The production of the advertising image in transmedia environments: A theoretical review of visual narrative

La producción de la imagen publicitaria en entornos transmedia: Una revisión teórica desde la narrativa visual

Irma Carrillo Chávez
Lead and corresponding author.
Conceptualization – Data curation
Formal analysis – Research
Methodology – Writing
igrafic@fh.uaslp.mx
*Facultad del Hábitat. Universidad
Autónoma de San Luis Potosi
San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico
ORCID: 0000-0002-2457-3191*

Manuel Guerrero Salinas
Second author.
Supervision – Methodology – Writing
mguerrero@fh.uaslp.mx
*Facultad del Hábitat. Universidad
Autónoma de San Luis Potosi
San Luis Potosi, SLP, Mexico
ORCID: 0000-0001-8647-4538*

◈ Abstract

This study examines the creation and distribution of advertising images across digital platforms in transmedia environments. A key argument is that users are no longer passive recipients but active participants who modify and re-circulate these images, forming communities around them. These user communities often adapt and transform institutional images—originally produced by companies and creative agencies—into new visual products that exist alongside official campaigns. The research is organized into three main areas: (1) the *transmedia context*, defined as the set of digital platforms where modern advertising images circulate; (2) *temporality*, limited to the last five years; and (3) the type of content, focusing solely on advertising images designed for multi-platform distribution. A transmedia narrative analysis model was used, adapted specifically for advertising images from existing literary frameworks. The study aims to clarify the new features and behaviors that characterize advertising image production within these contexts, identifying shifts in how such images are viewed and represented. The conclusions highlight key changes in the creation, movement, and interpretation of advertising images, demonstrating how transmedia practices reshape visual communication.

◈ Resumen

El presente estudio se enfoca en la producción de imágenes publicitarias dentro del contexto transmedial. Esta investigación se delimita en tres ejes fundamentales: contexto transmedial, *entendido como el conjunto de plataformas digitales en las que circulan las imágenes publicitarias contemporáneas;* temporalidad, *que se acota a los últimos cinco años del siglo XXI y* tipo de imagen, *pues se analizan exclusivamente imágenes de carácter publicitario, seleccionadas a partir de campañas diseñadas específicamente para su difusión en múltiples plataformas digitales. Para obtener estos datos se aplicó un modelo de análisis de la narrativa transmedia adaptado de estudios previos sobre productos literarios transmediales y ajustado a las particularidades de la imagen publicitaria. Por otra parte, el objetivo se centra en determinar las características, cualidades y comportamientos asociados a la producción de imágenes publicitarias en el contexto transmedial, con el fin de identificar los cambios paradigmáticos en los modos de ver y representar la imagen publicitaria contemporánea. Finalmente, se presentan las conclusiones de esta investigación derivadas del análisis, enfocadas en los cambios observados en la producción, circulación y percepción de la imagen publicitaria. Estas reflexiones permiten comprender cómo las nuevas formas de ver están determinadas por la lógica transmedial, que redefine tanto los modos de representación como los de recepción de la imagen.*

◈ Introduction

The emergence of multiple platforms, with diverse natures and contents, driven by the development of technological devices and their resources, has caused a paradigm shift around "traditional" advertising strategies, understood as those that followed classic stages of introduction, maintenance, or closure.

User participation is now essential. Users are both spectators and active consumers—prosumer communities. These communities modify advertising images from companies and agencies, transforming them into new narrative products that circulate alongside the original campaigns. This allows brand messages to expand in meaning and reach, sometimes beyond their original purpose.

This process also incorporates elements of literary and narrative theories, utilizing resources such as *storytelling*, which involves the narrative arc of a story, where protagonists and, sometimes, antagonists are defined; space-time atmospheres are created, and challenges are posed, accompanied by the promise of a reward. Thus, a shift from traditional advertising media – characterized by the unidirectionality of the message, the passivity of the viewer, and an implicit persuasive intention oriented towards consumption – towards a model that enables the active interaction of the user, to the extent that his knowledge and mastery of the digital environment allows it (Martínez Sáez *et al*., 2017). Thus, like a network of nodes, the narrative no longer flows in a single direction, but branches, re-signifies, and expands depending on the user's participation and the media that support it (Jenkins, 2007).

◈ The image in the transmedia context

The complexity of analyzing an image in the field of advertising may seem, to some, a banal exercise, as these studies have historically been associated with the fields of Fine Arts or Art History. However, the image consumed by society has acquired such relevance that it is difficult to assimilate all the visual information from the commercial field, which is presented to us both in reality – *advertising in and outdoor* (inside or outside a physical space) – and in digital environments.

In this context, it is pertinent to consider what Jenkins (2007) proposes about transmedia narratives, which are understood as those deployed through multiple media platforms, where each medium contributes in a particular way to the development of the story and amplifies the user experience. From the rise of smart devices, the wide range of computational technological tools and the accelerated growth of the Internet, with its capacity to store data and distribute content on multiple platforms – no longer only made up of sites or pages, but also products of incalculable commercial value, such as social networks or video and e-commerce portals, all advertising shared in these environments could be considered transmedia, that is, present on multiple platforms, which implies a narrative and strategic expansion that articulates different media with the active participation of the user (Scolari, 2009).

However, it is important to note that this dynamic does not develop homogeneously in all countries. While the central nations have powerful resources to process thousands of data points – *big data* – generated from the search, selection, and consumption of products or services by users, through the creation of sophisticated algorithms that conFigure their "profile", the peripheral countries face a different reality, in which advertising campaigns are rarely deployed with a diversity of platforms or comparable strategies. Couldry *et al*. (2009) analyzed the unequal distribution of media events in a globalized environment.

On the other hand, advertising resources have been nourished by a wide repertoire of strategies, different from those known during the 20th century, which have generated an increasing difficulty for the user to distinguish between advertising, entertainment, and information. This fusion of elements has been promoted to stimulate the average consumer's desire, giving rise to a process of *hybridization* that blurs the boundaries between the real product or service and the fiction that frames it (Ramos *et al*., 2022).
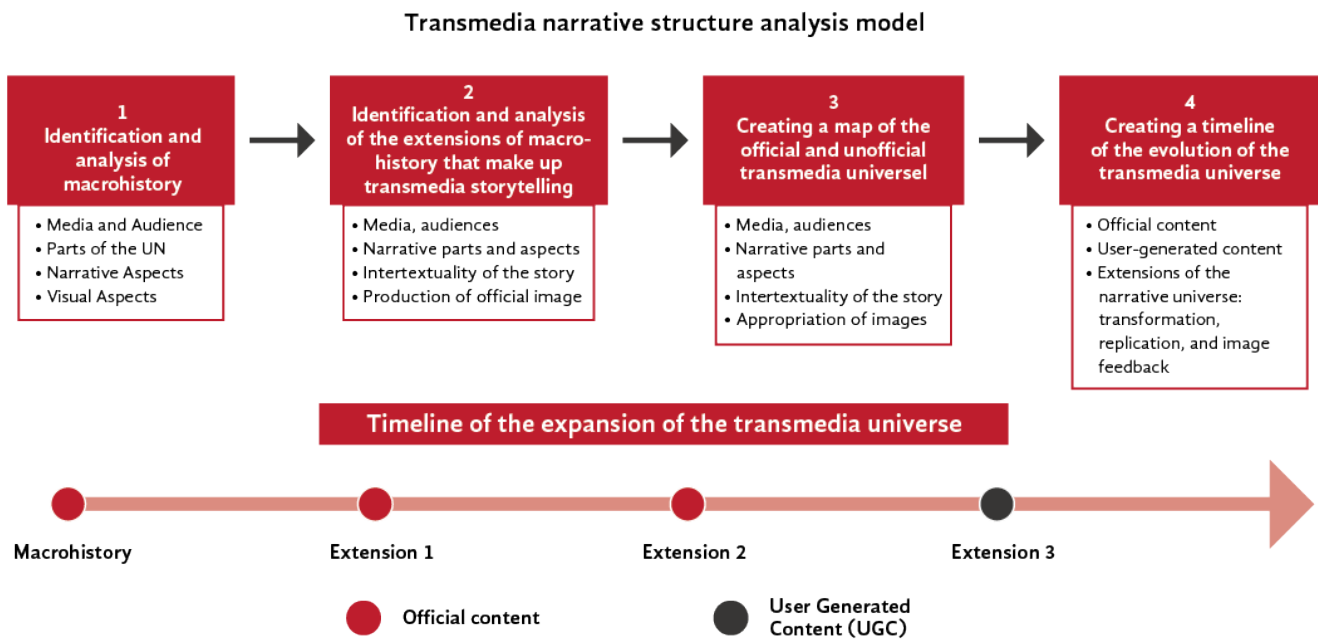
In addition to this phenomenon, it is observed that users have become content generators (UGC: User-Generated *Content*), thus becoming producers of advertising narratives—whether visual or textual—that they share with their communities or via social networks. This practice creates new advertising products and is one of the main mechanisms for the circulation and dissemination of advertising content in contemporary digital environments. As Scolari (2009) points out, users actively participate in the expansion of brand narrative universes, operating as agents who contribute to constructing transmedia stories and their dissemination across multiple platforms.

