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Transmedia discourse in the digital age: Exploring radical intertextuality, audiovisual hybridization, and the "aporia" of homo medialis

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Abstract

This article explores the evolution of transmedia discourse, a trend that emerges from the interplay between technological advancements and the modern individual's worldview, and its impact on contemporary media practices. The study focuses on the principles of radical intertextuality in convergent and television journalism, demonstrating how these principles contribute to the development of performativity, extraction, media symbiosis, and hybridization processes in screen arts. Additionally, the article delves into multimodal storytelling techniques, shedding light on the increasing demand for non-linear narratives and aesthetic models. The analysis concludes with an examination of the "aporia" of homo medialis within the context of digital anthropology, emphasizing the need for a better understanding of the human experience and identity in an increasingly interconnected digital landscape. The results of this investigation provide valuable insights for media scholars, industry professionals, and educators, with a focus on adapting to and leveraging the ever-shifting media landscape.

Keywords: audiovisual hybridization, digital industry, homo medialis, intertextuality, storytelling, transmedia



Public Interest Statement

The study focuses on the principles of radical intertextuality in convergent and television journalism, demonstrating how these principles contribute to the development of performativity, extraction, media symbiosis, and hybridization processes in screen arts. Additionally, the article delves into multimodal storytelling techniques, shedding light on the increasing demand for non-linear narratives and aesthetic models.

1. Introduction

This article presents the historical background and current state of transmedia storytelling in the evolving digital landscape. The rise of transmedia discourse, which includes the multifaceted use of media technologies and creative dissemination of content, has led to new challenges and opportunities for both creators and consumers. Studying these changes and their effects on society is crucial for understanding the role of transmedia in shaping contemporary communication and media arts.

The importance of researching this topic lies in its capacity to enhance our comprehension of the constantly changing dynamics within the media industry and to help practitioners navigate the blurring boundaries between different artistic genres and media platforms. Furthermore, the role of transmedia in shaping the homo medialis and the changing perception and consumption patterns among audiences must also be considered.

Therefore, the primary goal of this study is to investigate the impact of transmedia storytelling on the media industry, content creation, and audience engagement, as well as the role of transmedia storytelling in the emergence of homo medialis.

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To examine the historical development and evolution of transmedia storytelling from cross-media to its current state;
2. To evaluate the implications of transmedia discourse on the creation, dissemination, and consumption of media content;
3. To analyze the influence of transmedia storytelling on the anthropological image of the consumer;
4. To identify trends and future directions for transmedia storytelling in the digital age.

Our research hypothesis is that transmedia storytelling has fundamentally transformed the media industry, leading to new opportunities for artistic expression, lowering barriers to entry for content creators, increasing audience engagement, and contributing to the emergence of homo medialis. This hypothesis will be tested through a review of existing literature, coupled with the examination of contemporary case studies.

2. Literature Review

The evolution and dynamic development of computer and audio-visual technologies have led to global and radical transformations in the media sphere and screen arts (Bertola et al 2022). Beginning with the “digital revelation” of the 1980s (Debjani 2014; Williams 2017) and continuing today, the consistent and unstoppable digitization process has essentially changed the media and audio-visual industry, the strategy of production and content broadcasting, and tactics of consumption. This has resulted in discussions about digital aesthetics (Pardo 2013; Beatrice Fazi 2018; Mateer and Hailay 2019) and post-digital aesthetics (Philipsen 2014; Ferreira and Ribas 2020). It is important to note that the nonlinear network structure of media space, with its hybrid-adaptive logic, is influenced by the development of

internet technologies and mobile communications (Alejandro 2013). This impacts both the audience and the anthropological image of the consumer, leading to the emergence of homo medialis, as theorized by McLuhan (1994[1964]).

In contemporary communication studies, the term “transmedia storytelling” encompasses the process of creating thematic formations (Lemke 2005) or cycles comprising multiple narratives (fragments) connected by a singular story world (Jenkins 2006). These narratives are created and disseminated through various media technologies or means. The pioneers of transmedia discourse include Kinder, who introduced the term “transmedia” in 1991 and noted the connection with “transmedia intertextuality” and interactivity (Kinder 1991). Additionally, Jenkins’ article in *Technology Review* sparked significant interest and discussion among media scholars (Jenkins 2003).

Although parallels and similarities exist between “cross-media” and “transmedia,” researchers emphasize crucial differences between the two. For example, Davidson (2010) stresses the importance of interactivity in “transmedia”, while Ibrus and Scolari (2012) argue that transmedia incorporates the concept of cross-media without always preserving a single narrative logic across various media platforms. Miller (2004) posits that transmedia represents a fundamentally new way of thinking about entertainment rather than merely a new genre. Australian researcher Dena (2009) emphasizes that the term “transmedia” is used in various contexts and meanings in twentieth-century research, highlighting the discourse’s autonomy and interdisciplinary nature.

