

ACADEMIC WRITING PORTFOLIO

ALEXANDRA ZOGRAFOU

A selection of essays completed throughout my Master's in Visual and Digital Media (Oct 2017-Jul 2018)

INDIVIDUAL ESSAYS

Class: Representation & Ethics
Professor: Begoña González-Cuesta
Term 1

**Steven Meisel's "State of Emergency" for Vogue Italia:
a Case of Creative Representation Implying Police
Corruption & Abuse of Power**

For anyone working or following the events within the fashion industry, any editorial shot by well-renowned photographers is discussion-worthy. There have been many times when editorials sparked great controversy and left the audience biased about their role in fashion, and perhaps, fashion's role in society as a whole: should they merely offer a fictional fantasy world as a way for viewers to escape reality or provide a stimulus for them to reflect on dominant, serious social issues – “the chief task of any type of journalism,” as eloquently stated by *Vogue Italia* features director Carlo Ducci (Ducci, 2014)? Such was the case of “State of Emergency,” a 15-page long fashion editorial which appeared on the September 2006 issue of *Vogue Italia*, commemorating the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in New York. For the purposes of this assignment, we have chosen to focus and analyze the particular ethical issue raised in the image enclosed, which is the abuse of power from police forces against a woman for personal gain.

Before we begin with our analysis, we believe it is crucial to provide some information about the context and the people involved in it. These are: the publication, *Vogue Italia*; the late editor of the publication, Franca Sozzani; the sociopolitical circumstance, the 9/11 anniversary; and the artist whose work we are displaying, Steven Meisel. *Vogue Italia* is known to tackle significant social issues rarely discussed in fashion magazines and, which according to many, do not belong to the pages of such glossy publications. This was particularly a choice of the late editor-in-chief Franca Sozzani, who had frequently made headlines for publishing editorials who were both condemned for “glamorizing or sexualizing” the subjects¹ and significant sociopolitical issues and praised for their boldness and ability to generate food for thought. It was exactly this ability of Sozzani to distance herself and the publication from the stereotypical role of fashion, an industry which is very much seen as trivial, and challenge it to make a statement and take a stance against social phenomena. On the other hand, Steven Meisel is a frequent collaborator of the publication, and is known for his style and extraordinary talent to display prevailing social topics in the most provocative way (Sharkey, 2014).

Like its title suggests, “State of Emergency” refers to the US’s political and social situation following the 9/11 attack against the twin towers in New York, a turning point which, among other consequences, caused physical security forces to public places and terminals to increase and become reinforced – an effect related to the context of the topic discussed in the image we have chosen. It was precisely this context of reference that generated such controversy: “daring to mix fashion with the biggest national tragedy in recent history” (Ma, 2013).

The editorial follows a riot squad as it aggressively arrests models Hilary Rhoda and Iselin Steiro who then take part in target practice together with police officers before being led to the airport, where security performs security controls and strip search.

¹ We believe it is important to mention the comment of GQ editor, who successfully pointed out that this was the case particularly in the UK and the US, where the “set of cultural barometers” are different than Italy’s (Leitch, 2016).

Through the entire feature, there is a series of images depicting the two women submitting to violence inflicted by policemen and often being subjected to physical abuse and pain (as evidenced by their facial expressions), especially before they arrive at the airport: to name a few, a woman is held on the ground with a policeman pressing his boot against her neck; a woman is kneeling on a prison floor while an officer and a police dog stand over her; a woman is being dragged and verbally abused at by two policemen; a woman is being forced to enter the back of a police car. The words of Emile Saner and Mark Fisher perfectly sum up the main theme underpinning the entire shoot: the images “eroticize torture and police brutality (Saner, 2007)” and “find erotic possibilities in violence and humiliation (The Ballardian, n.d.).” In all these images, the abuse of power is evident, but in no other is the aspect of personal gain more apparent than in the one we chose to discuss in this essay.

On the image enclosed, what we see as viewers is a scene where a woman, having just been arrested, is getting manhandled by a police officer, while the rest of them stay still observing, against the police car. In our opinion, the impact the image makes as a depiction of abuse of power is so great thanks to the main formal element present – contrast: the main colors of the scene are black (the woman’s ensemble and the policemen uniforms) and white (the main color of the vehicle), which causes the scene unravelling in front of the car to stand out even more; the policemen look “hyper real” (thanks to their uniforms and arms) and the woman flawless, almost “faux” (thanks to her figure, fancy dress and shoes) (Bourke, 2006). It is this appearance that makes the contrast between the position she is placed in and the way she is being treated even sharper; the number of the policemen as opposed to the one woman being featured; and, finally, the contrast between the heavily armed policemen and an unarmed woman.

The main scene is framed by policemen, of whom we can only see the part of their bodies where they carry their arms on, but the overall feel is that their guns are as much in focus. However, the viewers’ eyes immediately go to his hands: using the one hand, he is keeping her down, and with the other, he seems to be searching under her dress, obviously taking advantage of the situation and the woman herself.

Having said that, and based on the general behavior and position of the policeman’s body, we believe that besides the concepts of violence and brutality, pornographic connotations – derived from the position of the two main subjects in Meisel’s image – are very strong here, and this fact heightens the concept of personal gain further. In this case, the gain seems to be purely sexual. From our research, and based on findings from the popular press, it was confirmed that, throughout the recent years, it is very usual among police forces to carry out sexual abuse for personal gain against victims of crime (Laville, 2012). In our case, though we cannot see the entire expression on the woman’s face, her look is very intense – it looks as a desperate cry for help – and we can assume that she has now given in because, being in a vulnerable position herself, she is terrified of police authority. The shock value generated by this image lies in the act of human rights being violated but also public trust in police being betrayed. To quote the words of Malcolm Barnard, as he discusses the signifying aspect of

clothing and fashion: "the uniform of a policeman indicates what kind of services we may expect from them (Barnard: 1996, 64)."

To sum up, we believe that, based on the impact it made when published, this editorial has fulfilled effectively its purpose as a medium of artistic expression: trigger the audience to reflect as well as challenge their opinions about current social and political topics. Both Meisel and *Vogue Italia* were accused of producing images that were "insensitive and too graphic" (Hampton, 2012). But they were equally – and, to our opinion, rightfully – praised for raising and discussing openly a serious issue, a phenomenon that even though is spreading epidemically, victims seldom speak publicly about even today.

[Words: 1280]

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Class: Branded Content
Professor: Juan Jose Montanary
Term 2

**Branded video storytelling: how short films can drive
authentic engagement and maximize sales – the case of
Nutella's first branded content series**

Today many professionals argue that traditional advertising methods might be dead (DeMers, 2016). Whether this holds true or not, one thing is for certain: they have not been working correctly for several years now (Lehu, 2007). The internet revolution as well as the growing communication possibilities emerged during the last two decades made it inevitable for marketing, advertising and communication professionals not to take notice. Wider and targeted reach, real-time results and accessible cost, to name a few, contributed to an increasing interest and preference towards this medium compared to traditional media.

At the same time, one of the major issues companies would typically face when resorting to traditional advertising is establishing a connection of trust with the audience, mainly because, while trying to make a sell, ads “say a lot of what brands think consumers want to hear, and more so, whatever moves their product.” This tactic leaves consumers disengaged and indifferent, and actually brings about different results than the desired ones (Limotte, 2017). Given this circumstance, today more than ever, the only way for companies to drive attention to their products is through telling stories, as Steve Bryant notices (Bryant, 2017). Brand storytelling is in fact the essence of custom branded content, which focuses on people rather than product stories (Vasiliauskas, 2018); these stories reflect the brand’s identity, personality and values.