◈ The transmedia narrative analysis model

The model proposed by García and Heredero (2015) constitutes a theoretical tool to understand the behavior of the media involved in a transmedia advertising campaign. It begins with the analysis of at least three

main platforms and considers the peripheral media that emerge from the activities of convergent communities, particularly content-generating users, whose participation is not only inevitable but also desirable within these dynamics of contemporary communication. Variables focused on the behavior of the image — production, appropriation, transformation, replication, and feedback — are incorporated into this basic structure, elements that have been little addressed in traditional models, despite the image playing a fundamental role in the construction of transmedia narratives. The image can function both as the protagonist of the visual story, capable of emitting an autonomous discourse, and as a complement to textual discourses, enriching and expanding the meaning of the story. Likewise, the model presents a timeline that enables us to visualize the various stages of the narrative's development, thereby facilitating an analysis of its evolution and expansion (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Representation of the analysis model for the structure and expansion of transmedia narratives. Variables pertaining to image behavior are added at the bottom (white box). The model includes a timeline showing how the narrative universe expands according to platform use and user-generated content.

Transmedia narrative structure analysis model

1 Identification and analysis of macrohistory	2 Identification and analysis of the extensions of macro-history that make up transmedia storytelling	3 Creating a map of the official and unofficial transmedia universel	4 Creating a timeline of the evolution of the transmedia universe
• Media and Audience • Parts of the UN • Narrative Aspects • Visual Aspects	• Media, audiences • Narrative parts and aspects • Intertextuality of the story • Production of official image	• Media, audiences • Narrative parts and aspects • Intertextuality of the story • Appropriation of images	• Official content • User-generated content • Extensions of the narrative universe: transformation, replication, and image feedback

Timeline of the expansion of the transmedia universe

Macrohistory — Extension 1 — Extension 2 — Extension 3

● Official content   ● User Generated Content (UGC)

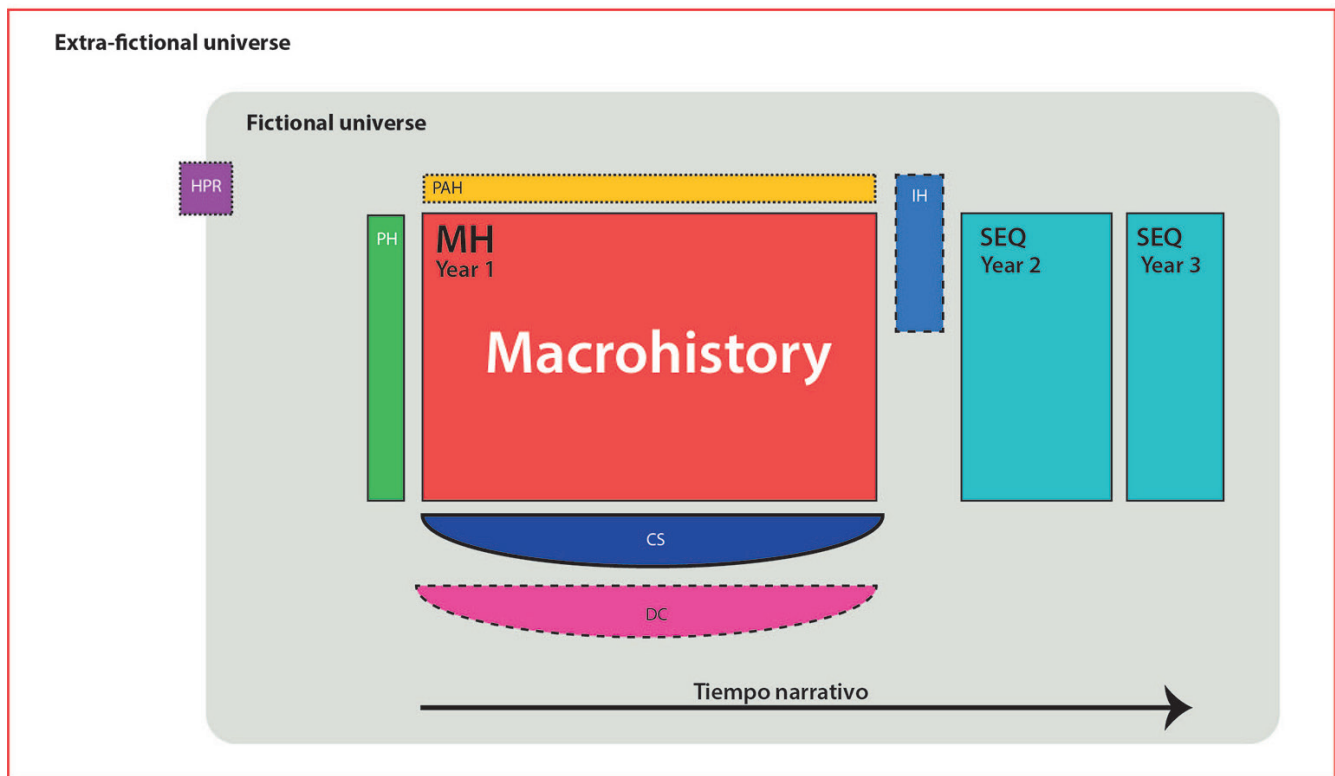*Source:* Prepared by the authors, based on the model proposed by García and Heredero, 2015.

◈ Identification and analysis of macro story extensions

The following diagram (see Figure 2) enables us to visualize how the analysis of the narrative universe's extension is conducted within an integrated communication strategy framework, within the context of transmedia narrative. This graphic representation, adopted by García

and Heredero (2015) in their theoretical proposal, originates from the work of the master Andreu Belsunces, who initially developed it for analyzing the transmedia narrative universe applied to a television series (Belsunces, 2011). Adapting the scheme to the advertising field allows you to visualize, quickly and easily, the connection between platforms, content, and the ways in which people interact with a campaign.

Figure 2
The identification model of the expansion of transmedia narrative applied to any product, whether printed or digital, is represented.

Macrohistory identification model (general)
Transmedia map adapted to advertising

Source: Belsunces, 2011.

As can be seen in the diagram (see Figure 2), the red box delineates the extrafictional universe, which encompasses everything that occurs, including events that take place outside of fiction. Within this box, the fictional universe is located, represented by the gray box. It is within this operational context that the fictional action unfolds, comprising both the official macro-story and the content generated by users or prosumers. The official content is represented by the elements that comprise the expansion behavior of the transmedia universe, marked by a solid black line. These elements are the following:

◈ **The macro history:** Refers to the official history, with proper permissions and copyrights, generated by an institution. Macro stories emerge from the planning and strategies developed by institutions and are of an "official" nature, as they receive support from the client when requested by the advertising agency (López, n.d.).

◈ **Preliminary stories:** These are those stories launched by the institution before releasing the official story, to raise awareness among the consumer public.

◈ **Complete the story:** Measure the level of interdependence of the macro story with its extensions and vice versa, as well as the autonomy of one or more stories or substories that make up the narrative universe (Belsunces, 2011).

◈ **Sequels:** Refers to the continuation of stories, either by editing another product, chapter, movie, season, or repetition of the advertising strategy. A "sequel" is a literary or cinematographic work that continues a story already developed in a previous one (Real Academia Española [rae], 2019). Sequels emerge in response to the success and public acceptance of the original work, a strategy also applied to advertising campaigns, particularly those incorporating immersive media as part of their various tactics. On the other hand, user-generated content is included, namely, unofficial stories, which are represented with a dotted line.

