented as images, masculinity set up as a discourse or masculinity as directly experienced, observed and practically performed (Sancar, 2011: 20).

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[5] Ben Child: "Mad Max: Fury Road's strong women won't surprise true genre fans." *http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2015/may/15/mad-max-fury-roads-strong-women-wont-surprise-true-genre-fans* and Jason Wilson: "The 'man-o-sphere' is outraged about Mad Max? Hand me my popcorn!": *http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/15/the-man-o-sphere-is-outraged-about-mad-max-hand-me-my-popcorn*

[6] Charlene Adams: "Why 'men should boycott' new Mad Max movie because it is a 'feminist piece of propaganda posing as a guy flick'" *http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3083606/Blogger-calls-boycott-Mad-Max-Fury-Road-feminist-piece-propaganda-posing-guy-flick.html#ixzz48r1PL1u4*

It's a fluid, dynamic and changeable concept. Masculinity references to deemed appropriate social roles, behaviors and understandings for men in a society or during a time. The concept of masculinity is determined through our everyday life relationships with all its conflicts and conciliations by the social institutions. In other word, women and men's value and visibility is determined by the culture, society, class and so forth.

Even if, it's easy to categorise men by using *de facto*, norms, generic speculations about manliness; such as standardizing and stereotyping them. Likewise, classifying men as Latin Masculinity, Black Masculinity, Middle Eastern Masculinity etc. (Sancar, 2011). Making all such kind of categorisations may cause to avoid and/or make insignificant and ignore the problematic of masculinity. In the first analysis, however, saying that the masculinity takes its shape through the terrain, culture; social, political and class structures which is in may seem to be a good starting point to interrogate the problematic, but that might cause to the problematic be seen as one-sided.

Earlier gender studies dwelled on only femininity (the dominance of patriarchy over women, imprisonment of women in private sphere, exploitation of domestic labour). Along with the second wave feminist movement, men's studies started taking a place in gender studies. During that period, the concept of different masculinities came forward such as "hegemonic masculinity." The concept of hegemonic masculinity by R.W. Connell (1987), which based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony caused a new debate in gender studies.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity severs itself from the concept of dominant masculinity. The dominant masculinity may refer to the traits of masculinity as well as to a popular authority. Hegemonic masculinity corresponds to "[...] white, middle class,

heterosexual, middle-aged, full-time employer[…]" male characteristics (Sancar, 2011: 27). It can be said that, hegemonic masculinity is a synthesis of various manliness. In some ways, it's an articulation of different masculinities assembled in one hierarchical synthesis. There is sort of a matter of benefit among men. All men one way or another take a share of hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, hegemonic masculinity pays a share in order to reduce the other to keep silent. In this way, it convinces the other types of men to its masculinity order. Connell clarifies the application of hegemonic masculinity concept saying that the thing gathers varied of masculinities into the common ground is that not only the dominance over women (suppression and subjection of women), but also the dominance over men. That's why the rulership of hegemonic masculinity effects not only women, but also people who stands in a subordinated social position such as disabled, handicapped, insane individuals; elders, children, and LGBTIQ etc. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, in the wider sence, is the image of masculinity who have hold the power (Sancar, 2011: 30).

Another name who made a contribution of the concept is Jeff Hearn (1996, 2004; with Collinson, 1994). Hearn argues that *hegemonic masculinity* and *hegemony of men* should be kept separate in the field of men's studies. He defines the concept hegemonic masculinity as "white, middle-class, middle-aged, heterosexual, homophobic, Anglo-Saxon, Christian and Western man who's physically active" (Sancar, 2011: 36). He emphasizes that the hegemony of men concept has such values as "not sparing of risk taking, physical strength and endurance; being persistent and stubborn, not hesitating to be aggressive and daring; homophobic heterosexuality, non-sentimental rationality, enduring the pain and bearing it and self-centeredness etc." (Sancar, 2011: 37). He adds on that there might be different kind of men who represent these values.

While the discussions on masculinity(ies) continue, a new concept of masculinity comes forward: *Crisis of men*.

> This is not to suggest that there is something inherently wrong with people who identify as being men, but rather that men as a social group are experiencing problems at a rate disproportionate to their numbers and with a uniqueness that seems to be a part of the lived world of men (Kahn, 2009: 165; Jefferson, 2002; McInnes, 2001).

During the post-industrial ages and modern times manliness frequently interacts both globally and locally with different masculinities. "Butler's suggestion that gender norms are 'phantasmatic,' that is, unreal or illusory, complements Tania Modleski's assertion that masculinity is always in a state of crisis because what defines it is constantly fluid and malleable; the boundaries of masculinity are then repeatedly tested and challenged" (Peberdy, 2011: 28).

Even though, the issues of men and masculinities are being ignored over the years in gender and feminist studies in academia (and also in practice) eventually, it got the attention that its deserves in the eyes of social scientists. From the very beginning of men's studies to the present, the notion has been studied in different aspects such as hegemonic masculinity, hegemony of men, male's crisis, masculinity and violence, machismo, queer masculinities, hyper-masculinity so on and so forth.

The discussions on masculinity in social sciences inevitably spreaded to film studies. Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" first published in *Screen* in 1975 is a pioneer essay in the film and media studies field. Mulvey's article, says Neale (1983 [2005]), "was highly influential in its linking together of psychoanalytic perspectives on the cinema with a feminist perspective on the ways in which images of women figure within mainstream film."

Masculinity and Violence

The debates on violence tend to be gendered natural. The most of the violent acts done by men. Violence appears within the society and on media representations as largely considered to be gendered specific. Among the academics on masculinity and violence Connell is one of the most productive writers herein the field of gender, masculinity and violence. Connell (2000: 22) declares that "There is often an appeal to biology, with testosterone in particular, the so-called 'male hormone', as a catch-all explanation for men's aggression." As in the *Mad Max* series the automobiles have an important role in action genre such as chasing scenes. As Connell points out that, reckless driving is with each passing day increasingly recognized as a form of violence which in the most of cases where men are involved in. "Young men die on the roads at a rate four times that of young women, and kill on the roads at an even higher ratio" (Connell, 2000: 22). Also the commercial mass media outlets promote the violence mainly done by men. From sports to violent video games, and TV series to Hollywood action movies. "The messages in these media relentlessly insist, on the bodily superiority of men and their mastery of technology and violence" (Connell, 2000: 27).

As it is mentioned that the great majority of violent acts around the world, in anytime, are committed by men. Another productive academic who's been studying on masculinity and violence is Tim Edwards. In his book "Cultures of Masculinity" says that "From pub brawls, to building bombs, and from forced prison buggery to battered wives, the problem seems the be men: men swearing, men punching, men kicking, men smashig, men bashing, men destroying things, other men, women, themselves, even the world" (2006: 39). However sometimes, what we may count as a violent act and vice versa might not be easy to define. Gazing, joking, or just looking may

constitute psychological violence (Edwards, 2006: 40). Besides that, some kind of violent acts are done quietly through institutions. The family institution, as one of the strongest and oldest 'flagsman' of all, contains some sort of violence within itself (based upon its heteronormative and traditionality). The kind of violence may appear if and when someone revolts against the dominance (as hegemonic, masculine or patriarchal).

The differentiation of violence may be described as in there categories (including sub-categories): Physical, verbal and psychological. Direct physical violence emerges as hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, pulling, grabbing, tearing, smashing, stamping, slamming and similar activities (Edwards, 2006: 40). Whether it is against to a person or property. The violence may occur day or night, inside or outside. Although, the inside (private sphere) ensures the security through the family institution and patriarchy. However, the outside (public sphere) contains insecurity and dangerous particularly more for subaltern individuals and the act of violence might be justified as occasions requires. The private sphere protected by men and public sphere by the state's heteronormative, masculine and legalise "violent" organs[7].