Branded content is expected to dominate over advertising in the future (Handley, 2017). Unlike traditional advertising, branded content is a non-intrusive form of advertising which includes creation of content – from articles to videos and podcasts, and even live elements – which is published in the company’s channels and brings value to the consumers. It “is not advertising in the way most people think of advertising (commercials, banner ads, social media ads, etc...)” (Medium, 2018).

Regarding audience reach, its goal is redefined here, too: instead of aiming at the broadest audience possible, branded content strategies are custom-created for those who would better connect, and, hence, would be more actively engaged and interested in a particular company or a product. Specifically, branded content “is a dynamic experience; it compels rather than it interrupts; it feels like a natural extension of the brand; it organically supports brand growth (Minnium, 2017).” Its effectiveness lies in successful integration with the brand, and, thus, whether consumers in the end perceive it as an advertisement (Green Buzz, 2016).

Valuable content is what makes a company and its products relevant and believable. Content has the objective to either inform or entertain (Lieb, 2011). Therefore, as a brand tool, “branded” content is closer to a communication strategy rather than a marketing one. It is used to serve brand objectives: create or reinforce brand identity/awareness/loyalty/positioning, improve brand image, launch a new product or increase sales among others. Branded content is an opportunity for the brand itself to create an emotional link with consumers and establish a trust relationship with them – something traditional advertising has always struggled with.

As part of a wider marketing campaign, it can prove extremely beneficial throughout all stages (attract-engage-convert-nurture) in the marketing funnel, as consumers, wary of

aggressive advertising today, find this form of promotion more reliable; according to a research conducted by *Time.inc* among GenZ, Millennials, and GenX consumers, two in three consumers trust branded content more than traditional advertising (Elkin, 2017).

Digital audience consumption habits have changed; online audience rarely reads, rather than scrolls and skims through the written information, looking for visuals which could potentially capture their attention. Thus, stories published online need to be as visually stimulating as possible. One format which could successfully achieve this goal is video. Visually compelling, and hence memorable – as Bowman explains, “it’s easier for users to remember than text-based content” (Bowman, 2017) – videos can be proven very effective for brand communication. They can take a range of forms – from “inspiring real-life stories to quirky short films (Green Buzz, 2016).” However, the key advantage of employing videos in a brand campaign is the measurable results which can attest their effectiveness (Gray, 2006).

One of the most successful branded video content series recently was the “Spread the Happy” campaign presented by *Nutella USA* in November 2016 – it is in fact the first branded content series of the company (Lacsamana, 2016).

Nutella was born in 1964 by Mr. Michele Ferrero; it was based on the recipe for *Giandujot* developed in 1946 by his father, Pietro Ferrero, confectioner and founder of *Ferrero*. Introduced to the US market in 1983, it has since become the number-one selling branded hazelnut spread. Nowadays, the brand is available in approximately 160 countries worldwide (Cision Pr Newswire, 2016).

Describing it not as an ad rather than a campaign communicating the concept of happiness, “Spread the Happy” had no intention of branding Nutella, according to marketing director for Nutella USA, Eric Berger; through “Spread the Happy,” the company aimed to “celebrate real people and real stories” (Monllos, 2016). To quote the agency behind the creation of this campaign, their goal was “to develop a series that reflected the Nutella brand, what it stands for and what it means to fans everywhere. The aim was to share this sentiment not only with those who already appreciated the brand, but also appeal to a new audience. [...] The goal is to inspire our great fans and social community to spread the happy in their everyday lives” (Shorty Awards, n.d.).

“Spread the Happy Series, Season 1” is a collection of short films. The series comprises of four episodes in total, each one released on Nutella’s Youtube channel once a week until the beginning of December, 2016. Every episode revolves around a different character, someone who “spreads the happy,” inspiring others “with their remarkable talents, their joyful spirit, or by committing acts of kindness in their communities” (Akopyan, 2016).

Below is a brief summary of the content of each episode (Cision Pr Newswire, 2016):

Brooklyn and Delvar (Published on Nov 13, 2016): The first episode recounts the special friendship developing between three-year-old Brooklyn and Delvar, the local garbage man, when she treats him a cupcake for her birthday.

Pay it Forward (Published on Nov 20, 2016): In the second episode, attorney Marty Burbank and his wife Seon decide to invest in the future college education of a kindergarten class of 27 lower-income students, instead of buying an expensive sailboat for themselves.

EchoSmith (Published on Nov 27, 2016): In this episode, family pop group Echosmith discusses spreading love, joy and happiness through their music, and bring together family and friends for a special evening to thank them for their support.

Boys with a Purpose (Published on Dec 4, 2016): The final episode tells the story of South Carolina-based Raymond Nelson and Kenneth Joyner, who started "Boys with a Purpose" to teach young boys how to become proper gentlemen by implementing the organization's motto: "Look good, feel good, do good."

The choice of a short-film series format in this case is very effective for two main reasons: first, the concept of a series creates an expectation to the audience to keep coming back frequently for new content; secondly, even if each video maintains its individual character, the stories are connected through the common theme of the campaign (spreading happiness), which makes the story and aim of the campaign more thoroughly understood.

The choices of the message, tone of voice and theme of this campaign aim at provoking emotion to the consumers to create a strong emotional link with the company.

The effectiveness of the campaign message lies in the use of the words "spread" and "happy:" "spread" in this case evokes both the word's literal (type of edible product with which Nutella falls into the same category) and figurative meaning (pass around a feeling or mood, which is what the company aspires to do through this campaign). "Happy," on the other hand, is the key concept of this campaign. The two of them work very well in combination, helping the audience understand and relate to the message.

The tone of voice adopted is *personal and authentic* – the protagonists share their own experiences and stories in front of the camera; *sentimental* – the stories presented are all about sharing joy and love, two very strong emotions; *inspirational* – the series inspire people to take action in order to make other people and themselves happy, as well as the feeling of happiness itself to the viewers; *optimistic* – as repeated throughout the series, "happiness is contagious." It is all around, and it is easy for people to discover it by spreading this emotion to one another.

The overall values communicated throughout this campaign are *happiness* – pursuing the feeling of happiness and making other people happy daily; *kindness* – helping others and doing small good deeds; *paying it forward* – creating happiness in the life of other people after experiencing happiness from them; *informal code of conduct* – living your life by helping and trying to make people around you happy.

These attributes make the entire series realistic, and thus, relatable. Viewers get a peek at the everyday life of the people starring. The protagonists are real people next door and are portrayed as relatable throughout the campaign. Therefore, a connection with the target audience of Nutella – which is discussed more in depth below – is more easily established, as the first feel that the brand is penetrating their everyday life.

Nutella's primary target audience is women, in particular mothers, aged 35-54 with kids (Info Scout, n.d.). Of course, the main target consumers are people (both male and female) from 10 to 25 years old, who use the product with their breakfast or lunch (Oboolo, n.d.).

Furthermore, according to research data, Nutella is popular at college and university campuses, too (Brand VO2, 2014). In any case, it is considered a family product (Oboolo, n.d.).

The fact that the company's target audience is broad explains the strategic content choices about the channels (all of them online) the campaign launched in: "Spread the Happy" was presented on Youtube on November 13, 2016 (See Appendix I) with the video "Brooklyn and Delvar." The next three episodes were released weekly for the next four weeks. A week after the last one was published, a summary including the recap of the plots of all episodes was uploaded (See Appendix II). The first episode of the series was published on Facebook, too, informing the audience about the launch of the series (See Appendix III). Besides Youtube, the second main online platform used was Instagram (See Appendix IV). The company also engaged in a collaboration with the Ellen DeGeneris show, whose audience demographics (women 25-54) include Nutella's target audience discussed above (Guthrie, 2016). Titled "Ellen's Nutella Spread the Happy Contest" (Sweepstakes Bible, 2016), the contest called upon participants to nominate someone they know and share how they are spreading happiness with a chance to win \$10,000; the contest was also announced via a tweet on Ellen DeGeneris' Twitter account (See Appendix V).