◈ **Parallel stories:** They tell an alternative narrative that unfolds concurrently with the official story, often revealed through successful characters on social media.

◈ **Peripheral stories:** Small stories that have a minimal relationship with the central story. Peripheral stories are identified because they are narratives whose contents are related to the official history in an unofficial way.

◈ **Depth in characters** refers to the variations that the official story undergoes, producing new stories with the same protagonists.

The characters that comprise a transmedia universe are constructed from three main assumptions, all of which are complex: cultural convergence, the type of user, and the fictional role that the character plays within that universe. According to Jenkins (2008, p. 14), cultural convergence is defined as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences, willing to seek the type of entertainment experiences desired."

◈ **The observer:** For García and Heredero (2015), the observer is the one who enters certain media without leaving a mark on the product they consume; however, this can still affect the transmedia product, for example, by the number of views of a video or on a social network.

◈ **The interpreter:** A user who enters certain transmedia products and gives their opinion in certain places in macro history, such as blogs or similar sites, but does not expand the transmedia universe.

◈ **The creator:** Those who generate content that expands the transmedia universe, through convergent communities, which is known as the "fan effect", as well as the co-authors who expand content through its components, that is, creating the content through peripheral stories.

◈ **Interstitial micro stories:** Stories that are told between prosumers – user-generated content – between each of the installments of the official story (García & Heredero, 2015). Stories are mostly built from comments on social media platforms and those from influencers.

◈ **Narrative time:** Refers to the timeline within which the transmedia narrative unfolds.

◈ **Timeline of the expansion of the transmedia universe:** This line allows you to visualize, in a general sense, the behavior of the campaign and, in the case of sequels, how its expansion continues through the duration of the subsequent campaigns derived from the original.

◈ **Modifying an image: material support and content**

As mentioned, analyzing the image itself requires drawing on knowledge from various disciplines related to linguistics, semiotics, and rhetoric. In addition to these resources, the very act of perceiving an image in the sensible world involves a series of complex processes ranging from ocular perception to the processing of brain data. We see with the brain. We can therefore affirm that an image will always be inscribed on a medium

and that this support is susceptible to being disseminated by any means, whether physical or digital. The image itself is created by someone – whether it belongs to the canon or not – on a material support and made using any means of expression, including production techniques. Subsequently, the image undergoes a process of "dissemination", that is, it is published in the medium or medium – physical or digital. Once this happens, the image is ready to be observed, appropriated, transformed, and replicated by users/consumers who may have access to it.
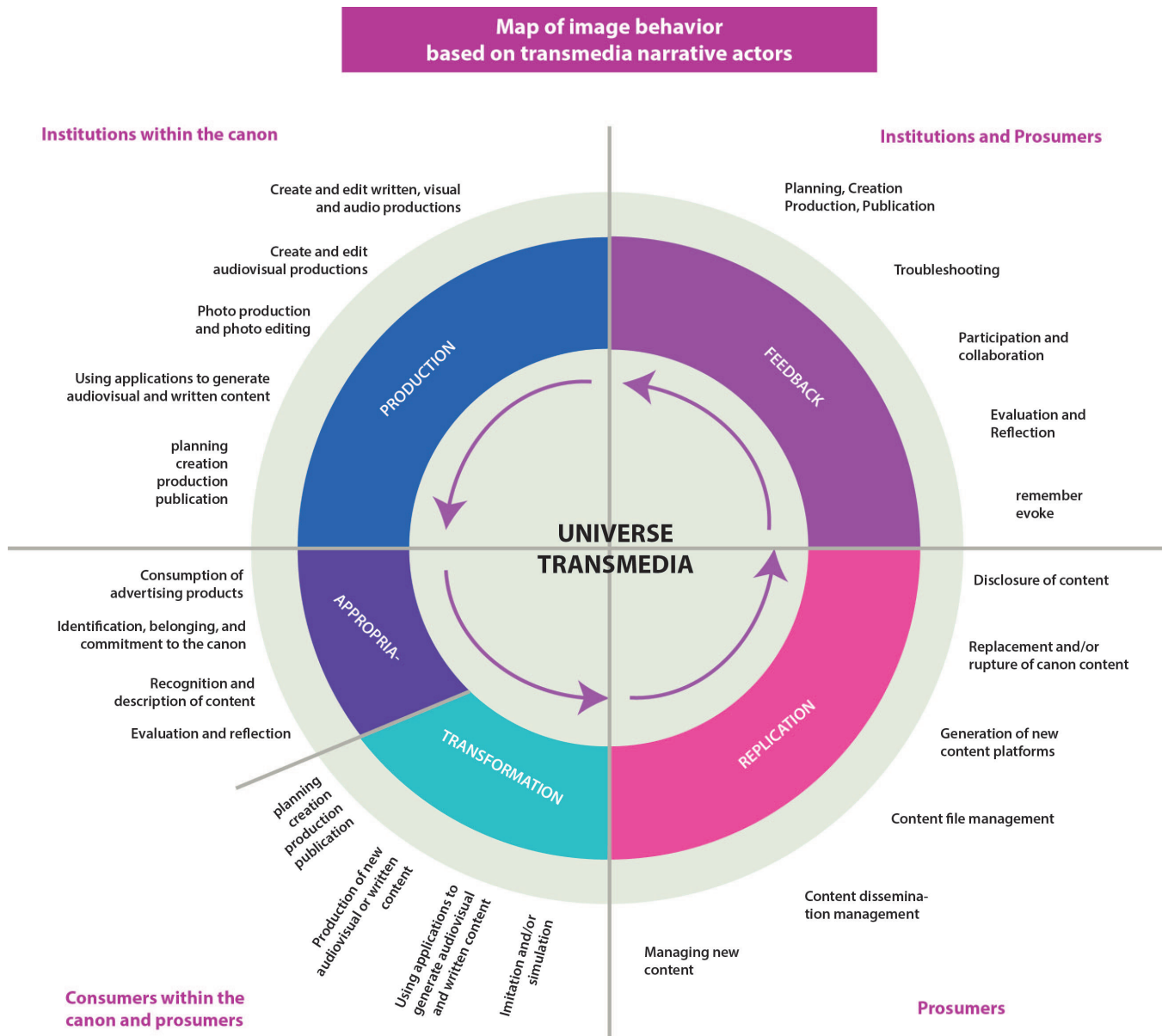
◈ The behavior of the image

The image created at the moment of its inception has fixed and stable characteristics, that is, it refers to the very moment of its creation. It cannot be self-modified; it is the users who execute that action through:

A. **Creation/production:** refers to the generation of the image, from the canon established by an institution.

B. **Observation/consumption:** this act is carried out by the consumer, who has access to the image, observes it, and consumes it, in accordance with the intention established by the canon.

C. **Identity/appropriation:** the consumer identifies with the image and the context that surrounds it, consumes the product, comments on it with his peers and appropriates the image, as described clearly and brilliantly by John Berger (2000) in his book *Ways of Seeing*, where he states that an image enters the viewer's home through television, it enters the family atmosphere, becomes a topic of conversation and lends its meaning to their significance.

D. **Transformation/modification:** the act of appropriating an image entails the indivisible act of modifying it, first, by the contextual change it undergoes: the image is torn from its original context and integrated into the individual's visual library.

E. **Replication:** Is defined as the publication and dissemination of content within the extra fictional universe, that is, the real universe in which the consumer lives, but which, however, touches points of the fictional universe.

F. **Feedback:** Since the image aligns with the previous consumption cycle, we now face the moment of acceptance by the convergent community, which transcends the formal canon and replicates the image in question. At this point, and if accepted, the representation of the creative institution enters the scene, which may or may not make the decision to a) denounce and demand satisfaction from the prosumer, or b) evaluate the results of the process and appropriate in turn that new image. What

happens next is part of the creation of subsequent stories or se-
quels, which can again be created by the canon (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
A schema that represents the behavior of the image in the five stages that make up the transmedia narrative (nt).