As in the *Mad Max* series, act of violence mostly appears in the public sphere. We may say that the diegetic world of *Mad Max* is almost uncivilized, post-apocalyptic, a state of chaos (which's embodied in as a tyrant) etc. In the world of Max there's no way of controlling violence therefore the societies of three *Mad Max* films were lack of social values. It appears that there's only savage and blooded 'barbarism' and 'primitivity' (Except the third film of *Mad*

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[7] "The private sphere is the stereotypically feminine world of household, family, and unpaid domestic labor while the public sphere is the stereotypically masculine world of politics and paid employment. The private and public spheres are two gendered spheres that is has become common practice to think of the social world divided into" (Crossman, 06 January 2016).

Max. There's a city presented as a middle age town). As Tim Edwards declares that, "The rise of modern sports is, in particular, seen as a prime example of a civilising process, or growth of civility and control of violence(…)" (2006: 47). So, there's nearly nothing to prevent act of violence such as modern sports. Thus, the absence of such preventing social mechanisms the act of violence cannot be prevented most of the time when Max encounters of his opponents. The violence has an important part generating of the male protagonist's masculinity in cinema. As Edwards (2006: 110) cites from Kirkham and Thumin that "the violence in such films is often conceived as a form of endurance within the wider formation of a successful masculine identity."

The violence is somehow comes with the power and it's not only towards women but also to the entire planet. "To say that violence is predicated on *maleness*, therefore, cannot explain this, though to say that violence is predicated on *masculinity*, as a quality that women may also possess, may still hold" (Edwards, 2006: 53). So, as it can be seen in *Mad Max: Fury Road* that the violence as a practice can be adopted also by women. Messerschmidt say that the violence can be a functional practice for identity or men and masculinity (Edwards, 2006: 53). And also, committing violence is perceived "masculine," exposing to violence intends to be "feminine."

Literature Review

The recent study on the *Mad Max* film series is made by Baydar (2015: 104-134) "Potential of Feminist Action Film: On Mad Max Fury Road" discusses the new sequel of *Mad Max*'s potential of resistance within the mainstream action cinema from a critical feminist perspective. The essay focuses on action films' genre and its narrative, and it utilizes in the feminist approach of how the film portrays femininity, body, leadership, collectivism.

Another researcher who's been working on *Mad Max* is Rebecca Johinke. Her recent article "Not quite Mad Max: Brian Trenchard-Smith's Dead End Drive-In" (2009) make a reference to an *Ozploitation* film Dead End Drive-In (1986) that the film is not well recognised among Australasian film scholars and she claims that the film itself has various sides to discuss such as Australian masculinity, car culture, white paranoia, crisis of Australian men, immigration, borders and so on. She builds her argument using previous researches on the aforementioned topics. Johinke's previous essay on Mad Max is called "Manifestation of masculinities: Mad Max and the Lure of the Forbidden Zone" refers to masculinity, heterosexism, homosexuality, patriarchy, representation of the men in the *Mad Max* series, withing the action genre cinema. Johinke explains how Max's masculinity is supported by the narrative: As he stands as a heterosexual man against homosexual biker gangs in the first and second film (2001: 118-125).

Falconer, in her article "'We Don't Need to Know the Way Home' The Disappearance of the road in the Mad Max Trilogy" (1997) examines the spatial history of Australia. She discusses the films in two modes of analysis as a postmodern cultural production and post-colonialist text. Firstly, she describes the development of Australian film industry around the world and how that made effects on the story of *Mad Max* in years. Then the archetypes in *Mad Max* relating to the Australian lifestyles and its nationalist discourses. She criticizes the *Mad Max* sequel in a political economy approach.

Kieran Tranter's essay "Mad Max: The Car and Australian Governance" (2003) holds a discussion about the importance of cars and its impact on the daily life of Australians, the governance and youth culture. In the article three roles are identified: The cars as identity, cars as myths and cars as power. Tranter examines these three roles of cars combining them with the first and second *Mad Max* films and by doing that she explaines how the power of cars can be violent, how the cars can have symbolic meanings of the society or imagination of it.

Another discussion is made about the *Mad Max* films by Straton in his article "What Made Mad Mac Popular? The Mythology of a Conservative Fantasy" (1983). He confronts with the problem of reality and unrealistic sides of the society in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*. By doing that, the author examines the narrative of the films withing the American film conventions and codes. Also, he uses semiotics to reveal the connotational meanings of the two *Mad Max* films.

The *Mad Max* films have been examined in different aspects and approaches up until today. The main focust of the essays are cars, governance, masculinity, road, society and so on. According to the debates, only the forth sequel of *Mad Max* brings up feminisim to a discussion –as a feminist propaganda– with its strong female protagonist. The reason of that is arguable. In the third film, there's also a strong female character, but the portrayal of female characters (as a protagonist, hero[ine], anti-hero[ine]) in different genres and narratives may lead and/or mislead (and so, reproduce) the meanings of female's potrayal and spectacle.

Research Design

Research Questions

In this research our aim is to analyze spectacle of Max as a man in the series of *Mad Max*. (1) Is there a conversion of Max's actions and behaviors in *Mad Max: Fury Road* as against in the previous ones (on the portrayal and spectacle)? If there is, what kind of changes have been portrayed in his character? (2) Does Max engage in violence, cars and weapons lesser in the forth *Mad Max* film?

Method

The most suitable method for this kind of research can be a content analysis, qualitative analysis, semiotic analysis, ideological (gender ideology) and narrative analysis. We are going to use the content analysis method within the frame of qualitative research techniques. On the other hand within the content analysis approach can be done both quantitative and qualitative. Usually, there's a perception that these two methods of analysis cannot be collocate. On the contrary, the results are both obtained through qualitative and quantitative analysis can be used to support the research questions and hypotheses as and when it's required.

The results of quantitative analysis are presented as pozitivist facts. The cogency of quantitative is apparent. Numbers are not *subjective*. In order to attain the objective findings, the qualitative data were obtained via visual analysis can be also supported by quantitative methods. As we are not going to use the quantitative approach in the research, the research questions and problematics will be supported by the theoretical framework and literature review.

The content analysis provides consistent, objective and quantitative information were obtained from an uncoded content hence, it provides reliable information. The fact remains that, the analysis is debatable. Well, the significant and open content can disclosed by using content analysis, but the hidden meanings and between the lines of a text cannot be noticed. Thus, through the instruments of semiotic analysis the underlines of a text can be examined.

There are two data sources in this research. The first data is taken from *Mad Max* (1979: 93 minutes), *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981: 96 minutes), *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985: 107 minutes)

and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015: 120 minutes). The visual data will be analysed in order to seek out the related issues: masculinity, spectacle and violence. The second data were obtained via books, articles and columns will support the research questions.

Analysis

New Max: No Need To Support His Masculinity!

As it is mentioned in the introduction that there is a discussion ongoing about the new sequel of *Mad Max*. It's criticized by the men's rights activists that Max is no the protagonist of the film, but he stands as a supporting character. How did they get to that conclusion? Even so the action sequences of *Mad Max: Fury Road* have got quite credits, Max's manliness, apparently, has got a lot of stick.

Who's Max? Firstly, Max is a white, heterosexual man. "The men see themselves in terms of being 'white' (clean, pure, superior), 'ordinary' (thus creating a hegemony of normality) and 'descent' (Christian, law-abiding, moral)" (Johinke, 2009: 317). Max is introduced and portrayed as a straight white man who spends an ordinary life with his family as a *law abiding* policeman. What does he do? He is/was a(n ex-)police patrol officer who fights against criminals. Those two facts give him a power which comes naturally: first as being of a heterosexual man, second as being of an officer of the state apparatus (represents the "phallic law"). Naturally, those innate features of Max need to supported by the mainstream conventions of narrative (cinematic, literal and social). In the first and second films, the villains of Max are gay motorcyclists (Johinke, 2001: 118-125). Max and his straight patrol, in the first film, fight against Toecutter's gang and in the second film, Max and the survivors (good guys in white) fight

against Lord Humungus and his tribe (bad guys in black). These two villain groups are portrayed as homosexuals and S&M. By doing that, the classical narrative supports its protagonist's masculinity against the marginal and queer character portrayed as dangerous and demonized. Against them, Max stands as a dominant male character, as the one and only man. In the third one, Max disguises in a messiah role, or to put it in a different way, he gets up this position through his gendered role as a father for children whom waiting to be rescued. During the first two films of *Mad Max*, Max's masculinity is such supported, empowered and developed by the villains' *deficiencies* that in the third film, his character reaches in a position of which no longer needed to be support.