The results, summarized in a case study video (See Appendix VI), prove that this campaign was very successful for Nutella in generating both awareness and sales. The figures available on the website of Shorty Awards which the agency behind the campaign entered, (Shorty Awards, n.d.) speak for themselves: according to the website, "in an increasingly crowded holiday marketplace, the company achieved an 18% year-over-year boost in sales for the months of November and December; the work outperformed across every benchmark (KPI's included reach, engagement and video completion), totaling over 52 million views across multiple digital and social platforms;" and over 61 million impressions; it returned a 6x the benchmark on CTR and a CPV below \$0.03; to this day, the first episode has about 2.8K comments on the company's Facebook page (See Appendix III). Hence, audience engagement was translated in a measurable impact on product sales.

The success of the campaign is further proven by the fact that the series is set to return for a second season this April, and also premiered at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival.

As shown above, digital series in the form of short films are an effective and growingly popular branded content strategy. According to *Inc*, storytelling through video via digital media will be the most effective option for companies, since engagement rates are higher when this format is used (Hall, 2017). The efficiency of video is most of all explained by the advantages provided by the internet and the mobile platforms today: reaching the desired audience globally and in real time; having a more permanent nature than traditional advertising – the audience can view and go back to the content when and where they like, unlike traditional advertising which is accessible from TV screen only and for a specific time; allowing for a relatively affordable cost compared to advertising on a television network.

In essence, storytelling through video series as well as branded content in general can help companies establish themselves in a positive way in the mind of consumers, as they play

an effective role in disconnecting them from merely commercial ends which could ultimately have damaging results. This strategy, targeting mostly consumer emotion, helps developing a more personal relationship with the consumer based on genuine trust.

[Word Count: 2189]

APPENDIX

I. "Spread the Happy" Campaign Presentation (Ep. 01) on Youtube ([LINK](#))

The image shows a YouTube player interface for a video titled "Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Series". The video is from the channel "Nutella USA" and is the 2nd video in a series of 5. The video player shows a scene with many colorful butterflies (pink, red, white) flying against a light blue background. The text "Brooklyn & Delvar" is overlaid on the video. The video has 19,154 views, 74 likes, and 4 comments. The video description reads: "In this episode, we meet three-year-old Brooklyn and her local garbage man Delvar. With a". The video is published on Nov 13, 2016. The channel "Nutella USA" has 1.7K subscribers. The video is recommended for you. The video player shows a progress bar at 0:30 / 3:37. The video player shows a play button, a volume icon, and a full screen icon. The video player shows a search bar and a menu icon. The video player shows a notification bell and a user profile icon.

Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Series
Nutella USA - 2 / 5

Brooklyn & Delvar

Nutella® Originals - An Unlikely Pair Spreads The Happy in One Sweet Way
19,154 views

Nutella USA
Published on Nov 13, 2016

SUBSCRIBE 1.7K

In this episode, we meet three-year-old Brooklyn and her local garbage man Delvar. With a

Nutella® Originals - An Unlikely Pair Spreads The Happy in One Sweet Way
Nutella USA

Nutella® Originals - Echosmith Spreads the Happy Through Song
Nutella USA

Nutella® Originals - Couple Pays It Forward with Selfless Act
Nutella USA

Nutella® Originals - Boys Find Their Purpose in Becoming Young Gentleman
Nutella USA

Lady Antebellum - Need You Now (Live)
LadyAntebellumVEVO
Recommended for you

Lifeshouse- Everything (New Version)
paulina marin

II. "Spread the Happy" Campaign Recap on Youtube ([LINK](#))

The image shows a YouTube player interface for a video titled "Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Anthem". The video is from the channel "Nutella USA" and is the 1st video in a series of 5. The video player shows a scene with a bright, cloudy sky. The text "spread the happy" is overlaid on the video. The video has 3,761 views, 11 likes, and 8 comments. The video description reads: "'Spread the Happy' isn't just a phrase, it's a way of life. Meet four groups of people whose". The video is published on Dec 11, 2016. The channel "Nutella USA" has 1.7K subscribers. The video is recommended for you. The video player shows a progress bar at 0:16 / 3:01. The video player shows a play button, a volume icon, and a full screen icon. The video player shows a search bar and a menu icon. The video player shows a notification bell and a user profile icon.

Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Series
Nutella USA - 1 / 5

spread the happy

Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Anthem
3,761 views

Nutella USA
Published on Dec 11, 2016

SUBSCRIBE 1.7K

'Spread the Happy' isn't just a phrase, it's a way of life. Meet four groups of people whose

Nutella® Originals - Spread the Happy Anthem
Nutella USA

Nutella® Originals - An Unlikely Pair Spreads The Happy in One Sweet Way
Nutella USA

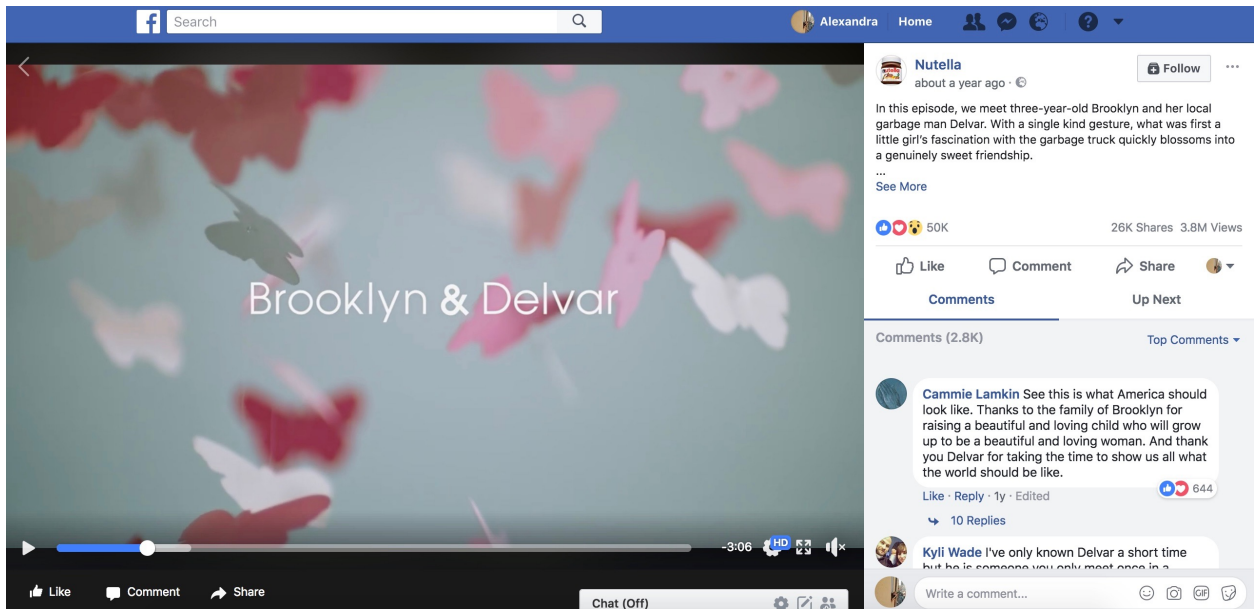
Nutella® Originals - Echosmith Spreads the Happy Through Song
Nutella USA