Map of image behavior
based on transmedia narrative actors

Institutions within the canon

Create and edit written, visual
and audio productions

Create and edit
audiovisual productions

Photo production
and photo editing

Using applications to generate
audiovisual and written content

planning
creation
production
publication

Consumption of
advertising products

Identification, belonging, and
commitment to the canon

Recognition and
description of content

Evaluation and reflection

PRODUCTION

APPROPRIA-

TRANSFORMATION

UNIVERSE
TRANSMEDIA

FEEDBACK

REPLICATION

Institutions and Prosumers

Planning, Creation
Production, Publication

Troubleshooting

Participation and
collaboration

Evaluation and
Reflection

remember
evoke

Disclosure of content

Replacement and/or
rupture of canon content

Generation of new
content platforms

Content file management

Content dissemina-
tion management

Managing new
content

planning
creation
production
publication

Production of new
audiovisual or written
content

Using applications to
generate audiovisual
and written content

Imitation and/or
simulation

**Consumers within the
canon and prosumers**

Prosumers

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the proposal of Transmedia Literacy
(Literacy, 2018).

◆ **Case Study** Based on the model presented, this section proposes a case study
that allows us to observe how its components take shape in a specific

situation of advertising communication, framed within a transmedial narrative. The intention is to demonstrate, in a clear and practical manner, how the phases of the image's behavior – from its creation to its replication and feedback – become visible in an advertising campaign with these characteristics.

◈ *Hotel de Leyendas Victoria 2016* (hlv-2016)

For the selection of the case, three fundamental criteria were taken into account: it was an advertising campaign with a transmedia or crossover structure, had been published in Mexico between 2015 and 2023, and was part of a fictional universe with at least one sequel or subsequent narrative development. The *Hotel de Leyendas Victoria 2016* campaign meets all these conditions, so it represents a significant example to apply the proposed analysis model and observe how the visual narrative is deployed in a nationwide advertising context.

◈ The extra fictional universe

Within the framework of this research, the concept of *extra fictional universe* refers to the set of elements that, although they are not a direct part of the narrative or fictional content of an advertising campaign, significantly influence its reception, interpretation, and effectiveness. This universe includes social, cultural, economic, and demographic factors that shape the real environment of the target audience. In this specific case, the profile of the beer consumer in Mexico is analyzed as part of that extra-fictional universe that surrounds and conditions the production and reception of advertising images.
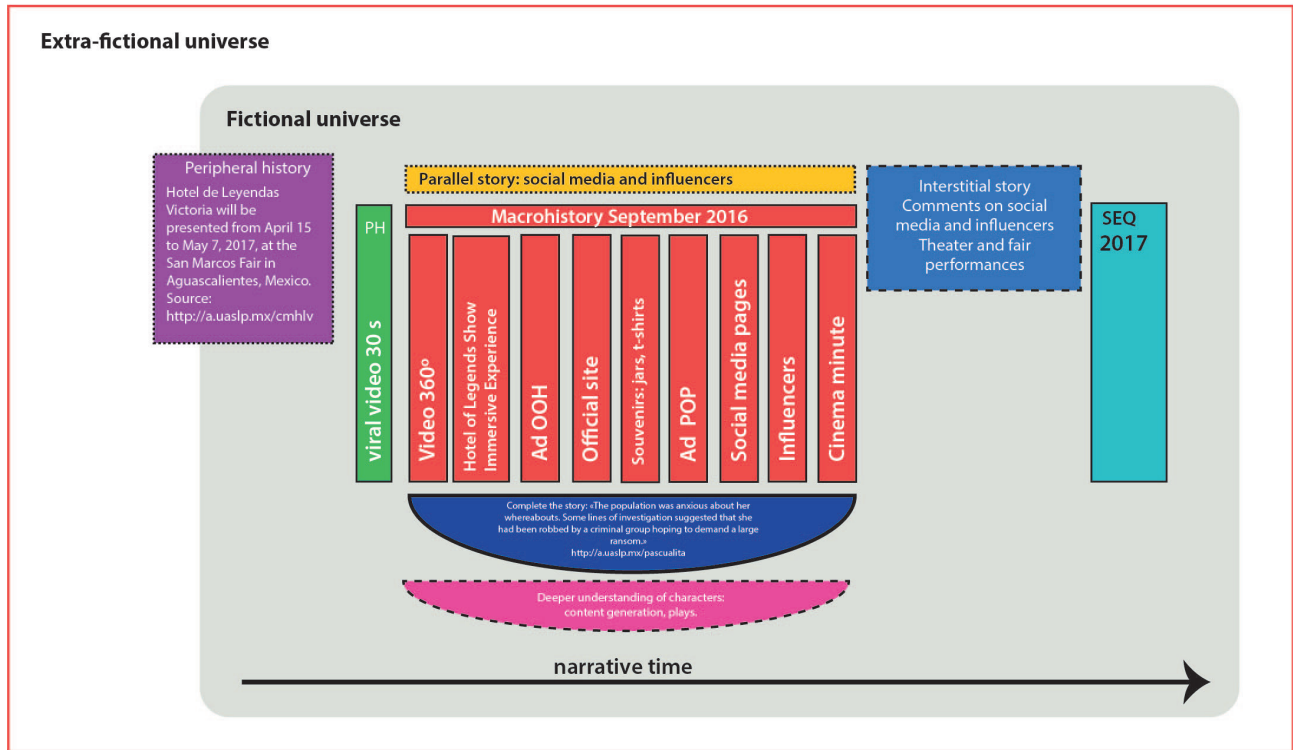
In the case at hand, the profile of the consumer within this extra fictional universe can be defined as follows: people over 18 years of age, who like to drink beer; they belong to a variable economic class (high, middle and low) and have a basic and/or higher level of education; they have a certain purchasing power, whether their own or deferred; they are consumers at home or in bars and, finally, they are Mexican. The profile of a beer consumer is also made up of a series of intrinsic factors, such as the selection of a certain brand, the design of the container, the level of alcohol or purely sensory aspects, such as color, temperature or taste, as well as subjective values, such as the perception of quality, regionalist stereotypes, labels or harmful effects (Carvajal and Zapata, 2017), factors that were not analyzed in this research, since it is only necessary to know the general characteristics of a type of beer consumer.

◈ The extra fictional universe

The following is a breakdown of the components that comprise the fictional universe presented in the case, understood as the scenario in which the elements of both the macro-story and user-generated narrative content are played out (see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Representation of the identification model for the expansion of the transmedia narrative, applied to the hlv-2016 case, referring to the advertising campaign 'Legend-Victory Stories of the Year 2016'.

Macrohistory identification model (general)
Transmedia map adapted to advertising
Case HLV-2016

Source: Own elaboration (Carrillo, 2023).

◈ Macrohistory

In the case of hlv-2016, a precedent related to the recovery of Mexican traditions, specifically the Day of the Dead, was established in 2015. That year, the Victoria brand, considered the most consumed beer in Mexico, increased sales by 20%.

With this background, in 2016, Grupo Modelo opted for an emotional campaign, which sought to connect rather than sell. The emotional resource used was the fear of Mexicans of traditional legendary cha-racters — La Llorona, El Colgado, La Dama de Rojo —, as opposed to what could be thought of as imported festivities such as *Halloween*, all of which was determined by the study of the insight or knowledge of the receiver.

A concept was developed to create an immersive campaign, where the receiver would actively participate through actions within the same campaign. This approach enables consumers to have active and real ex-periences aligned with the brand's values (Alfaro, 2016). The main action took place in the once-great Hotel Reforma, located in Mexico City, which had been adapted for this purpose. In it, an immersive and multisensory experience was created, one that is a show in which the spectator is a protagonist. The staging was directed by the renowned theater director Hugo Arrevillaga, who directed a cast of more than 70 actors on stage (Equipo Editorial Portada, 2016). Undoubtedly, the most important medium of the entire campaign was this immersive show; however, the campaign was also composed of videos uploaded to platforms such as YouTube, a Cine Minuto production, *out-of-home* media, such as bill-boards or MUPY ads and print media, generation of *souvenirs*, such as jars or t-shirts, points of sale, independent stagings, official sites, *Fan Pages*, on the main social networks – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – and even several content creators, better known as *influencers*, who collaborated hard in the dissemination of this campaign.

◈ The preliminary story

A *teaser* or preliminary story is a means of communication that serves to capture the consumer's attention without fully revealing the message or identity of the brand, thereby creating an effect of anticipation. In this case (hlv-2016), the preliminary story or teaser was published days before the macro story was released. *It was published on September 18, 2016, on the video platform YouTube, through a 30-second video called "Security cameras capture being strange in Reforma" (see Figure 5).*

Figure 5
Still recovered from the video captured by security cameras on Paseo de la Reforma and published on September 18, 2016, as a preliminary strategy to start the History of Legends-Victory campaign.