Max, as we all know that, is a man. No matter how he is distant to any kind of sexual intercourse or intimacy, Max *still* is a heterosexual hero. In *Fury Road*, Max's manliness is not empowered by the narrative. The story is not about Max's heroism against demonized villains, but against hegemonic men and masculinity. However, Max does not appear or portrayed as the real man among other men and then again, he does not necessarily to gain other's admiration or trust as in the previous films of *Mad Max*. The admiration plays an important part of reinforcing the masculinity. In first three films, admiration provides a significant role on Max's manliness. In the first film, Max is admired by his colleagues and chief: "Fred 'Fifi' Macaffee: *They say people don't believe in heroes anymore. Well, damn them! You and me, Max, we're gonna give them back their heroes.*" In the second, he is admired by Gyro Captain[8], Pappagallo[9] and the other survivors[10]. In *Beyond*

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[8] Gyro Captain: *"They've got you wrong. You're not a coward. STUPID, maybe. But not a coward."*

[9] Pappagallo: *"He fulfilled his contract. He's an honorable man."*

[10] Curmudgeon: *"It's been a long time since I've seen driving like that, man."*

Thunderdome, survived children[11], Aunty Entity[12] admire him and basically whomsoever. In *Fury Road*, Max's courage and fighting skills are not established to gain the others' admiration and acceptance but to survive[13]. On the other hand, he shows with his behaviours that he doesn't care about admiration as well as not willing to take almost any of responsibilities and be the saviour of all[14].

The first three films of *Mad Max* are kind of reinvention of the western (other than action genre). The environments of western genre (as well as action) is homosocial and heteronormative. Kieran Tranter (2003, 67-81) points out the western conventions of *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* as:

> Max the troubled cowboy hero; the Gyro-Captain (Bruce Spence), the goofy side-kick; the inhabitants of the community, the settlers and honest town folk of the Wild West; the leader of the community, Pappagallo (Mike Preston), the town mayor; the Interceptor, the super horse that all good cowboys are blessed with; and Humungus' horde, the murderous Indians.

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[11] Savannah Nix: "*(…)But most of all we 'members the man who finded us, him that came a-salvage.*"

[12] Aunty Entity: "*Congratulations! You're the first to survive the audition!*", "*Well, ain't we a pair, raggedy man. / Goodbye, soldier.*"

[13] Max Rockatansky: "*I am the one that runs from both the living and the dead. Hunted by scavengers, haunted by those I could not protect. So I exist in this wasteland, reduced to one instinct: survive.*"

[14] *[Max proposes turning back and claiming the Citadel]*
Keeper of the Seeds: "*I like this plan… we could start again, just like the old days!*"
Max Rockatansky: *Look, it'll be a hard day.*
[points to the horizon]
Max Rockatansky: "*But I guarantee you that a hundred and sixty days ride that way… there's nothing but salt.*"
[points back]
Max Rockatansky: "*At least that way we might be able to…* **together**… *come across some kind of redemption.*"
*[He holds out his hand. After a pa*use, Furiosa takes it and clasps tight]
www.imdb.com/title/tt1392190/quotes

Max is the one who involves to the story most of the time, even if he is the protagonist. As is in the western genre, the hero (anti-hero) ends up in a village where there's a disorder about to happen. In the second and the third film contain kind of western conventions in itself. As in the most mainstream western narrative cinema *Mad Max 2* and *Mad Max 3* follow the same codes. So, the only heroic model of protagonist is, mostly a combination of white-heterosexual-man.

The most important part of Max' characteristic is being a great driver as well as his skilfulness in different actions and situations. A must of the all *Mad Max* films is that the cars and fast driving. Classic western and gladiator films take place in an environment where there are no social rules, values and sanctions which prevent the act of violence but open a road for it. "A landscape without a definable 'center' may offer no 'moral center' or set of values on which heroism maybe based" (Falconer, 1997: 258). The road, as the metaphorical arenas, contains and provides an opportunity for the protagonist in order to prove himself and his masculinity (i.e. to earn appreciation and respect of those who around him). The roads of *Mad Max* are the arenas of performance of masculinity (Johinke, 2001: 118). Fast driving is related to the protagonist masculinity and capability of survive from the enemies. "[…]the road appears as a specific and violently contested site" (Falconer, 1997: 249). Just as gladiators fight in the arenas, Max fights on the road in order to survive by using his survival skills. This how, he proves his manliness as well. The nature of all the four films are the fact that is the cars, chases and battles on the road. "He has proven himself superior to all around him and has out-driven every scoot-jockey on the road" (Johinke, 2001: 125). His superiority has to be proven in the first three *Mad Max*, but in *Fury Road* Max is not the superior character because there's a collective fight against tyranny, patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity. Max also refuses to be a part of the

hegemonic masculinity. He does not bargain with hegemony and hegemonic masculinity.

In the first three films of *Mad Max*, Max is the tough guy and it doesn't appear differently in the forth sequel. Of course, the appearance of Max's body has been changed with the last film because of the actor's substitution however, the physical appearance of Max has always been very active, lifgtfooted and dynamic. In the meantime, he still possesses some accessories like his leather jacket and weapon which are playing a fundemental role to reinforce Max's masculinity. In the whole *Mad Max* films, Max survives from some kind of a wasteland by attesting to his abilities. He uses his shotgun with one hand (despite in the last sequel, he is not a go-getter as he is in the previous films), he drives vehicles better, faster and smoother than anybody else. Nevertheless, he survives even if he had captured by his opponents. The opponents sometimes are homosexual biker bandits, a despot, tyrant or even sometimes people who's escaping from the bad guys.

Because the *Mad Max* films take place on the road so as to escape from the bad guys that the physical violence always make it presence felt and threatens the protagonists. Which is why Max involves all sorts act of violence and battles, and thereafter he defeats all of his enemies with the back up or not. He resorts to violence for different kind of reasons such as to take revenge, to satisfy a need, to escape, to help… One of the contra arguments against the fourth film is that, Max helps people. He loses his sense of helping people after he lost his wife and son even so, in the second and third films he has the sense of helping people no matter for what purposes it is. In the fourth sequel of Mad Max, Max helps women who escape from a despot and its *domination masculine*. It so happens that, Max's path crosses with Furiosa's, and the Wifes' cause. The cause can be considered as a feminist resistance. But that doesn't show Max's masculinity runs short. He's the main superpower

of all *Mad Max* films. His ability to survive from his opponents, good driving skills and outfighting hasn't changed.

It's possible that the only weakness appears in his character is the post-traumatic stress disorder. In the first and last films, *PTSD* becomes more visible. His apathy to things he encountered occurs in the most of *Mad Max* episodes due to the disorder. After the trauma, he becomes a lone road warrior and in all *Mad Max* films, he rarely speaks. In fact, Max does not speak that much in all *Mad Max* films. However, this is also a part of the spectacle of Max's masculinity: as being silent, calm, stabil, confident etc. His calm, deliberate and strong-willed manners apart him from others. "Max's traits of cool aggression, control, authority, power, potency and technological mastery are pertinent, indeed laudable, characteristics" (Johinke, 2001: 118). These characteristics fit with both hegemonic and dominant masculine ideals. In *Fury Road,* despite the previous *Mad Max* films, Max is not portrayed as a man who wants those ideals. Some of those characteristics appear in Furiosa's character portrayal in just the same way as in Max's. The ideals of masculinity can be possessed and/or be obtained by the male protagonists as well as the female protagonists. However, it can be said that Furiosa gains strength thereby *masculinizing*, but instead she strengthens in a female-specific way in the narrative. She does not collaborate with "Hegemonic Masculinity" by possessing some masculine behaviours.