Nutella® Originals - Couple Pays It Forward with Selfless Act
Nutella USA

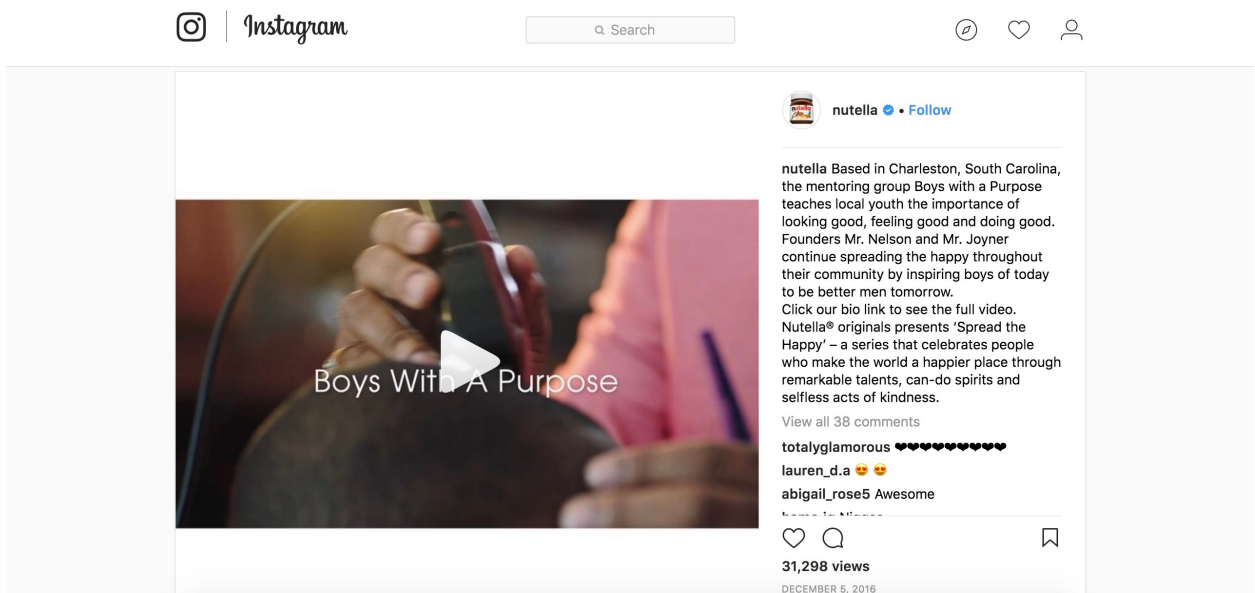
Lady Antebellum - Need You Now (Live)
LadyAntebellumVEVO
Recommended for you

Lifeshouse- Everything (New Version)
paulina marin

III. "Spread the Happy" Launch on Facebook ([LINK](#))



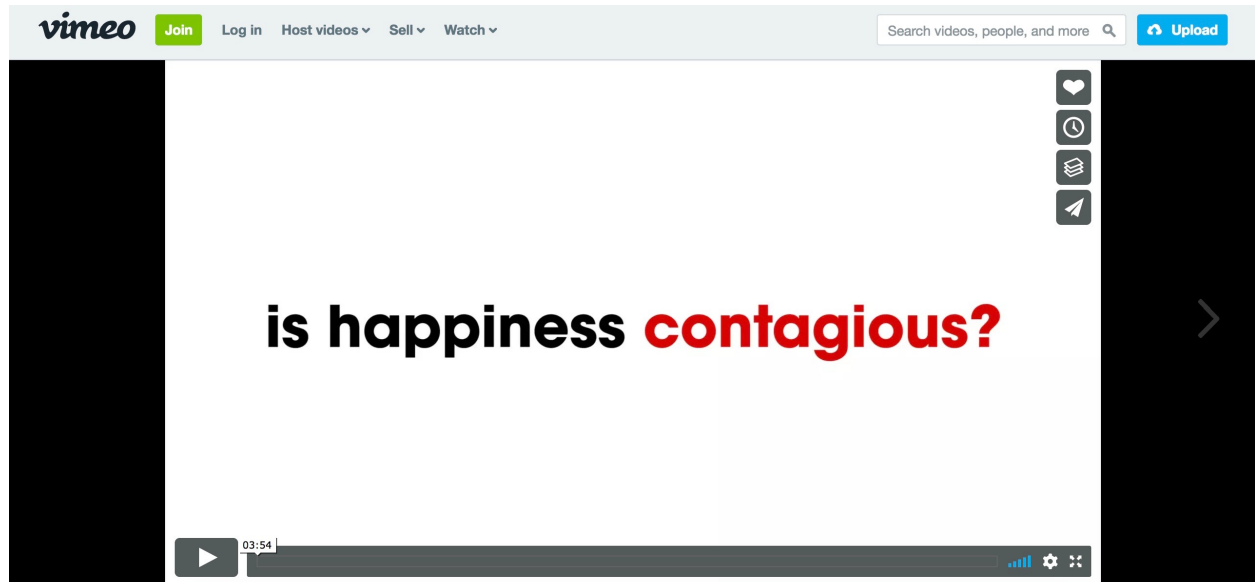
IV. "Spread the Happy" Posts on Instagram ([LINK](#))



V. “Spread the Happy” Contest Announcement by Ellen DeGeneris ([LINK](#))



VI. “Spread the Happy” Case Study on Vimeo ([LINK](#))



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Class: Digital Media Culture
Professor: Carolina Fernández-Castillo
Term 2

YTP on "Identity in the Digital Age" & Report on Individual work

Link to Video: https://youtu.be/s8aVmf_VHdl

A *mashup* is, as defined by David Gunkel, “a bastard art form” (McDowell 2016, p. 22). It is created intentionally “to make a statement about the world through particular choices of the datasets and their presentation” (Vernallis et al. 2013, p. 281).

As a concept, it has its origins in the music industry as a combination of songs – typically two or more – put together to create an original result. As Ogrinz further explains, usually “the vocal track of one song was combined with the instrumental background of another in this process.” (Ogrinz 2009, p. 9) Hence, the final artwork is comprised of pre-existing media with a well-known meaning and recollection in the audience’s mind, used for a new purpose. We could say that the mashup is related to “meaningful appropriation,” since “all cultural artifacts are open to re-appropriation” (Murray 2015). It is worth mentioning here that mashups often focus “on undervalued or forgotten materials” (Vernallis et al. 2013, p. 440).

Having said that, we could assume that this new genre challenges the boundaries of ownership and intellectual property (McDowell 2016, p. 27). However, as Robertson points out, “mashups tend to be transparent with regard to their sources and rely on this transparency to make their meaning” (Robertson 2013), embracing the concept of “collective artwork,” where there is a “co-operation of all the branches (in this case, different media) in their common message” (Wagner 1849, p. 76).

As a genre, mashup has been influenced by European avant-garde in the early 20th century, particularly the Dada, and the DIY movement (Robertson 2013). It emerged when artists began experimenting with various mediums to produce “avant-garde assemblages” (Richman-Abdou 2017), a technique popularized by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque (A Brief History Of Collage). Mashup has also references to the art of the 20th century modern collage – “juxtaposition of images and ideas, questioning traditional definitions of high and low art forms, re-appropriating material into new aesthetic and conceptual contexts” (A Brief History Of Collage). Last but not least, it shares some characteristics introduced by futurist cinema as well: remediation (as per “refashioning earlier media”) (Catanese 2017, p. 187), integration (incorporating different media into a single artwork) and narrativity (“Futurism refuses narrative order” (Catanese 2017, p. 19), but rather employs a non-linear narrative to tell a story and evoke emotions.).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, we have been moving towards what Jenkins defined as “participatory culture.” In Jenkins own words, it is “a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices.” Furthermore, “members believe that their contributions matter” and “feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created)” (Jenkins et al. 2009, pp. 5-6). “Expressions,” where mashups are classified under, are one of the four forms of participatory culture (Jenkins et al. 2009, p. xi). Hence, we have been led to the emergence of “digital values” that, according to media professional John Sobol, “celebrate interactivity,

iteration, improvisation and an overall prioritizing of collective experience" (Sobol 2015) which, in the case of the new media, is polysensory.