Source: Oxlack, 2016.

The commotion caused among lovers of apparition stories and extra-sensory manifestations was indescribable: in hundreds of newspapers, platforms related to the subject, social networks, and communication apps, the video appeared and was replicated, assuring that it was true. In the video, you can see the intermittent appearance of La Llorona, undoubtedly the most popular character among legends and stories of apparitions. This video reached 1.8 million views in just over two days and was replicated by dozens of media outlets (Olivas, 2016). He highlights that September is a month when national holidays are celebrated, so people are focused on these celebrations, which lends greater credibility to the event. The strategy aimed to sensitize the viewing public to what was to come next.

◆ **The sequel**   For its part, *the sequel* manifests itself as a second phase of a campaign that builds upon previous characters, visual styles, or narratives to reinforce the brand message, maintain public interest, and promote loyalty through narrative continuity. In this case, the repetition of the formula occurred in 2017, yielding the same results: widespread consumer acceptance. For this year, the preliminary story consisted of removing La Pascualita from the window of a bridal store called La Popular, a mannequin that keeps behind it a legend typical of Chihuahuan lands (see Figure 6).

Figure 6
Photographs of the mannequin known as La Pascualita, a legend from the state of Chihuahua, which disappeared as part of a preliminary strategy to launch the sequel to the History of Legends-Victory 2 campaign.

Source: Entodomusic Magazine, 2017.

The disappearance of the mannequin caused a stir, especially since it was known to have "appeared" in Mexico City. And there began the History of Victoria Legends again, this time, tackling three new legends: La Planchada, El Relojero, and La Zacatecana.

◈ Completing the Story (Participatory Communities)

In the digital sphere, participatory communities are mainly developed on social platforms, forums, blogs, and interactive spaces, where users are not mere receivers but active agents who influence the evolution of content and the collective construction of meanings.

Ideally, the public should be able to consume the products of transmedia communication independently; however, there are cases in which the expanded world is such that this act is impossible to perform. This classification point of the model is related to both the function that the transmedia product performs within the narrative universe and the number of extensions that this universe has. In the case of Historia de Leyendas Victoria 2016, this act of completing the story can be observed in the number of interactions that were manifested through journalistic platforms, convergent communities, and the derivations of the original macro-story, such as theatrical shows, parties, and meetings in bars.

Jenkins (2007, n.p.) mentions that "The encyclopedic ambitions of transmedia texts often result in what might be seen as gaps or excesses in the development of the story: that is, they introduce potential plots that cannot be fully told or additional details that hint at more than can be revealed."

◆ **Parallel story**

The *parallel story* is identified as a complementary narrative that takes place simultaneously with the main campaign but does not directly follow the same storyline. This type of story enables you to deepen the campaign's message, generate greater audience engagement, and encourage active exploration of the content, especially in transmedia environments where each platform can contribute a distinct piece to the overall narrative.

In the case at hand, the parallel stories were revealed through *influencers* and social networks, as both the user and these *opinion leaders* shared additional content or invited the public to reflect on what was scarier, the characters of Mexican legends or the monsters of *Halloween* (see Figure 7).

Figure 7
Stills rescued from the promotional video of the IAB 2017 awards, showing the selected media (left) and the online advertising that invites the user to participate with comments related to Mexican legends.
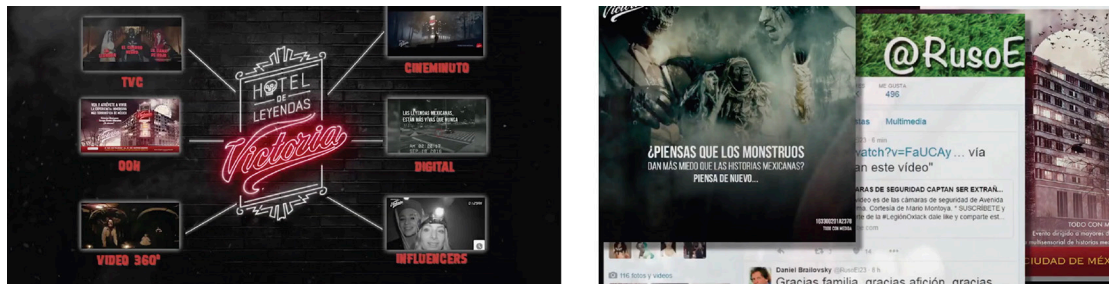
Source: iab Mexico, 2017.

Peripheral *stories* are narratives that develop around a main story but are not considered an official part of it. They can be generated by users themselves or by the brand as additional non-core content, encouraging participation and expanding the story beyond the limits set by the main campaign.

A key fact about this case is that the Hotel de Leyendas Victoria had access only to the inhabitants of Mexico City. Upon verifying the success of the immersive experience, it was decided to extend it to other states of the Mexican Republic. This is the case of the theatrical production that took place at the San Marcos Fair in Aguascalientes, on dates following the campaign, from April 15 to May 7, 2017 (see Figure 8). The expansion was successful. Finally, the experience was presented at the eight most important fairs in Mexico, including the one in San Luis Potosi.

Figure 8
Still rescued from the promotional video for the San Marcos fair, in Aguascalientes.

Source: Quarter Rock Press, 2017.

⬥ **Interstitial Story**

An *interstitial story* refers to a narrative that is set in the time space between the end of a macro-story (the main story) and the beginning of a possible sequel. Its function is to fill in narrative gaps, explain transitions, or develop events that were not directly addressed in the main plot, allowing the audience to maintain interest during the waiting periods between larger installments and enriching the narrative universe by offering additional details. In this case, the stories were constructed from comments on social networks and comments from influencers (see Figure 9).

Figure 9
Stills were rescued from the official Facebook page "Cerveza Victoria", where the interstitial story of "Hotel de Leyendas 2017" is revealed.
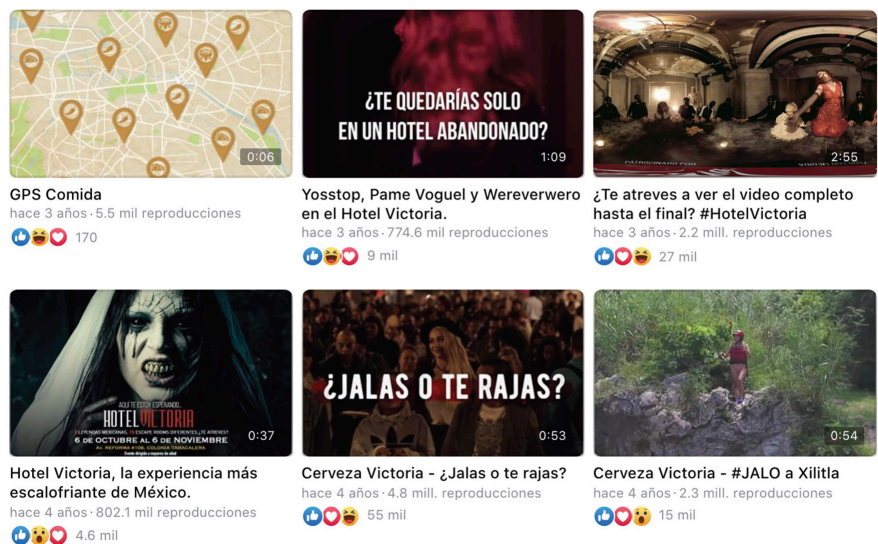
Source: Victoria Beer, 2021.