Max uses various types of tools to gain the victory, beside his physical power: knives, guns, car parts such as doors, gas tanks et cetera. Likewise, the female characters of *Mad Max* use all sorts of tools to turn to violence. What matters most is that against what and how the narrative rewards, justifies or punishes the female protagonists and characters. In the first two films, women are punished by the narrator because of they were revolting and committing violence against men and their hegemony. In *Mad Max 1*, the wife dies because

she stands against the male violence as well as in *Mad Max 2*, one of the women survivors fights against the yoke of men and she dies. In *Fury Road*, some of "the Wives" and "the Vuvalini of Many Mothers" die yet the narrative doesn't punish them, but they die because of a cause that they believe. Likewise, the death of a hero in classical narrative cinema. David Gilmore explains his concept of nurturing aspects of men as (MacKinnon, 2003: 10):

> Men nurture their society by shedding their blood, their sweat, and their semen, by bringing home food for both child and mother, by producing children, and by dying if necessary in faraway places to provide a safe haven for their people. This, too, is nurturing in the sense of endowing or increasing.

As Gilmore declares that the male protagonists and characters are nurturing the hegemony of men and masculinity, and their patriarchal society by shedding blood, killing others and even dying for the sake of defending and keeping *their* women, their motherland safe from the other men.

As in the classic action and western narratives, the crisis is resolved by the power of male protagonist. The narrative comes to an end (resolution) when the man, as a *natural right* of his performance, defeats his opponents by force of his physical power. And the act of violence is justified as an impartial violence of man. On the other hand, the classical canon offers, provides and makes space for its hero to kill his archenemy by himself, without having help (As traditionally, the *male* antagonist comes the heroes way vice versa and so that to create the binary opposition). It's the hero's duty to defeat the enemy. In *Fury Road*, the one who kills Immortan Joe (the enemy) is Furiosa, not Max. Male protagonist does not resist on his heroic position. The narrative of *Fury Road* suggests that it's a collective action rather than one lone-hero who saves the woman, future and the world.

Conclusion

It is possible that, one of the biggest feature of *Mad Max: Fury Road,* which distinguishes it from the other *Mad Max* films, is that the narrative weigh heavier than the spectacle of male. In the previous films, spectacle goes ahead of the narrative. The narrative builds upon the spectacle of male protagonist. Thus, in the previous *Mad Max* films, the importance of hero's appearance, spectacle of his masculinity and the body, and "his" fights and achievements get ahead of the narrative. "At which point the look begins to oscillate between voyeurism and fetishism as the narrative starts to freeze and spectacle takes over" (Neale, 1993: 17). *Fury Road* doesn't give any priorities just to one protagonist, but gives two of them. Max's appearance in the forth sequel is not short than its previous ones. The last sequel's duration is about a half an hour long than the first and the second one. Even the action scenes and violence take way longer than the previous ones, but the story' focus point is not the protagonist and *his* spectacle, but the narrative itself. And in the narrative, the tyranny and patriarchy are defeated by the people against it. Collectivism between male and female characters weigh heavier than the spectacle of one hero canon in the classical narrative. Thereby, those who have found the new *Max* less man or masculine (in a very traditional heteronormative and gendered role ways, like "how to be a man?") as they expected, *Mad Max: Fury Road* may not fulfil their concerns about *man*kind's future. As it is seen in the analysis that the biggest difference and shift in the new Max is that his masculinity doesn't support by the narrative. George Miller and his film crew didn't present Max's masculinity as a spectacle even so it's a spectacular film. The fact remains that, Max engages in violence, perhaps, more than ever.

In addition to this, in order to analyze the spectacle of men and masculinity in *Mad Max* films should be examined by means of *pleasure in looking*. If there's a conflict and problematic of identification between the *audience* and *protagonist*s can be found by the help of Mulvey's critical essay on visual pleasure and gaze (1975) and other essays on male gaze and pleasure in looking. As she declares that, "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" (Mulvey, 1975: 11). Thus, an analysis about the spectacle of male, identification of audience with the protagonist and the male gaze can give a clearer perspective and more reliable results. The research we have done has limitations because the lack of quantitative analysis, an in-depth narrative analysis, and also an ideological and feminist film analysis as well as it needs a reception studies (as an audience research). In my opinion, the research findings should be support by other approaches and methods as above-mentioned for the future studies.

In sum, as Tim Edwards points out that any sort of analysis of media outputs are, *in essence,* analysis of representations.

> Thus, movies, advertisements and television programmes are, most fundamentally, cultural texts and this then opens up the question of the connection of text and context or the wider relationship of representation and reality. There is much contemporary and significance to be found in the analysis of masculinity as it is represented in cinema (2006: 107).

As long as the representations of men and masculinity is analysed within the context of gender studies and any other interdisciplinary approaches of the media outputs will raise the awareness of public about gender representations on the media.

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WALKING THE DEAD
THE MAKINGS OF A GAME WITHIN A SUCCESSFUL TRANSMEDIA FRANCHISE

GEORGE PRUNDARU[1]

ABSTRACT: This study is an analysis of the transmedia project *The Walking Dead*. A very successful franchise at the moment, with a lot of products in multiple media, it offers a very good opportunity to identify the position and specific characteristics of videogames in comparison to other media, and to see the relationship between them. Looking at the main three products in the franchise, the comic book, the television series and the adventure game, the research applies an analysis grid meant to bring out the way in which similar contents behave differently when translated across media, the way in which media can communicate between themselves and what the role of the consumer is in each instance. This paper concentrates on the experience of the adventure game in the context of the other products in the franchise, and on how the specific means of expression overlap.

Keywords: video games, transmedia, immersion, gameplay, engagement, agency

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The Walking Dead franchise is one of the biggest media properties that exists today. It includes the most viewed cable television drama series, one of the best sold comic book series, genre-defining video games and a lot of other products such as supporting TV shows, mobile games, board games, art books, action figures etc. It also has, as of April 2016, the biggest Facebook fan base of any TV show, totalling up to over 34 million people. Starting with this large extent and popularity of the franchise in mind, the purpose of this study is to analyse video games as a communication medium, taking as an example *The Walking Dead* franchise, in the context of cultural products that extend beyond the boundaries of specific media to maximize the narrative and commercial impact of different intellectual properties.

Narrative transmedia products do not, as of yet, benefit from a set of established research methods. Transmedia projects are a relatively new phenomenon, and their study even more so. The term itself was coined in 2003 in an article by Henry Jenkins (2003) and later detailed in a book (Jenkins 2006). In this context Renira Rampazzo Gambarato puts forward a model on analysis founded on the basic principles outlined by Jenkins at the *Futures of Entertainment* conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2009 (Gambarato 2012, 6-7), but also on the works of other researchers, such as Janet Murray, Jeffrey Long or Robert Pratten. The analysis consists of a set of questions grouped under ten central themes, which is basically a flexible qualitative analysis grid that can be applied to a majority of transmedia projects and can be adapted and extended for specific situations.

In the following, we will apply this grid to *The Walking Dead* transmedia project. This subject was chosen for its relevance in the current media landscape. The three main products in the franchise, the comic book, the TV show, and the adventure game are at this time, or were at the time of release among the most successful popular, critical and commercial successes in their respective areas.

The TV show is the fictional show with the highest audience of all cable shows in the USA, and some episodes have even surpassed broadcast shows or the most viewed non-fiction shows (football games and reality shows).