A Neo-Dada art form, which follows in the same characteristics of participatory culture as defined by Jenkins, is the Youtube Poop (YTP). A "poop" is created by video remixes "edited from a large array of video clips, in order to confuse, stun or entertain the viewer" (WebAnimation/YouTubePoop). Its reference to the Dada movement is rooted in their common base of lacking sense and rationality (WebAnimation/YouTubePoop). The main elements of a YTP are called "poopisms." These include among others: loops, scrambling/random chopping, forward reverse, backward forward, mysterious zoom in, ear rape, eye rape, sentence mixing, beep censor (for the full list of poopisms and their explanations, see Youtube Poop Wiki).

For the purpose of this assignment, we created a mashup of popular teenage comedy films, which tell our story, interspersed with clips from different genres – from TV shows and cartoons to viral videos – typical poopisms (mostly the loop structure be it stutter or video loop, ear and eye rape, sensor beep) and sound effects. Our source for video and audio clips was Youtube.

Our intention was to create a humorous video and highlight its comical effect through the use of clashing media. Moreover, this way viewers can easily separate the main-plot clips, and emphasis is given to the "remix" attribute of YTP.

The initial part of our creative process was to research on the assigned topic. The idea for the edit came from the book *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, where the three dimensions of self-esteem (self-worth, self-efficacy and authenticity) as outcomes of the identity theory and their connection to social media researcher's concerns about users' psychological well-being are discussed (Stets and Serpe, 2016). Additionally, the opinion that social media feels like a "popularity contest" defined by cliques the same way it did in high school (Halloran 2011; McClintock Greenberg 2013) was another interesting point of view we came across through research and thought it would add value to our edit. Our aim was to explore the ways users' perception of identity and self-esteem is affected by the content they consume online, and how the latter heightens their need to belong to the "cool" online communities created by influencers and media celebrities. Our focus is the female audience, specifically teenage girls, as they are the ones mostly affected in a negative way (Tran 2014).

For the core of the artwork, selecting the movies to be used came naturally from personal knowledge. Having watched all of them multiple times, it was easy to recollect their best-known scenes, and choose the ones aligned with our story and which feature entirely female characters – this was the case for the "Friends" clip, too, albeit not a teenage comedy. Our choices will be clarified further on.

The edit is split in two parts using the TV static effect.

In the first part, we are introducing the topic through Jana Webb's TEDx talk on how everyone is affected by social media. This clip was found in the early stages of research, and many audio pieces from this talk are used throughout the artwork.

The mashup begins after the "old-movie" introduction effect.

Throughout the first part, issues of self-insecurity caused by social media exposure are raised; in "Little Miss Sunshine" and "Why Don't You Like Me?" clips a loop effect (in the first case, video, and in the second, stutter) is applied.

The word "like" ensures a transition to the next sequence, revealing its double meaning: "like" someone for their personality vs "like" their social media presence, as explained by Webb on Kendall Jenner's (looped) clip. We deliberately added Jenner's footage, as she is an established media personality being idolized by young girls.

"More, more, more," accompanied by a reverse speed effect, is explained in the following sequence: an extravagant style makeover in an effort to appear cool – exaggeration is a typical user behavior on social media. The slow-motion effect emphasizes on the characters' pretentious attitude, which, however, fulfils the aim of "getting liked" (Alicia Silverstone's looped self-admiration moment while another part of Webb's talk is playing; and then Nicole Kidman's clapping accompanied by the respective audio effect). A funny celebrity clapping seemed like a good fit, and this viral video was one of our first research results.

The second part focuses on social media as a simulation of high school and the frustration of wanting to belong. Here, more effects are used and the remix attribute is stronger to foreground feelings ("Spongebob Squarepants" clip horizontally and vertically flipped and with stutter loop applied; bomb effect). The clips show how "regular" users of social media feel like outcasts ("Easy A" clip with stutter loop applied on "sh*t") and insecure compared to the "cool" clique ("Kickass 2" clip with the provocative dancing; "Mean Girls" clip afterwards) everyone is "obsessed with." This phrase is emphasized with an eye and ear rape.

Before the end, the atmosphere is changing in an effort to convey a positive message: everyone should have the courage to accept and remain true to who they are, regardless of pressures of popularity ("Clueless," "Kickass 2").

Users eventually get tired and annoyed by this ecosystem (bomb explosion), and burst ("Heathers" clip); the censor beep reinforces the feeling of rage.

Then the school bell rings, implying that intermission is over – so is the "show," in this case the spectacle of the ladies fighting but also the video. This free association used here is referencing the Surrealist movement (Surrealism).

In conclusion, a mashup's main characteristic is mixing different media to create an original product which has a new purpose and tells its own story. Starting from the music industry, today it has expanded in video art with its most popular version being the YTP.

In our work, we followed a collage-inspired methodology (playing with different genres) to put together a selection of movie clips to make a statement about identity in the digital age.

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Class: Intellectual Property
Professor: Javier de la Cueva
Term 3

**Commentary on Eben Moglen's "Freeing the Mind: Free Software and
the Death of Proprietary Culture"**

"Few people creating and the rest consuming is anti-democratic." This fact is key for Eben Moglen, an advocate of free software movement (Moglen 2003), and aligns fully with the dual identity of people today: they are authors and users at the same time. They create over works which have already been created, embracing the new paradigm of collective social production. Within this open culture, people want to allow other people to use with this new work they produce in ways they want.

While in entertainment this is possible in exchange of royalties, in cultural, scientific and digital intellectual production it should happen with zero cost under specific conditions. Intellectual production today relies heavily on collective social production. The most recent example of collective creation is the Internet, as well as the base it operates on: its software. Today, most of the online applications and websites are constructed using free software. Free software has brought about a revolution, and the changes it led to, which spread beyond the technology industry, have been the subject of considerable discussions recently.

Free software, according to Moglen, is an "inherently incremental intellectual product (Moglen 2003)," and similar to scientific and literary works, it is a product of knowledge born out of a collaborative effort. In fact, Moglen continues, "its creation is aligned to humans' innate need for social creation," just like the way forms of language were created (Moglen 2003). Therefore, the way free software was born and is currently being produced is not something new; it is the exact same way all important intellectual works of the Western civilization have been created since the Renaissance. (Moglen 2003)

The innovation achieved through free software lies in changing what software is and how it works in respect to all the other aspects of intellectual production (Moglen 2003). Free software is a "social network" operating on the principal basis that "central executable elements of human technology can be produced by sharing." And if this is possible for the executable elements of technology, then the same should apply to the non-executable elements of culture; they can be distributed without exclusionary property relations (Moglen 2003). Therefore, because the production of software is changing, the distribution of other cultural goods is changing.

Consequently, nowadays a new political economy of software is emerging. Thanks to the power of networks, works can be shared and understood, improved and developed further by allowing one another to do so. In the case of free software, people create better software, and at the same time share information which allows them to improve their technical skills (Moglen 2003).

There are two systems/choices prevailing when constructing commons: the BSD, the Berkley Systems Division license, according to which "everything in the commons may be taken and put into proprietary, non-commons production as easily as it may be incorporated into commons production," and the GNU General Public License of the Free Software Foundation (Moglen 2003).