◈ Deepening the characters

This concept refers to the more detailed and complex development of the protagonists or key figures within a narrative, a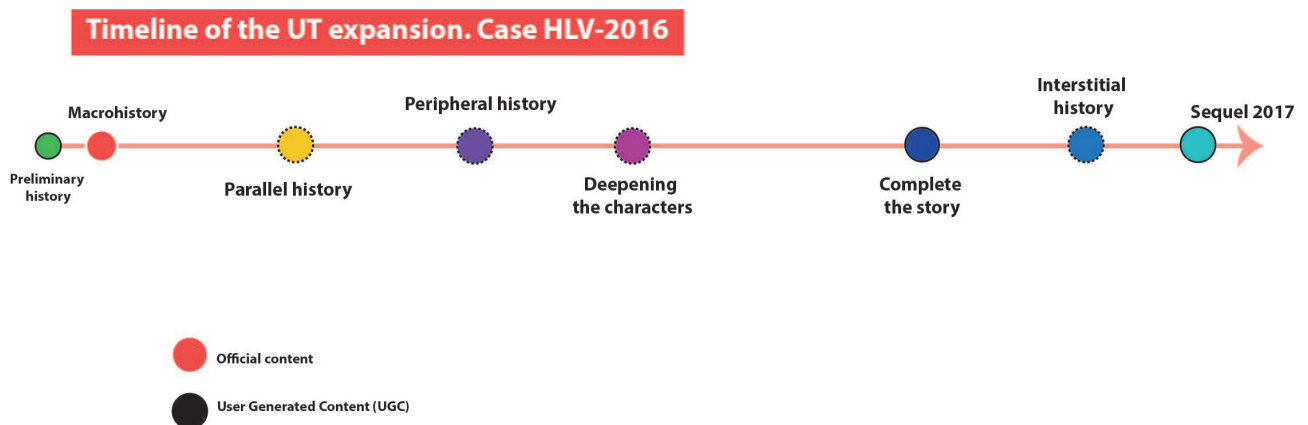llowing the audience to know their motivations, emotions, background, and evolution over time. In the analysis of the case study 'History of Legends Victoria 2016', this deepening becomes evident when observing how the characters of Mexican legends are presented and enriched through the various contents distributed across multiple platforms. Each medium provides additional information—whether visual, textual, or interactive—that complements the main story, enabling the viewer to construct a more complete and nuanced picture of the characters.

This transmedia strategy not only strengthens the emotional connection with the audience but also expands the narrative universe of the campaign. It is worth noting that the expansion and deepening of the characters primarily occurred in the context of social networks and traditional media, such as magazines and newspapers, and that users participated in numerous parallel events, including costume parties, bar meetings, and contests organized by various media outlets.

◈ Timeline

The hlv-2016 campaign ran from October 6 to November 6, 2016. However, as already seen above, he expanded his narrative to later dates, which touched on the months when the immersive show was presented at the main fairs in Mexico (see Figure 10).

Figure 10
Chronological representation of the transmedia universe of the case Hotel de Leyendas 2016.
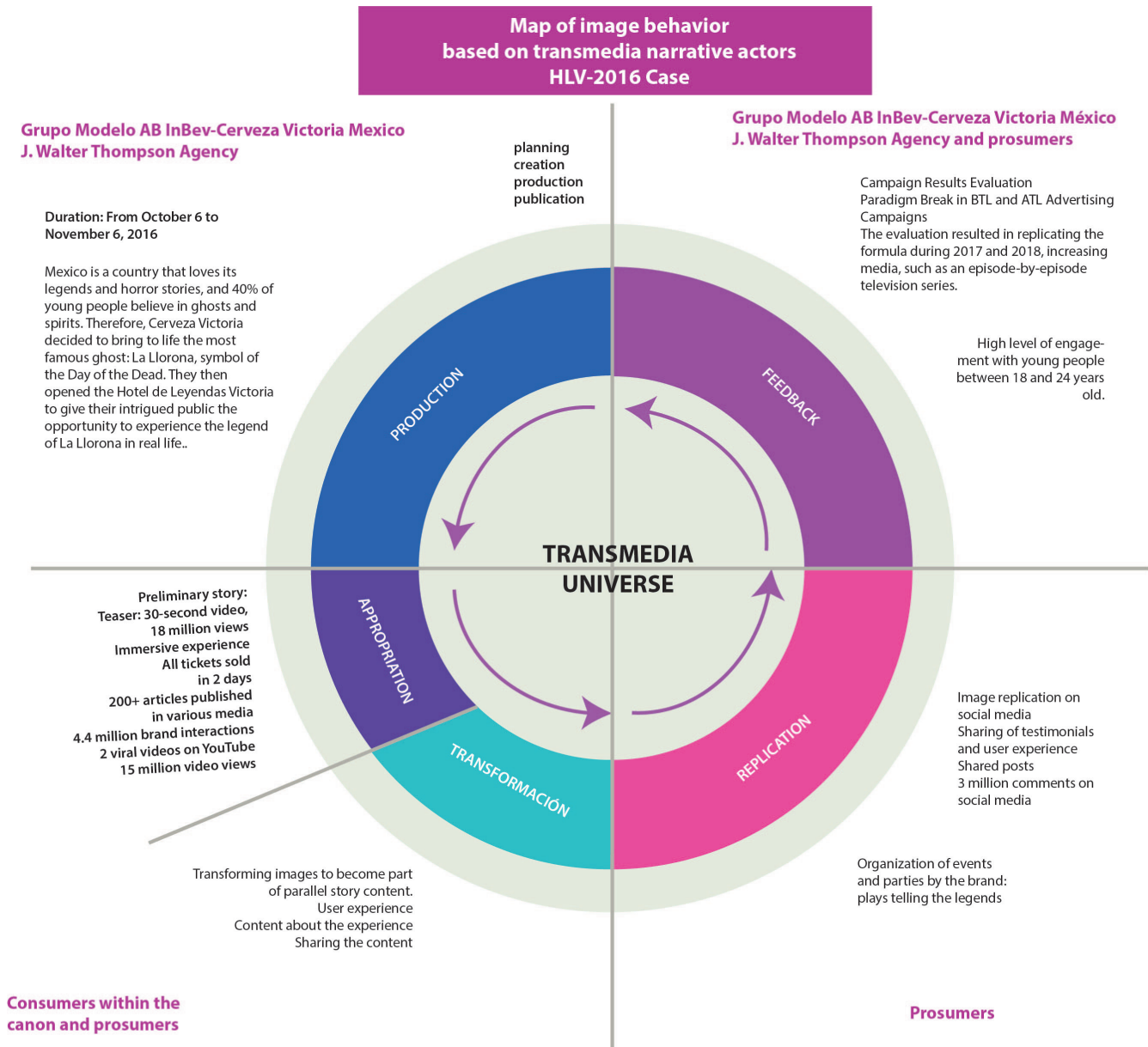

Source: Authors.

Finally, in Figure 11, the analysis of the image of this case is empty:

Figure 11
The image is represented in the five stages of behavior within the transmedia narrative for the hlv-2016 case.

Map of image behavior based on transmedia narrative actors HLV-2016 Case

Grupo Modelo AB InBev-Cerveza Victoria Mexico J. Walter Thompson Agency

Duration: From October 6 to November 6, 2016

Mexico is a country that loves its legends and horror stories, and 40% of young people believe in ghosts and spirits. Therefore, Cerveza Victoria decided to bring to life the most famous ghost: La Llorona, symbol of the Day of the Dead. They then opened the Hotel de Leyendas Victoria to give their intrigued public the opportunity to experience the legend of La Llorona in real life..

Preliminary story:
Teaser: 30-second video, 18 million views
Immersive experience
All tickets sold in 2 days
200+ articles published in various media
4.4 million brand interactions
2 viral videos on YouTube
15 million video views

planning
creation
production
publication

PRODUCTION

FEEDBACK

APPROPRIATION

TRANSMEDIA UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMACIÓN

REPLICATION

Grupo Modelo AB InBev-Cerveza Victoria México J. Walter Thompson Agency and prosumers

Campaign Results Evaluation
Paradigm Break in BTL and ATL Advertising Campaigns
The evaluation resulted in replicating the formula during 2017 and 2018, increasing media, such as an episode-by-episode television series.

High level of engagement with young people between 18 and 24 years old.

Image replication on social media
Sharing of testimonials and user experience
Shared posts
3 million comments on social media

Organization of events and parties by the brand: plays telling the legends

Transforming images to become part of parallel story content.
User experience
Content about the experience
Sharing the content

Consumers within the canon and prosumers

Prosumers

*Source: A*uthors' elaboration based on the proposal by Transmedia Literacy (Literacy, 2018).