The comic books have held the top of the sales charts for years. From July 2012 to April 2014, two issues (nos. 100, and 115) held the title of the most sold individual issue of any comic book of the decade, being taken down by an issue of the Amazing Spider-Man and then several issues of Star Wars comics, in the marketing push for the new 2015 (Comichron.com 2016b). In January 2016 it held again the first place in monthly sales, and was the only non-Marvel or -DC title in the first 25 (Comichron.com 2016a).

The adventure game reached impressive sales numbers, especially considering the genre it represents. The first season was the best-selling game on Xbox Live Arcade for two weeks (Hryb 2012) and on the PlayStation Network and Steam for a week (Moriarty 2012)and in July 2014 Telltale announced they had sold 28 million copies of game episodes (Ohannessian 2014). But beyond this, the first season of the game received very high critical acclaims, being named game of the year 2012 by almost 100 institutions (professional institutions, specialized and general media – e.g. Metacritic, Wired, USA Today, gamesradar.com, Spike Video Game Awards to name just a few). It has also given rise to a new wave of adventure games that are often referred to as being "in the style of *The Walking Dead*".

The analysis loosely follows Gambarato's previously mentioned question grid, condensed and adapted to the specificities of the project in view.

Premise and purpose

The narrative of the project is centred on the outbreak of a pandemic that reanimates the bodies of the people who die from it, with minimal brain activity and a continuous hunger for flesh. From this point of view it is not substantially different from most "zombie"

productions. The difference is in the "realistic" approach of this fictional event. The creators raise the question "what would people really do in this situation?" From this position they attempt to move away from the tropes of the genre (establishing others in the process), the result being a narrative focused not on the physical struggle for survival, but on the human drama that surrounds it.

The project is dominantly an entertainment one, with a hint of an educational role given by the constant ethical dilemmas presented, if we consider the moral principles supported by the fictional narrative as translatable to real life in any shape.

Audience and market

Target audience

The products that are part of the project have widely intersecting target audiences, when looking at the socio-demographic make-up, but with several specifics for each medium. The TV show (Darabont 2010) is the most visible element of the project. It is the show with the highest ratings among adults in the 18-49 age range and, as the first cable entertainment show to reach this status (15,2 million viewers for the midseason finale of season 3)(AMC 2012) and, while its audience is declining, every episode of the latest season of the show (season 6) up until the writing of this paper has beaten other scripted shows (including broadcast) in the US. The biggest number of people reached by the show on average was 18 million for season 5, dropping to 13.3 million for the first half of season 6 (Kissel 2016). Most of these are 18-49 adults (the show is rated TV-14), the most important group for advertisers, because of their consumption patterns and their purchasing power (Sinha-Roy, Kelsey, and Osterman 2013).

The comic book (Kirkman and Moore 2003) is rated for a mature audience because of the intense violence, profanity, nudity and sexual themes. Despite this, the age of the audience reached by the comic books may reach below that of the TV show. This is partly justified by the fact that the overall age for consumers of comic books is lower than for TV dramas, but also because of the fact that the impact of drawn images is not considered to be as strong as filmed images. In addition to this, the lower overall consumption of comics as a medium attracts less attention from the civil society at a larger scale and from parents considering their children's media use, at a smaller scale.

Despite the smaller audience when compared to the show or the game, compared to other comic books *The Walking Dead* is often at the top of the charts. Issue no. 100, from July 2012 held the record for most copies sold, with 384800 copies, until April 2014 (Comichron.com 2016b). The leading title is now the first issue of a Marvel Star Wars series in January 2015 (simply called *Star Wars*), with over 1 million copies sold.

The adventure game (Telltale Games 2012) is published with a mature audience in mind, as also rated by the ESRB and PEGI. With 28 million episodes sold worldwide by 2014 (10 episodes had been released by the time these figures were published) but no clear socio-demographic data about the buyers, we can assume that the main audience of the game demographically overlaps that of the show, with men of ages 18 to 49 being the principal target, an assumption that can just as well translate to other media in the property that do not provide clear audience numbers (such as the action game, the webisodes and the novels).

A 2013 report about the American Facebook fans of all the pages linked to *The Walking Dead* property (comics, TV shows, games, books, characters) showed that there were more fans of *The Walking Dead* than of comic books overall on Facebook (Schenker 2013). Out of

these, approximately 605 are male, but the proportions get equal as we get to the 45-50 age range, and changes in favour of women at around 60. But the fans that are above 50 are fewer than half a million, i.e. less than 4% out of the total. About 60% of the fans had declared on Facebook that they are in a relationship, half of which are married. Just 5.5 out of the 12.8 million have declared their education level, but out of these 77% have graduated a form of higher education, 16% are students and the remaining 7% are still in high school. The real ratios are probably more balanced, as Facebook users tend to project a positive image for themselves, and as such people with a lower level of education are less likely to declare it. Also, the actual numbers may vary considerably, as some users may not declare their interest in the property or otherwise falsely declare it. We also have to take into consideration the representativeness of Facebook for the entire population. Despite its huge popularity, there are still a lot of people who do not use it, for various reasons, such as personal safety, lack of technical abilities or intellectual reasons (Meza 2015, 103).

Types of use

The audience that enjoys *The Walking Dead* products are *reflective consumers*. *Real-time* consumption is excluded by the episodic nature of all the products, episodes that, though they each have a satisfying narrative structure, are part of a larger narrative structure themselves. The main narrative threads are usually resolved in a medium and long timeframe, rather than o short term. Because of this, real-time viewing can actually be frustrating, creating a tension that doesn't get resolved. The content in all the media is built on long-term tensions that keep a consumer interested for a longer period, awaiting a resolution, unlike a formulaic sit-com, in which most of the active tensions are resolved in each episode, re-establishing the status-quo.

Navigational consumption is also limited by the fact that the narratives in different products are either only tangential or they overlap. The tangential connection refer to the fact that most of the narrative threads are parallel and so the information from one is not particularly useful in the other. The relationship between the adventure game and the TV show is a good example for this, as the only two characters that are present in both are Hershel and Glenn, and their role is so small in the game that very little extra information is presented about them that would not be in the show. Otherwise, the characters and events in the game are independent and their evolution does not affect the other media in any way.

The stories from the comic books and the show, on the other hand, overlap at the very beginning, but then they split into alternative narratives, presenting a different evolution for the same characters. For this reason, they cease to coexist in the same narrative universe, but they do allow for navigational consumption, but only as a meta-consumption, as exploration of the differences between the media and of the creative process.

Business model

The Walking Dead franchise is based on a classic premium business model. Consumers can use the products only for a fee. The TV shows can only be seen by paying a cable subscription or through paid streaming or download services. The comics are sold for $3.99 per printed issue or $1.99 per digital issue. The official price for a full season of the game (six episodes) is $24.99, but they can often be found much cheaper in sales.

For a mobile game, a price of $4-5 is considered high in comparison to the price of most mobile applications. The more popular models for these devices are free or freemium, but seeing as

the standard approach for the traditional platforms (PC, Mac, Xbox, PS) is premium, it makes sense to use the same approach for the mobile platforms. As a compromise for mobile users, starting with October 2012 Telltale have been offering the first episode of both seasons for free on iOS and Android versions of the game. In a similar fashion, comiXology gives away the very first issue in a digital format for free.