The latter is what makes the non-restricted dissemination of intellectual production possible. The GPL focuses "on how to preserve the free and open distribution of your work when you do allow others to modify and redistribute it (Deek and McHugh 2007, p. 222)."

When using a work, in this case a software, people are allowed to handle it however they want; but if they distribute, modified or unmodified, they must acknowledge and give the people who will use the work afterwards the same rights.

This is a new take on issues of copyrightability of software. According to Spinello and Bottis, "software patents have constituted in the past an uncertain domain of copyright, which reflects a major issue of copyrightability: the separation between an idea (*corpus mysticum*) and the expression of that idea (*corpus mechanicum*). This is so because with software it is evidently difficult to separate the idea behind a computer program and its expression in code. An idea is not copyrightable; only its expression is (Spinello and Bottis 2009, p. 71)."

Furthermore, open movement and free collective creation has liberated knowledge and led to a higher quality of work. As Moglen puts it, "production without property relations produces superior goods. This form of production, without exclusion from the right to understand and produce oneself, produces better goods (Moglen 2003)." The peer review process, which is a common practice among this type of production, allows for detecting defects during development, proposing implementation suggestions, and commenting on the work of contributors. Thus, "products become more secure and more reliable than the ones created within a property relations system" (Deek and McHugh 2007, p. 3).

Open-source projects provide substantial opportunities for learning, as mentioned earlier, a fact which is most frequently cited motivations for participating in such development (Deek and McHugh 2007, p. 8). Moreover, according to Moglen, "distribution without exclusion from the act of distributing results in inherently superior distribution" (Moglen 2003).

The reasons presented above explain the rise of adopting the Copyleft and the Creative Commons Licenses in the cultural industries. Copyleft calls upon anyone who redistributes a work, with or without modifications, to pass along the freedom to further copy and change it (Deek and McHugh 2007, p. 253). Similarly, in the case of Creative Commons, people are free to "use, share, repurpose, and remix" (Creative Commons 2018), as long as they agree that upon modifying the work, they do so "under the same liberal conditions under which they received the work." In all cases above, distribution is possible at zero marginal cost.

However, there are still industries that own data on exclusionary terms, and fight to prevent networks from operating. Therefore, according to Moglen, there is an important decision to be made: "free the network to be a network or to control the network as a form of broadcasting," meaning a form of proprietary distribution by a few favored individuals, i.e. the creators, in which the remaining individuals are regarded as consumers, i.e. non-producers, non-creators (Moglen 2003).

As Spinello and Bottis notice, a refocus away from the individual, in order to broaden the conception of "authorship" is crucial. That way, the resources at the author's disposal – multiple sources, possible collaborators, and the input of the audience – are more seriously considered. As a result, this re-focusing should allow to account for collective and collaborative forms of authorship, some of which are facilitated by new technologies (Spinello and Bottis 2009, p. 122).

Lessig shares the same opinion (Lessig 1999, pp. 30-42): emphasizing on the “abrupt transition in the Internet’s architecture from an idyllic innovation commons’ to an ‘architecture of control,” he notices that today “thanks to the ‘original Internet’s’ open protocols, individuals could use these resources to develop and set up new applications without restrictions or permission” (Spinello and Bottis 2009, p.115). In Moglen’s words: “by freeing the technology that runs the network, we change the way the network operates as a connector of human minds (Moglen 2003).” Transforming the software industry from commodity to service becomes possible by “sharing the spectrum, building networks and interconnecting them.” This new path is changing the way of production – from a system assuming exclusionary production is superior to a system discovering that non-exclusionary production is superior (Moglen 2003). Therefore, since software is a utility today, not even governments should stand in the way and restrict access to intangible goods which are meant to be shared (Spinello and Bottis 2009, p.114).

Concluding, contrary to the opinion of Craig Mundie of Microsoft Corporation that it destroys the global software industry (Moglen 2003), free software has done nothing but transformed it and brought about developments which spread beyond the technology industry. According to Moglen, it heralds the beginning of a social movement with specific political goals. Within the twenty-first century, this movement is gradually extending and affecting not only the production of software but also the production and distribution of culture (Moglen 2003), radically impacting the areas of intellectual infrastructure and production globally. At the core of its manifesto lies the view of free software as “a political and ethical choice asserting the right to learn, and share what we learn with others.” Thus, free software has become the foundation of a learning society where people share their knowledge in a way that others can build upon and enjoy, while ensuring the same freedoms and benefits for everyone (Free Software Foundation 2018).

It is worth noting here that, in Spinello and Bottis’ opinion (Spinello and Bottis 2009, p. 6), at the most extreme side of the spectrum of intellectual property lies establishing “a regime where all intellectual products remain unowned, by either individuals or organizations.” Advocates of this view, which Spinello and Bottis label “information socialism,” argue that potential elimination or restriction of intellectual property rights “will lead to the expansion of the intellectual commons and the fostering of creativity. It will also engender ‘greater political and economic equality’ (Martin 1998, p. 311).” Likewise, Rifkin (Rifkin 2000) identifies this era as an “age of access,” where access to information and digital networks is prioritized over individual property rights.

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TEAM ESSAYS

Exploring the Development from Pamphlet to Transmedia Branding through the Expanded World of *Cluedo*

MVDM October 2017

Digital Media Culture

**Professor Carolina Fernández Castrillo,
PhD - Team B**

(Franziska Becker, Astrid Chacón, Soyoung
Cho, Rossana d'Ornellas, Eric-Azad
Guiragossian, Alexandra Zografou)

Exploring the Development from Pamphlet to Transmedia Branding through the Expanded World of *Cluedo*

As a field, communication may be new, however it is “a very old practice” (Simonson, 2013). Since centuries ago, organizations and individuals have been using a variety of channels and mediums to communicate. The pamphlet could be considered as one of the earliest mediums. Its emergence originates in the 12th century: *Pamphilet* was the French title of an anonymous comic love poem *Pamphilus, seu de Amore* (Pamphilus: or, On Love) which was widely spread around in the form of a thin leaflet. “Hence the English word “pamphlet” became a generic term for an unbound text smaller than a book” (Evolutionary and Revolutionary story of pamphlets, 2016). With the invention of typography, the print medium became widespread, and gradually evolved to serve multiple purposes, mostly political. Pamphlets became the primary medium of propaganda – starting from the British Civil War in 1640 and the American Revolution in 1776, they were notoriously used in World Wars I and II (Airborne leaflet propaganda). However, pamphlets were also used for positive purposes, e.g.: generating awareness about growing social issues (Abolition of Slave Trade in 1838 and Suffrage Movement in 1848) (Evolutionary and Revolutionary story of pamphlets, 2016). Their use as a promotion tool began in the post-war era, around the 1950s, taking advantage of the further advancement of printing technology which, by the 1970s, allowed for elaborate design at affordable cost. Since then, they have remained as one of the basic tools for communication purposes (Walsall, 2014), particularly in the case of guerilla marketing (Evolutionary and Revolutionary story of pamphlets, 2016), in its various forms (leaflet, pamphlet/brochure).

Besides pamphlets, posters’ story of use was quite similar, as they were used both as a communication tool and a medium of propaganda. A key person in their evolution was Leonetto Capiello, an Italian caricaturist who focused exclusively on creating identities for brands during the 20th century. At the same time, due to the rising conflicts in the world (WWI and WWII), posters became a tool for propaganda and imposing ideas, too. However, since the mid-1950s, their most common use is commercial, demonstrating products and appealing to the customers (A Brief History of the Poster).