◈ **Results**   This paper presents an analysis of a case study as part of a broader research effort, with the aim of exemplifying the method. Table 1 presents the summary of the most relevant moments that occurred in this case analysis; at the top, the case analyzed is named, and in the left column, the parts that make up the macrohistory analysis model:

Table 1.
Image behavior in the case analyzed

Image behavior in the cases analyzed					
Case	Extension narrative universe	User-generated content	Context	Elements used in the campaign	Image transformations within the official campaign
HLV-2016	It meets all the elements contained in the universe extension model, from the preliminary story to the sequel 1.	The UGC manifested itself primarily on social media sites, through various publications: viralization of the preliminary story video, photographs within the immersive experience, appropriation, transformation, and replication of the image (videos and digital content), attendance at the immersive experience, and feedback from both actors: the institution and the prosumers.	Various platforms within the digital space. Immersive experience in reality.	Preview video Immersive experience Print ads Product labels Promotional videos Social media contests and trivia Creation of characters based on legends.	This is evident in the "Completing the Story" section, where the participation of both the institution and the user (prosumer) is manifested through the appropriation, transformation, or modification of the image and its subsequent replication mainly on social platforms. The creation of a sense of identity and belonging based on the premise of "pride in being Mexican." The user's costumes tended more toward those related to legends than to the American celebration.

Note: Emptying of the case study hlv-2016. Own elaboration (Carrillo, 2023).

Regarding the case analyzed, the context of the product, Victoria beer, belongs to Grupo Modelo (2021), which was acquired by Anheuser-Busch InBev, a multinational company based in Leuven, Belgium.

The creator of the advertising image generates an image relevant to the campaign based on established canons or institutional rules, as indicated in codes of ethics, social uses and customs, or specific moments. This act of production involves complex processes, such as conceptual and intentional planning of the message, but above all, determining how the campaign can prompt the consumer to take a specific action.

In this case, all the testimonies found in publications related to the success of the campaigns created specifically for Victoria beer —recognized in various advertising and communication contests (Noticias Neo, 2019)— are aimed at selling an experience and not the product itself, through the detection of cultural codes already inserted in the Mexican popular imagination, such as the stories of legends, miscegenation, the pride of being Mexican, the celebration of death or the cosmogony of pre-Hispanic peoples.

The direction taken by case 1 Stories of Legends Victoria was related to the comparison made around what the characters of the Halloween celebration provoke – vampires, witches, mummies, talking pumpkins, spiders or bugs, aquatic monsters or haunted houses – against what

is generated by legends, assumed as real in the collective imagination of the Mexican; narratives that have been passed from generation to generation both by oral and written means. where the user can experience emotions such as terror, fear, amazement, or fright, which cause a challenge to those who experience them.

This challenge is taken by those who consider themselves brave, Mexican macho, who are not afraid of anything, transforming the product and its respective experience into one that satisfies the morbidity of those who face it. In this sense, it is worth examining the reasons why Mexicans are drawn to stories of horror and apparitions, as many can provide faithful testimony of their personal experiences in this regard.

While it is true that constructing advertising strategies involves a complex process that spans from in-depth knowledge of the company and product to the clarity of the results desired from the campaign, implementing a campaign with transmedial characteristics requires creatives to go beyond traditional advertising. including those produced for radio, TV, and cinema. It is evident, then, that it is necessary to have a narrative that serves as a permanent thread, and that peripheral stories are derived from it, each with its own narrative, but without forgetting the main narrative.

Essentially, the distinction between traditional and transmedia advertising lies in the utilization of technological resources, which encompass mobile or fixed devices – such as computers, phones, and tablets – and provide users with access to complex technologies like the Internet.

The use of advertising products prior to the launch of the campaign has always existed, only that before it was used very recurrently to keep the viewer on tenterhooks about which service or product would be launched on the market: expectation and novelty were, for many years, the determining factors to keep the appearance of the new product in suspense. **Transmedia communication enables creatives to utilize all available technological resources to construct narratives that achieve the same effect, but in a more nuanced and effective manner.**

In this case, the video belonging to the preliminary story was placed within the extra fictional universe, that is, in the consumer's daily life. Stories that blend the real and fictional worlds are more believable to consumers. They belong to the world of *fake news*, which refers to situations or experiences that cannot be corroborated by the user's own experiences. Thus, the video of an alleged camera located on Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City, where the appearance of a ghost is clearly visible, has provided irrefutable and conclusive proof to the communities of fans of paranormal phenomena that everything they have always believed can now be proven. The result was the viral replication of the image on hundreds of sites, both official and outside the canon, where observers' comments reflected a perceived reality.

A summary of the general observations that resulted from the analysis is listed below:

1. The creator of the advertising image generates the image based on canons or institutional rules indicated in codes of ethics, social uses and customs, or specific relevant moments; that is, the official fictional universe.

2. The image is published in a wide variety of media, both physical (material) and on platforms, the main ones being social networks or sites created for this purpose.

3. The receiver receives the image and applies his cultural baggage to assimilate it: at this point the phenomenon of the *appropriation of the image* occurs and, according to his criteria, he modifies the image, that is, transforms it, generating new communication products, which can be of a varied nature: *fandom worlds, memes, fake news, stories,* etc. and so on.

4. The transformation of the image necessarily requires the *deconstruction* of the original image. This deconstruction can be carried out in phases derived from the original image, or alternatively, it can be completely transformed, while always maintaining a reference to the original image.

5. The image is replicated on a wide variety of platforms, with the main ones being social networks and sites specifically created for this purpose. In this part, the images then belong to the *non-fictional world* and transgress the canon.

6. An evaluation is conducted by the institution within the canon, and it is decided whether to continue with the same formula based on the user's behavior (reactions).

7. The forms of perception of the image are subordinated to the device in which they are observed; a meta-image is seen, that is, an image within the delimitation of another image, and it is mediated.

8. The formats, grids, colors, typographic fonts, and photographic or vector resolutions are limited to the format of the platform in use; each one has its own unique formats.

9. The emergence of algorithms that detect and profile users based on their search, selection, and behavior in networks has led to a phenomenon known as *the filter bubble* or *echo chambers*, which limits the expansion of knowledge about alternative options to which the user may be entitled.

10. The primary use of the image is transformed and diversified from its publication on the Internet; Each user observes it and can become a passive or active receiver, that is, they assimilate the image, and it is possible or not that they appropriate, transform, or replicate it, either identically or transformed into similar or fake images.

11. Images become resources that reaffirm truths evidenced in literary discourses, such as notes, information, and advertising, thereby generating more misinformation and fostering credulity among users.

12. The image has become a tool for reaffirming users' identities, based on various resources, including *selfies*, sites the user follows, content distribution, content generation, and others.

13. The user becomes a voracious consumer of images on sites designed expressly for this purpose, constantly consuming and generating content, creating fictitious profiles that bear no relation to real life. This fact has led to the emergence of characters, as well as users, who exhibit negative behaviors.

14. Crimes derived from the illicit use of images published by users have prompted governments to implement precautionary measures in this regard, including amendments to laws and changes in behavior.

15. The ways of seeing an image have changed: it is no longer *observed*, but looked at superficially, so critical thinking and the manifestation of a value judgment, with respect to something, is almost nil.

◆ Conclusions

This proposal aims to understand that conventional communication strategies have been replaced by others linked to the technological resources offered by electronic devices, and that they are in a stage of hybridization that fluctuates between traditional and current advertising methods.

The macro history analysis model, initially used for the analysis of a literary product modified for transmediality, could be applied in the case of advertising, since the occurrence of advertising media does not manifest itself in a linear way, but rather forms independent information nodes, but interconnected with the rest of them; Thus, it can be observed that the node of "the printed media" is related to "the media published on social networks" through the image and literary discourse, but that "the node of the immersive media" can appear, where only the image of identity is the common thread. It may even be the case that

there are several interconnected levels or layers that can determine new planes of development. Thus, not only can a creative agency intervene, but several advertising companies can also be working on the same project, as evidenced by the great diversity of platforms.

In this sense, it is important to note that a general manager is always required to verify the functionality and flow of the central idea from which the project is developed. This study reveals only a small portion of the potential that lies ahead in terms of advertising, as new digital media will undoubtedly be developed.

The topic addressed by this research has been exciting from various perspectives, ranging from the delimitation of the nature of the images to be analyzed to the observation of the relationship between the image and the user, which is impossible to separate.

In addition, it may be possible to derive other relationships from this research, as seen in humanistic disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, or Social Sciences. On the other hand, Philosophy plays a preponderant role in the analysis of forms of thought and human behavior.