Financial success

The popularity of the franchise has also led to financial success. For the fourth quarter of 2012 AMC reported a 16% rise in revenues from advertising, supported by *The Walking Dead*'s high ratings (Launder 2013). The AMC Network's financial report for 2014 showed a 15.4% net increase in advertising revenues. "Advertising revenues increased $101,821 across all of our networks, with the largest increase at AMC. This increase resulted from higher pricing per unit sold due to an increased demand for our programming by advertisers at all of our networks, led by The Walking Dead." (AMC Networks Inc. 2015)

The single-issues and collection of *The Walking Dead* volumes have continuously been in the top ten of the sales charts, occupying lower positions in the last couple of years. From 2010 to 2013 there has always been an issue of the comics at the very top of the charts and in 2012, *The Walking Dead* books took up 7 of the first 10 places on the best selling graphic novels list (Miller 2013). While in 2014 TWD was just in second place, the best position TWD issue was no. 145 on the 133rd place, Star Wars comics taking a size-able part of the sales, followed by the Marvel and DC universes (Diamond Comic Distributors 2016b, c, 2015). Despite this fall, Image Comics, the publisher of the comics, is still rising in market share from slightly over 3% in 2009 (Magnett 2014) to around 7% in 2012 and to 10% in 2015 (Diamond Comic Distributors 2016a, 2013). It is the third

publisher, from this point of view, far behind DC's 25% and Marvel's 40%. Still, this market share brings the publisher estimated revenues of over $70 million/year. The sales of issue no. 100 of the comics alone got close to $1.5 million.

At the beginning of 2013 "The Wall Street Journal" estimated sales of over $40 million for the first season of *The Walking Dead* adventure game starting from Telltale CEO Dan Connors' declaration that they had sold 8.5 million episodes (Lynley 2013). By June the number of episodes sold had doubled (Telltale 2013) and was still rising. For an adventure game these are very big numbers, even though the game with the most copies ever sold (Nintendo Wii Sports, according to VGChartz.com) has sold 82.71 million copies from 2006 to date. But taking into consideration the market segment on which this games is competing, it can safely be said that the Telltale series has a great success and is a leader.

Structure

Transmediation

The Walking Dead project is a retroactive transmediation project, not having conceived from the beginning as a franchise. All the products are based on the comic book, launched in 2003, the next product being the 2010 TV show followed by the adventure game in 2012. From this perspective, the independence of each product, and even narrative divergence, are acceptable. In a franchise "each media platform involved is independent except that they cover different narrative spaces" (Rampazzo Gambarato 2013, 85), while in a *portmanteau narrative* the platforms contribute together to the same experience[2].

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[2] „In a franchise approach, I advocate that all the platforms carry equal weight while with the Portmanteau approach the content may well be jigsaw pieces that need to be connected to form a whole experience." (Pratten 2011, 18)

The autonomy of each story allows the consumer to get into the universe through any entry point, regardless of the chronological positioning or the popular success of the product. The TV show is the main entry platform, due to the fact that the medium has the highest accessibility, and this can be seen by the number of viewers.

The Structure Itself

All three main products in the franchise have an episodic structure. This allows them to have a similar narrative construction, despite the specifics of each medium. The TV show and the game are explicitly divided into seasons and the season into episodes. In the case of the comic book each issue can be equated to an episode and, usually, 6 or 12 issues which are collected into a volume represent a resolved narrative arc, and may be assimilated to a season. This structure allows for narrative threads co-existing at three different levels.
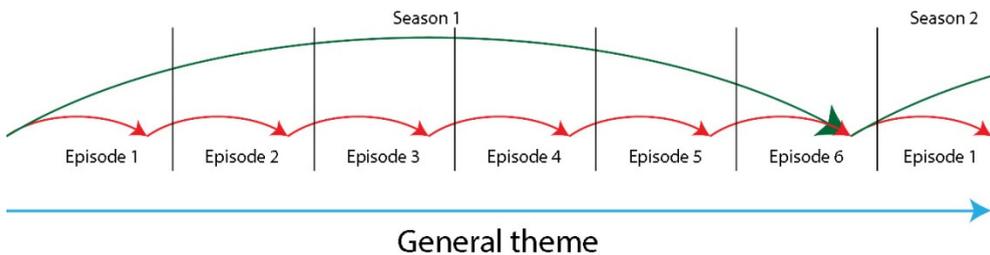
Figure 1. The integration of narrative arcs in the episodic structure.

The story at the highest level is closely linked to the overall theme, the appearance of the zombies, their nature, the possibilities for destroying them, the survival of humanity. The resolution of these themes would lead to the depletion of the narrative potential of the entire franchise. At a lower level, the seasons have extended narrative threads that crop up in all the episodes throughout the season, tying them in one coherent unit to be resolved in the end. These, as opposed

to the higher level, are more concrete. In the first season of the game, for example, there are two such recurring narratives: the journey towards the ocean to find salvation, and the search for Clementine's parents (both resolved in the last episode) that support and motivate the other events in the season. At the lowest level there are also story threads that are introduced and are resolved in a single episode, that are the building blocks that give strength to this structure and allow each episode to exist as an individual entity.

There can also be story arcs that cover several episodes without overlapping with any other structure unit. Also, television season can also be divided into two by the winter holiday hiatus. Some shows (including TWD) have an intermediary unit consisting a half a season that is built into the narrative structure of the season overall. So there is a midseason finale, which is in many ways similar to a season finale in that it resolves some of the storylines, but usually ends in a cliff-hanger to set up the midseason premiere after the hiatus. This helps maintain interest in a show through the break. Practically, as can be seen in Figure 1, the arc of each structure unit is actually introduced in the previous unit. An episode does not just resolve the tensions it initiated (or that had been there before), but also introduces new ones for the following episode, to create anticipation and rising interest. At the end of a season, after concluding the story, the last moments of an episode are used to offer a short teaser for the next season, to leave consumers with an unresolved memory, even if they will forget the specifics in the months between the seasons.

Experience

The role of the player and levels of engagement

In the case of the comics and the TV show we are dealing with a detached viewer who is not involved in the action, an external observer. The involvement is exclusively at the narrative level,

through emotional connection to the characters and maintaining the audience interested about their evolution. The game, as expected for this medium, engages the player more through interaction, but at the same time, tries to maintain a cinematic quality. For this reason, the perspective in the game is constantly shifting. The point of view of the player is, therefore, constantly changing. This leads to a lack of consistency in identification in favour of more auctorial control over emotional involvement and control over the information.

In the moments of maximum tension, the perspective is a first person one. Quick time events, where the player needs to have fast reactions to on screen events, are introduced to make the genre more dynamic, and are often viewed from a first person point of view. The player sees the world through the eyes of the character and identifies more closely with him, in situations of imminent danger. Otherwise, the third person perspective is used, in which the camera follows the main character, Lee, from behind, from a distance that can vary the shot from an over the shoulder one to a long general shot. The distance from the camera also affects the degree of player engagement in the action. Wider shots denote a more detached attitude and come up in moments when the player is left to explore and gather information. The camera closes in as the action gets more intense. In certain moments the camera does not follow the character around at all, but stays fixed to establish the scene and to offer easier access to information in the environment and to ease exploration.

The unfolding of the narrative is based on the same principles as in other media. In this case we can talk about an alternation between moments of tension and moments of relaxation, but also a gradual rise in tension followed by a final resolution. This structure can be observed in the game in the behaviour of the camera. In moments of relaxation, the camera is detached, the shots are wide, the movement is smooth and slow, but in moments of tension the camera moves in, the movement becomes more erratic and twitchy, the shots are narrower and as they close in, they eventually move to a first person POV:

In the following sequence (Figure 2) one can observe this transition, from the moment of maximum tension (a), where Lee has to shoot a policeman after he becomes a zombie, and the camera perspective is in the first person, to the partial relaxation that follows (b), seen from the outside, a detail shot (c), then closing back in on the character (d), and setting up another tense moment by settling into a third person perspective that is very close to the character, an over the shoulder shot (e).

Figure 2. Camera perspective in *The Walking Dead* adventure game as tool for player engagement.