The 20th century saw also the emergence of video ads. After the first ad by watch brand Bulova broadcasted at a Yankee’s game in New York in 1941 (Video Killed the Radio Star: A Brief History of Video Advertising, 2016), video ads became a growingly influential and impactful medium for companies. In the 1980s, the appearance of MTV changed considerably video advertisement, as it revolutionized the way products were advertised on TV (THE MEDIA BUSINESS; How MTV Has Rocked Television Commercials, 1989). In 2004, Youtube appeared and, following its creation, companies started realizing that online videos were the ad medium of the future (Drell, 2011).

Thus, with the digital revolution within the last two decades, companies have been gradually employing participatory forms of communication with their audience, adopting what has been known as a “transmedia” approach as a means of differentiation from competition. First coined as a term by Marsha Kinder in 1993 (Kinder, 1993), “transmedia” was further defined by Henry Jenkins in 2007 (Jenkins, 2007) as “transmedia storytelling,” referring to “a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.”

When it comes to brands, campaign messages are told across different platforms and, usually, in different forms. There are two alternatives of transmedia storytelling used by companies: the “Canon” and the “Fandom” (Scholari, 2014). The “Canon” is the official content created by marketing professionals, while “Fandom” relies heavily on user-generated content. (Fiorelli, 2015). For instance, in the case of Dark Knight Rises “Why so serious?” movie campaign, the website *ibeliveinharveydent.com* and offline material – flyers, t-shirts and posters – were created, before fans started uploading content

on their social media accounts and were asked to complete tasks which would lead to discovering the Joker (Case Study: The Dark Knight Viral Marketing Campaign, 2014). The "Fandom" aspect is very important for any transmedia campaign, as it suggests that brands and audience collaborate to "co-construct transmedia narratives, storyworlds, and frames for engagement," as Stein and Busse note (Stein and Busse, 2012).

Therefore, transmedia branding can be proven effective for brands, as 1) it "promotes participation as brand value;" 2) it "harnesses collective intelligence to deepen and evolve the brand;" and 3) it generates, what Jenkins defined as, "spreadability," "an alternative to viral marketing and communication," resulted from the combination of audience participation and collective intelligence (Tenderich, 2014). It could be stated that "transmedia is the way to give them what they want" (Phillips, 2012). Furthermore, this way the brand message becomes "personal, relevant, and targeted in a way that is difficult for a brand to do" without audience participation (Tenderich, 2014).

Fully agreeing with these opinions and recognizing the value of spreadability in a campaign, we decided to organize a performance based on the relevance of transmedia practices in the communications industry. The hypothesis we investigated is whether, as Tenderich (Tenderich, 2014) explains, "transmedia collective intelligence and participatory techniques can greatly help the spreadability of brand messages." In order to analyze our working hypothesis, we researched contemporary case studies and literature on this topic, and applied the theory to practice through a transmedia campaign created for an academic presentation for our *Digital Media Culture* class.

The campaign itself consisted of a scavenger hunt, whose final part took place on the day of our final presentation, and it aimed to explore 1) the possibilities of transmedia branding 2) the interaction among the audience and the hosts of the game (Team B members), 3) the use of a "gamification" approach to transmedia branding.

The game was based on the principles of *Cluedo* but translated from a board game to a transmedia campaign which combined off- and online activities, redefining the role of the traditional *Cluedo* player as well as the game makers. In order to increase the reach, we decided to collaborate with a local café, *DoEat*. This way, we motivated the players further and expanded the world of *Cluedo* beyond its board game nature.

We designed our campaign to be realized online through social media and offline through audience communication and handouts, leading to uncovering the identity of "the killers."

Briefly explaining how the game works, the concept was based on *Cluedo* (the killers are six, three from each section). Elements from the party game *Mafia* (Wikipedia, 2018) (assigning roles, "murdering" innocents and debating identities) were used as reference. The participants of the game were the students of the Master's in Visual and Digital Media sections O1 and O2 as well as the professor. The participants group consisted of two types of players: six killers – three from each section – and innocents – the rest of both sections; this suggests that the interaction was possible both among killers and among killers and innocents. The campaign ran for five days until the day of the final presentation, from Monday 26/2 to Friday 2/3. For each day of the campaign, two clues were published on social media and needed to be solved by the innocents, in an effort for the killers' identity to be uncovered. At the end of the day, the killers would decide on the two innocents (one from each class) to be killed, while the players had the chance to solve the clues and reveal the killers. The same day, the participants list was updated with the people who have been eliminated. Killers who were still alive and innocents who have identified a killer would be eligible to participate in the draw. This draw took place during our presentation, and the winner was awarded a voucher for *DoEat*.

"Participation" in this game lied in the audience's response to the content published, which would help generate new content and push the campaign forward. The communication with the audience was asynchronous, in the sense that the latest developments and discoveries were published by the hosts twice a day, while the audience reacted at a time convenient for them.

After the game was introduced by posting a teaser and a link to the game's Facebook group on Whatsapp (see Appendix I), it was then promoted via offline materials in both classrooms (see Appendix II). The game's Facebook group was created as a common platform on which the players could play. At the same time, a Whatsapp group was created to facilitate the communication among the killers, and in order for them to decide on potential killings. On the day of the presentation, an Instagram poll took place, where the audience was able to vote in real time about the identity of the killers.

For tool selection (Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram), the main criteria for our online platforms were the familiarity of the users and assurance of a degree of privacy. The visual design decisions came from research on the crime context: a promotion flyer designed based on a ransom note-template and a Facebook page banner including all players inspired by the "EU's Most Wanted" list – the latter bears the characteristics of *Cluedo* personas. On the first day, printed flyers were handed out in both classrooms to further encourage participation. Whenever someone is killed, the banner is updated accordingly (see Appendix III). On the day of the presentation, propaganda flyers were hung up on the walls, in an effort to influence the audience's ideas about the killers' identity (see Appendix IV).

The nature of communication was shifted on the day of the presentation, to achieve a live performance element. Audience participation and interaction both among them and with the hosts was the main focus; during this day, communication was synchronous, facilitated by everyone involved – killers, innocents and hosts – being at the same event. During the performance, the audience was asked to open Instagram and check the game account's "Story" to vote on two possible killers – one of them being the right one.

The performance was structured as follows: Our team was introduced as the members of the marketing teams of *Cluedo* and *DoEat*. Following this, a short history of the evolution of branding (from pamphlet to transmedia) followed. As the explanation went on, we handed out pamphlets and refer to posters to enhance our performance. From this point on, the presentation shifted to digital communication tools brands use to reach out to audiences (video and TV ads), concluding with the concept of transmedia as an exemplary medium providing maximum degree of audience-company interaction. This part was highlighted by the case studies we found relevant to our transmedia campaign. Afterwards, our campaign idea and its development was presented. Following a brief summary of the events of the week, the final act was an Instagram poll for the remaining killers. When voting was over and the killers revealed, the winner of the draw as well as the prize were announced. When the performance ended, all material was uploaded in a website created for this end:

<https://onlyacluewilldo.wixsite.com/monsite-1/the-game>. The success of this campaign lies in that everyone has now become familiar with *Cluedo* and how it works.

In conclusion, our working hypothesis has been confirmed: Transmedia collective intelligence and participatory techniques do help the spreadability of brand messages. Co-constructing and expanding communication as well as igniting audience participation can help transmitting and extending the reach of the message. Since, according to Jenkins "immersion encourages participation" (Henry Jenkins explains his vision of transmedia and audience engagement), the level of participation and engagement of the audience resulted to an immersive experience, which helped the audience experience and become aware of both brands, *Cluedo* and *DoEat*.