The forms of persuasion are currently perceived from technological advances, the evolution of the media, hyper mediations, multiplatform and even from the new ways of telling stories (*Storyteller*), which have been imitated from traditional literary tools (narrative) by design and advertising agencies, appealing – in accordance with human nature – to the desire to be told a story or story about something.

Under this mask of traditional narratives, in the case analyzed, it can be perceived that emphasis is given to narration or to telling stories, but always with a bottle of Victoria beer in hand. The product/service takes a back seat in appearance; however, it is always present. The relationship between *beer/traditional Mexican legend*, or *beer/cosmogony of pre-Hispanic peoples*, occurs naturally, given the seductive tendency provoked by horror stories, the courage of Mexicans in the face of death, or the homage to those who have passed away. This is a clear example of the union of cognitive-behavioral arguments.

Finally, the case of Historia de Leyendas Victoria 2016 does not develop in a linear or one-dimensional way, but is structured as a narrative network composed of multiple interconnected nodes. The analysis model enables us to understand how different media—print, social networks, and immersive environments—function as independent yet interconnected narrative platforms, each contributing unique fragments to the broader narrative of history. For example, while a print ad can focus on visual aesthetics and a symbolic message, a social media post can trigger user engagement through comments or reinterpretations, and an immersive environment can offer a direct sensory experience based on the product's visual identity.

This transmedia structure not only broadens the reach of the message but also allows for greater narrative depth, where the product (in this case, Victoria beer) is organically integrated into stories that appeal to tradition, emotion, and cultural identity. Thus, transmedia analysis reveals how narrative is fragmented and strategically distributed to generate a coherent, immersive, and emotionally meaningful brand experience. ⬤

◈ **References**

Alfaro, Y. (2016, octubre 7). Hotel Victoria: el marketing que busca conectar, no vender. *Expansión*. Recuperado el 15 de octubre de 2020 de https://expansion.mx/emprendedores/2016/10/07/hotel-victoria-el-marketing-que-busca-conectar-no-vender

Belsunces, A. (2011). *Producción, consumo y prácticas culturales en torno a los nuevos media en la cultura de la convergencia: el caso de Fringe como narración transmedia y lúdica.* [Tesis de maestría]. Catalunya: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. Recuperado el 14 de octubre de 2020 de http://hdl.handle.net/10609/8581

Berger, J. (2000). *Modos de ver*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gilli.

Carvajal, J.W. y Zapata, E.E. (2017). Análisis de percepciones de consumidores de bebidas alcohólicas-productos cerveceros. *Criterio Libre, 10*(17), 107-126. Recuperado el 14 de octubre de 2020 de https://revistas.unilibre.edu.co/index.php/criteriolibre/article/view/1143

Carrillo, I. (2023) *La producción de la imagen publicitaria en el contexto trans-medial* [Tesis de doctorado inédita]. San Luis Potosí: Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí.

Cerveza Victoria. (2021, noviembre 27). Sin título. [Facebook]. Recuperado el 22 de enero de 2022 de https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hotel%20De%20Leyendas%20Victoria/490837401301561

Couldry, N., Hepp, A. y Krotz, F. (2009). *Media Events in a Global Age.* Londres: Routledge.

Equipo Editorial Portada. (2016, noviembre 18). México – El enigmático "Hotel Victoria", la experiencia más aterradora. *Portada*. Recuperado el 16 de octubre de 2020 de https://bit.ly/4jnoijM

García, J. y Heredero, O. (2015). Propuesta de un modelo genérico de análisis de la estructura de las narrativas transmedia / Proposal for a generic model of analysis of the structure of transmedia narratives. *Revista ICONO 14. Revista científica de Comunicación y Tecnologías emergentes, 13*(2), 260-285. Recuperado el 10 de octubre de 2020 de https://doi.org/10.7195/ri14.v13i2.745

Grupo Modelo (2021). Grupo Modelo México. Recuperado el 18 de mayo de 2021 de https:// https://www.grupomodelo.com/quienes-somos

Iab México. [Iab México]. (2017, mayo 17). Día de Muertos 2016 "Hotel de leyendas Victoria" [Archivo de video]. Recuperado el 13 de octubre de 2022 de https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbmNYlwqjv0

Jenkins, H. (2007, marzo 21). Transmedia Storytelling 101. [Pop Junctions]. Recuperado el 28 de marzo 2025 de https://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html

Jenkins, H. (2008). *Convergence Culture. La cultura de la convergencia de los medios de comunicación*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Literacy, T. (2018). *Alfabetismo transmedia en la nueva ecología de los medios*. Recuperado el 21 de octubre de 2020 de http://transmedialiteracy.upf.edu/sites/default/files/files/TL_whit_es.pdf

López, P. (s.f.). ¿Qué es un brief o briefing y cómo hacer uno? [Cícero Comunicación]. Recuperado el 15 de octubre de 2020 de https://www.cicerocomunicacion.es/brief-briefing/

Martínez Sáez, J., Canós Cerdá, E. y Sanchis Roca, G. (2017). Narrativas transmedia y publicidad: análisis de las campañas más premiadas (2011-2016). *AdComunica. Revista Científica de Estrategias, Tendencias e Innovación en Comunicación*, 14, 51-74. Recuperado el 13 de mayo de 2020 de https://raco.cat/index.php/adComunica/article/view/343042

Noticias Neo (2019). Grupo Modelo: reconocido en múltiples certámenes de publicidad y comunicación en 2019. Recuperado el 18 de mayo de 2021 de https://www.empresas2030.com/articles/2019/12/11/grupo-modelo-reconocido-en-multiples-certamenes-de-publicidad-y-comunicacion-en

Olivas, O. (2016, septiembre 22). El video del fantasma de Reforma es una campaña de cerveza Victoria. *Merca2.0*. Recuperado el 16 de octubre de 16 de merca20.com: https://www.merca20.com/video-del-fantasma-reforma-una-campana-cerveza-victoria-j-walter-thompson/

Oxlack. [Oxlack Investigador Paranormal]. (2016, septiembre 19). Cámaras de seguridad captan ser extraño en Reforma [Archivo de video]. Recuperado el 20 de octubre de 2021 de https://youtu.be/FaUCAyX1qeA?feature=shared

Quarter Rock Press. [Quarter Rock Press]. (2017, abril 17). Tráiler Hotel de Leyendas Victoria San Marcos [Archivo de video]. Recuperado el 17 de octubre de 2022 de https://youtu.be/B_UZ1FU-bg0?si=jL9HP6Xa9q158JcX

Ramos, M., Lozano, J. y Hernández-Santaolalla, V. (2022). *Fanadvertising* y series de televisión. *COMUNICACIÓN. Revista Internacional de Comunicación Audiovisual, Publicidad y Estudios Culturales, 1*(10), 1211-1223. Recuperado el 5 de marzo 2025 de https://revistascientificas.us.es/index.php/Comunicacion/article/view/22181

Real Academia Española [RAE]. (2019). Definición. En *Diccionario de la lengua española*. 23ª. Edición. Recuperado el 16 de octubre de 2020 de https://dle.rae.es/secuela

Revista Entodomusic. [Revista Entodomusic]. (2017, octubre 29). Hotel Victoria-La Pascualita [Archivo de video]. Recuperado el 25 de octubre de 2022 de https://youtu.be/Fe3jlhsPduk?si=pipmkF_u98W5C-8l

Scolari, C.A. (2009). Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production. *International Journal of Communication, 3*, 586-606. Recuperado el 21 de noviembre de 2022 de http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/477/336

◆ **About the author**   *Irma Carrillo Chávez*
PhD in Habitat Sciences with a line of research towards studies of image behavior, rhetoric, and semiotics. Research Professor at the Facultad del Habitat of the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosi (UASLP). She belongs to the academic group of Vanguardias del Diseño and has published and edited various books and magazines related to her teaching work. She is the author of the book *The Art of Marking a Book. Ex Libris in San Luis Potosi.*

Manuel Guerrero Salinas
PhD in Architecture, Design and Urbanism from the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos; master's degree in Ciencias del Hábitat, graduated from the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosi (UASLP), and a graphic designer. He is currently a professor-researcher at the Facultad del Habitat of the UASLP and a member of the academic group Vanguardias del Diseño, where he conducts research in the fields of visual perception, multisensory interactions applied to design, design methods, and theory and methods applied to typography development.