Dialogues among characters, arguably the most important part of the game, where the influence of the player over the narrative is the strongest, and where relationships between characters are established, are also treated in a standard cinematic way from the point of view of shot composition (Figure 3).
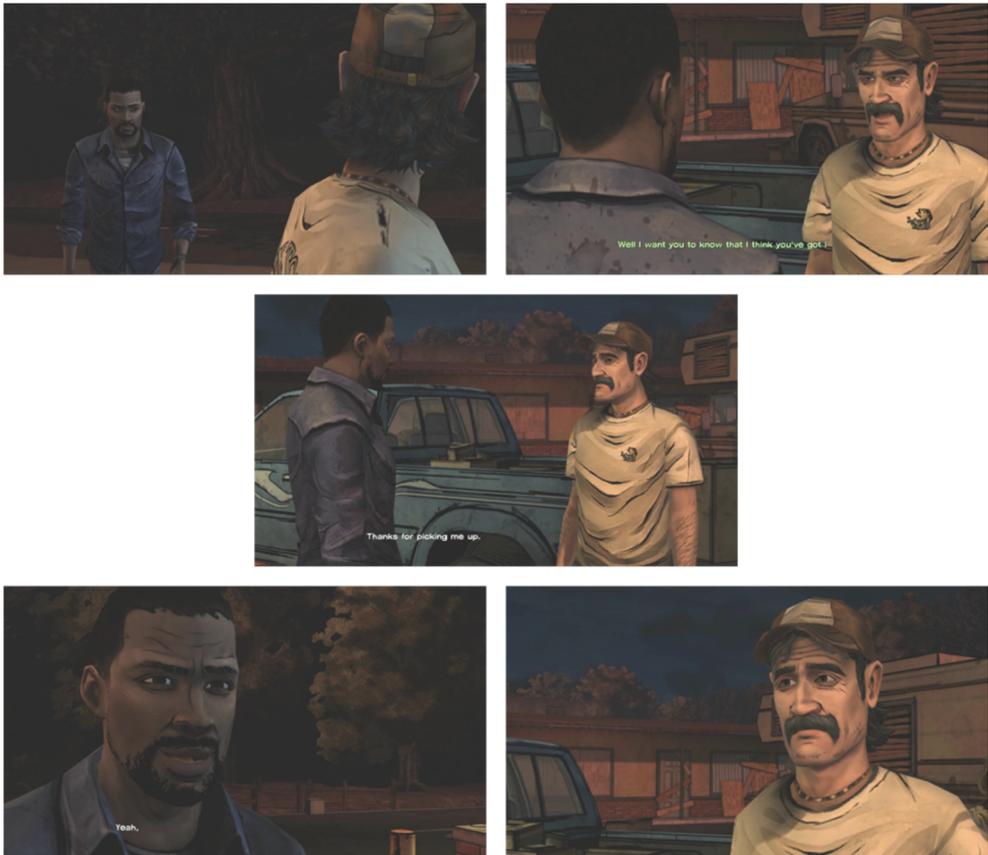
Figure 3. Standard cinematic framing for dialogue scenes: over the shoulder shots, single close-up shots and two-shots, used in *The Walking Dead* game.

Depending on how intense or personal a conversation is, or the direction in which it is evolving, the shots can change from wide shots that include both (or all) involved characters, to over the shoulder shots, in which both speakers still appear, but the camera moves behind one of them, close to their head. Lastly, the two-shots are replaced with close-up shots, and the viewer or, in this case, the player, gets more immersed in the conversation, and more personally and emotionally involved. This can also be taken a bit further, to detail shots that can emphasise the connection between characters. So *The Walking Dead* adventure game uses visual procedures that are standard in other media and adapts them to its own set of procedures, especially given the different relationship between the player and the game when compared to that of a viewer to a film or a reader to a comic book, for example. In the case of the player, the potential to create the illusion of spatial presence, or even presence of the self, is much greater because of the potential to observe the effects of one's own actions in the game world, connecting the real world including non-diegetic movement (such as using a mouse and a keyboard) directly to events in the on-screen fiction.

Engagement

Player engagement is achieved in two ways – on the one hand through video game specific means (gameplay elements, goals, missions), and on the other hand by developing emotional involvement. The narrative structure is made up in such a way that it favours social presence. The player ends up empathizing with their avatar or assuming the social relationships the avatar has with the other characters in the game, be they positive or negative. The fact that the relationship statuses are determined by the player's actions, who has the power to direct them through deeds and dialogue choices contributes to this level of empathy.

There are two main strategies for initiating engagement in *The Walking Dead* adventure game: creating emotional connections, and creating functional connections. Emotional connections refer to the fact that the player develops a certain relationship with the characters, from a narrative point of view, in a social presence situation. This relationship can be a positive one, of sympathy, or a negative one, of antipathy. Functional connections have as determining factor the role which the characters play in the mechanic economy of the game. Thus, players can become attached to characters, even if they dislike them, because of the benefits a positive relationship with these characters can give towards the fulfilling the goals of the game, while they can rid themselves of sympathetic characters that may not contribute to the progress through the game's structure.

The difference between the two types of connections is not always clearly obvious, but they can intersect or influence each other. An emotional connection can determine the preference towards one character or another in the case where they are functionally equivalent or, on the contrary, if it the emotional connection is strong enough, the players may choose a functionally inferior character. From the other point of view, players may develop sympathy towards characters due to their mechanical utility.

The narrative can be built in such a way as to force players into a decision that is disadvantageous regardless of the chosen path (e.g. there is no character that can support both an emotional and a functional connection, so players must give one up), creating narrative tension. IF this tension is too great, it can lead to frustration of ludo-narrative dissonance, a situation in which the story or the events in the game lose their narrative logic because of the mechanics.

In *The Walking Dead*, the engagement of the players uses both strategies in different ways. Firstly, the emotional nucleus that supports the entire game is the relationship between the main character, Lee, and

Clementine, a little girl who lost her parents and whose protection he takes upon himself. The two are connected by a relationship of dependency imposed upon the players from the start. Players have no real choice in Lee deciding to protect the girl. Still, the narrative is built in such a way that this imposed relationship is quickly accepted and assumed by the player, if it does not lead to game-breaking ludo-narrative dissonance. The players who do not accept this situation will not find any pleasure and will probably stop playing it, but once accepted, this virtual responsibility becomes one of the main goals in the game, together with personal survival. From the point of view of the gameplay, Clementine brings no advantages, but rather complicates the process of reaching the goals, but the paternal relationship which develops cancels out the disadvantages, integrating them in the narrative.

From a functional point of view, the player is more connected to Kenny, who survives until the last episode of the first season, so is present almost constantly in Lee's group. So while it is possible to maintain a relationship of antipathy from the very start, by deciding in the very first episode to save Hershel's son instead of Kenny's son, Duck, it's more advantageous to keep Kenny on Lee's side, making certain tasks easier. For certain types of players this can seem an arduous task, seeing as Kenny often has a contradictory position to the player's character.

The Walking Dead is built in such a way that there are a multitude of alternatives in ending the game, the success being given by the player's preference towards one of these alternatives. If the players have a specific ending as a goal (out of the possible ones), the main purpose of playing will become reaching that goal, and reaching a different ending might mean losing the game, even if it is, in itself, a valid ending. Some possibilities are taken away from the players from the start by the writers of the game, regardless of the player's actions,

being set as fixed elements of the narrative (or being completely dismissed as choices). These usually exploit the connections between the players and the characters to wrench out strong emotional responses. For example, Lee's (and other character's) deaths cannot be avoided just potentially postponed or modified in the details.

Player agency

Agency in a game refers to the possibility of players to exert their abilities in order to execute actions that affect the state of a game. The possibility to influence the course of events in *The Walking Dead* universe is at the same time great and limited. Depending on their actions, players can radically affect the destinies of the characters, up to making life and death decisions. This being considered, the narrative threads are largely pre-determined and events are fixed, or flexible only in the details. The way in which the action develops is presented in such a way as to give the players the illusion of control even when their decisions do not substantially affect the flow of the narrative. If, for example, at Hershel's farm in the first episode a player chooses to save Shawn Greene instead of Duck, the fact that Shawn is killed anyway does not seem like a lack of control, but a lack of the necessary abilities of the character to fulfil the task of saving him.