However, due to time constraints, we were obliged to adapt the game, removing many aspects which would make it potentially more intriguing and would push audience interaction even more. It would be interesting to discover the level of communication and interaction among the audience in case of more identities to be uncovered (e.g. sheriff) or murder weapons to be found. Depending on the budget, it could have possibly been expanded into a greater region (the entire HST, Madrid, or Spain even). Nevertheless, through this campaign, the final performance and the brand collaboration, we succeeded in expanding the world of *Cluedo* into something bigger than the game itself.

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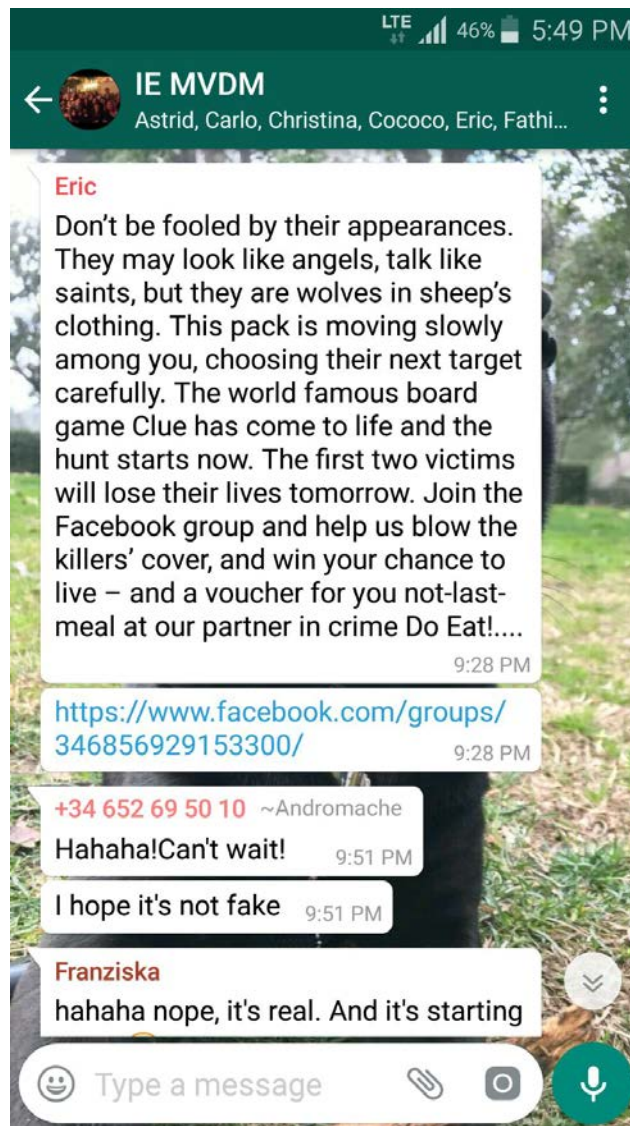
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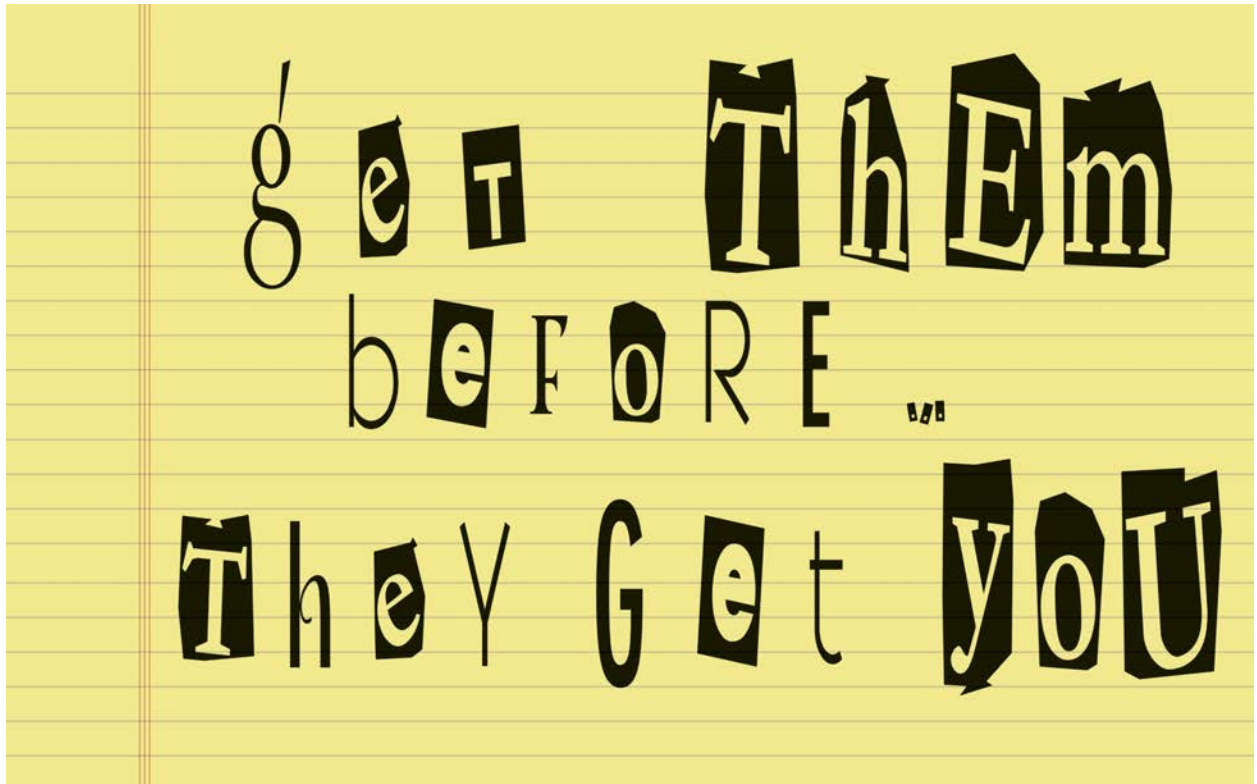
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APPENDIX I



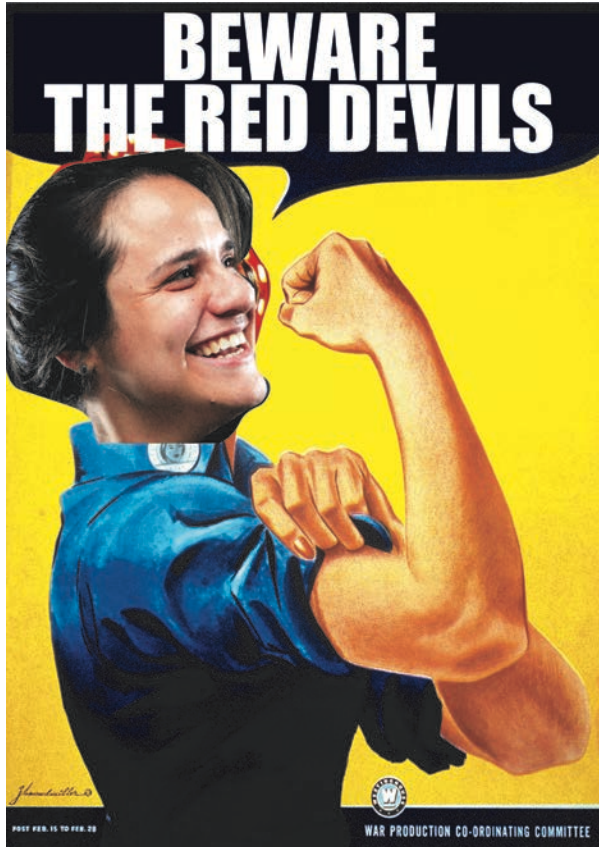
APPENDIX II



APPENDIX III



APPENDIX IV



THANK YOU!