A scene that has raised several controversies from this point of view is the moment in which Lilly kills Carley (both survivors from the Macon drug store in the first episode) without any previous build up or hints towards this, in the third episode. It can be assumed that players have created either an emotional or a functional connection with Carley because, if they reached this point they have previously already chosen Carley instead of another character (Doug) to be killed in a previous episode. Lilly shoots her after she accuses Carley of

being a traitor, without giving the player the means to react. This lack of control is shocking for players, used to be given at least an illusory option to intervene, and creates frustration. The effect might be intentional from a narrative point of view. The character is not an omnipotent hero so his vulnerability is emphasized, but there is a dissonance between narrative and mechanical control. Mechanics should be consistent and predictable. Up until this point, the player is used to a large degree of control, which is temporarily limited without explanation or precedent. Thus, the inability of the character is interpreted as the inability of the player.
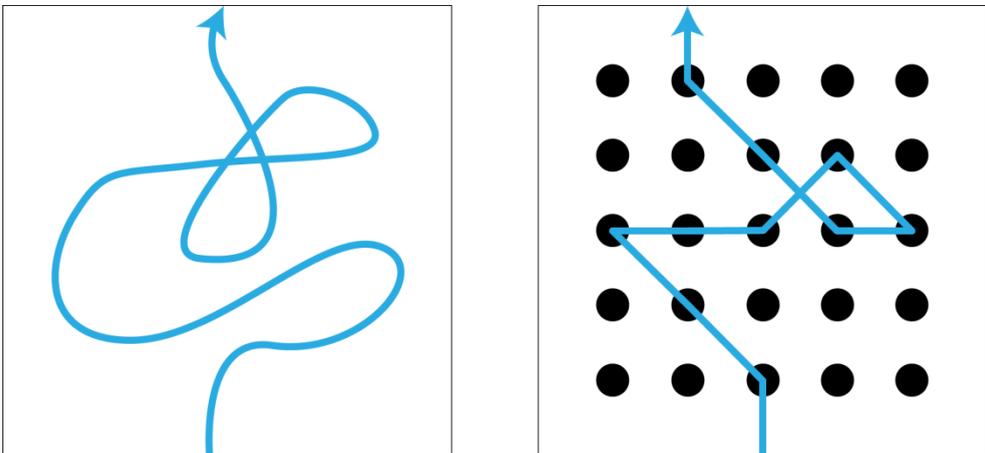

Figure 4 The difference between the player's path in a continuous decision field (left) and in a discrete decision field.

In comparison to most games, *The Walking Dead* gives the player considerable freedom of choice and of influencing the narrative, hundreds of significantly different scenarios being possible. Unlike agency in action games, where most actions have mechanic effects, and in which the pleasure of acting is more important than the

joy of following and influencing a narrative, in *The Walking Dead* (and adventure games in general) every gesture of the player has non-trivial consequences, affecting the game world and the potential for development of the following events. If in a game such as one from the *Halo* series destroying an enemy alien (from the hundreds or thousands that are attacking you) isn't necessarily significant (from a semiotic point of view) as an individual gesture, in TWD each action contributes to the meaning of the entire product. There are, in fact, also trivial actions, such as the movement of the character in the virtual space, but the ratio of semiotic ally meaningful and non-meaningful actions is greater than in other genres.

All these possibilities of affecting the game world through meaningful actions are, however, predetermined and converge to a limited number of possible outcomes. If in action games the movement, even if trivial, happen in a continuous field, giving the player a great freedom of choice, in *The Walking Dead*, decisions are discrete, individual units, determined by the writers and designers of the game, fixed points among which the player may choose and between which they can navigate. These two main types of agency, a flexible one, but with low semiotic significance, and one with a limited number of options, but with non-trivial consequences, represent two different types of experience, neither intrinsically superior. There are also hybrid models, which take elements from both. Modern adventure games solve the problem of limited options by reaching an adequate *narrative resolution*. If the discrete decision elements are considerable in number or have a high density, an illusion of continuity can be maintained, partially avoiding the disadvantages specific to this model. TWD gets close to this ideal situation, offering the player enough choices so that the holes in the decisional field almost pass by unnoticed, giving a strong illusion of agency.

The project as cultural attractor/activator

The term cultural attractor is used by Pierre Levy to denote cultural products around which clusters of fan and critical activity are formed, who see in the opportunities for creating meaning and evaluation (apud Jenkins 2006, 283) attracting people with similar interests. Cultural activators are defined by Henry Jenkins as "texts that function as catalysts, setting into motion a process of shared meaning-making" (Jenkins 2006, 283), projects that offer the audience forms of meaningful participation. Given the success of *The Walking Dead* franchise, it may be said that its role as cultural attractor is fulfilled. The fact that it has become a cultural phenomenon known by millions offers the members of the audience new ways to interact with the content, but especially with each other. The element that contributes most to establishing the franchise as a cultural attractor is the universal theme of exploring human nature, exacerbated by its extreme setting.

Beyond discussions with friends the day after the broadcast of each episode or after playing the game, fan communities have cropped up. Their presence is most easily identified by the websites they create, the fan pages on social networking services and discussions on forums, or the large amount of fanfiction and fan art. The intense activity of the communities developed around TWD and the big quantity of user-generated content that can be found online (parodies, fanfiction, fan art, FMV, mash-ups, etc.) is an indicator of the fact that the series is a success from the point of view of cultural activation. In addition, the social effect of the media products is reconfirmed, obvious here in their ability to attract people in building new communities.

Applicability

In what concerns the possibility of taking narrative elements and applying them to real life, *The Walking Dead* is faithful to its status as a fictional product, despite the illusion of realism which it attempts to project. The applicability of the information in the franchise is reduced because of its very premise. This being considered, there are communities that take inspiration from the contents of the franchise to prepare for catastrophic events, leading down from imagining a potential outburst of a pandemic of reanimated corpses to earthquakes and other natural disasters or a nuclear attack. The Discovery Channel has produced a series called *Zombie Apocalypse* to present ways of surviving a disaster, relating the information to popular culture and taking advantage of it to get bigger ratings (Discovery Channel 2012). Several professors from University of California Irvine have started offering a course inspired by TWD called *Society, Science, Survival: Lessons from AMCs The Walking Dead* (Schwartz 2013). The course provides information from physics, mathematics, social sciences and public health, analysing mathematical models of spreading epidemics, humans' reproductive rates, biological camouflage or elements of ballistics.

Conclusions

As apparent from the paper, video games are a medium of synthesis, bringing together characteristics of other media and adding specific elements. The previous analysis shows that a large part of the content of games is built using devices developed in other media. The visual presentation is borrowed widely from video production, with framing conventions, camera movements and blocking and their

effects being similar to what can be found in films. What is specific, though, is the attention a game places on the position of the character/player, and the effect the camera has on the experience of the game. When it comes to writing, the game is based on the same structures as those used for film scripts and almost exclusively uses dialogue to move the story forwards, but the script of the game does not have a linear structure, but a hypertextual one, a network of connections between otherwise fixed events, among which the players can choose to create their own paths. Practically, even if most of the pleasure of the game consists of making choices and in the cause-effect relationship between player actions and game response, the player only goes through one chain of events, the rest remaining just potential.

The potential of variability is what makes a two hour gaming session different from a two hour film. Beyond the technological means used for creating immersion (high definition graphics and sounds, realistic animations, visual representations of the player, etc.) the responsibility of the players is what most contributes to integrating them in the fictional world. Through interaction, a quality specific of video games as a medium, they become the more important element in the game, a source of dynamism in an otherwise static world expecting action.

Through interaction, a fluid product is created, one that is always subjected to external modelling forces. For this reason, video games as media products cannot be analysed as standard cultural texts, as an independent product, just a collection of potential elements, but only as an experience. This has to be taken into consideration by anyone who studies video games and suggest new approach paradigms.

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