3. Methods

Considering the interdisciplinary nature of transmedia discourse and its increasing prominence in digital storytelling over the past five years as a leading communication trend, it is essential to examine its transformative influence in key areas of the digital industry, including news journalism, hybrid screen arts, audio-visual culture, and media anthropology. The central thesis posits that the digital industry is a logical consequence of the evolution of audio-visual technologies, including transmedia – a technology that engages various media types, formats, and digital platforms to disseminate content and report events. Consequently, transmedia emerges as a distinctive form of audio-visual and media production that incorporates novel cultural practices for consumers and unique perceptual experiences shaped within the context of digitalization, technological determinism, and multi-platform accessibility.

To analyze digital storytelling and its transformative influences in this article, discursive analysis, narrative method, and intertextual analysis were employed, based on the works of Eco, Barthes, Baudrillard, Genette, Schmid, among others (Rayn 2019). These approaches enable the identification of new meanings, models, and discourses generated by digital tools (Rayn 2019). In examining contemporary issues within the digital media landscape, this research draws on the ideas of Benjamin (2010), McLuhan (1994[1964]), and Guins (2014). It adopts a methodological approach to investigate the formation of mass media’s “dual reality,” the analysis of multi-platform screen stories, and the exploration of self-produced media systems, as discussed in Luhmann’s work (Luhmann 2000).

Additionally, this article incorporates ideas and works from modern media anthropologists, who emphasize the digital context (Pertierra 2018; Miller 2018). The study aims to assess the homo medialis construct and determine its position within the “interconceptual” system of resonating human models from the perspective of transmedia discourse.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 *Digital Storytelling as a Modern Audio-Visual Technology and Media Practice*

While the practice of storytelling is not a new concept – having been actively implemented since the

1990s – digital storytelling has recently gained significant attention among interactive digital methods integrated into various industries and spheres of activity, including advertising, personnel management, marketing, journalism, and filmmaking. The effectiveness of storytelling as a communication technique has greatly increased due to the penetration of digital environments, with multimedia technologies transforming narrative practice into a wholly new content organization format. Robin (2006) defines digital storytelling as the art of engaging storytelling using modern multimedia tools such as graphics, audio, video, and web design. Since 2001, international conferences on interactive digital storytelling have been held in multiple locations worldwide (International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling 2022). In 2018, the Association for Research in Digital Interactive Narratives was established, encompassing video and computer games, interactive documentaries and feature literature, journalistic “interactive materials,” artistic projects, and educational publications.

Digital storytelling is increasingly researched within network media, with many foreign scientists emphasizing the use of technologies such as augmented reality, robotics and artificial intelligence, game design, and immersive storytelling technologies. This audio-visual technology has proven effective in various applications, such as sports journalism (Matsiola et al 2022), preservation and popularization of cultural heritage (Podara et al 2021), and as a tool for transforming the author’s identity (Davis and Weinshenker 2012).

It is essential to consider the visuality of digital formats involved in the creation of narratives. Digital storytelling encompasses transmedia content, which may include a combination of infographics, photos, panoramas, videos, interactive elements, slideshows, 3D graphics, GIF animations, and other audio-visual technologies (Balaman 2018). Digital storytelling projects are always logically structured and composed of interconnected elements that successfully complement each other. The author presents the navigation of the transmedia story in advance, allowing every user to move within the online canvas’s space. This way, users understand the author’s intention, fully immerse themselves in the plot and appreciate the story being told. All of this is achieved through modern technologies that influence our primary senses: vision (photographs, visual design, video images), hearing (audio inserts, podcasts, sound in videos), and tactile sensations (using touchscreens on various gadgets that enable tactile engagement with the described object). As a result, digital storytelling has become one of the main content marketing trends of the 21st century (Ruiqi 2018).

Important tendencies and consequences of digital transmediation in the sphere of modern audio-visual production include, firstly, profound intertextuality in TV journalism; secondly, media hybrids and media symbioses contextually connected with screen arts; and thirdly, the experiences of self-organization and structural transformations of homo medialis.

The historical development and evolution of transmedia storytelling from its roots in cross-media approaches to its contemporary state in the digitally interconnected media landscape:

Cross-media origins. Transmedia storytelling has its roots in the concept of cross-media or multimedia narratives, where stories were shared across different media platforms, such as books, television, and films. However, these early attempts were typically limited by the linear, one-way dissemination of content and a passive audience experience.

Convergence culture and Web 2.0. The rise of the Internet and Web 2.0 (mid-2000s) fostered a culture of interactivity and user-generated content, leading to an environment where stories could be told across various media channels and audience participation was encouraged. This transformation marked a shift from passive consumption to active engagement and provided the foundation for transmedia storytelling.

Emergence of transmedia storytelling. The advancements in digital technology, social media, and

mobile devices have further enabled creators to expand their narrative worlds across media platforms and offer immersive experiences, such as alternate reality games (ARGs), web series, and interactive apps. These experiences often encourage user-generated content, extending the story world beyond the author's control and embracing audience engagement.

Current state of transmedia storytelling. Today, transmedia storytelling has matured into a rich and diverse landscape, encompassing innovative narrative structures, hybrid genres, and collaborative storytelling ecosystems. New technologies, like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), continue to open up opportunities for deeper immersion and participatory narratives, blurring the lines between reality and fiction.

The historical development of transmedia storytelling reveals how advances in technology, audience involvement, and the convergence of media platforms have progressively shaped the way stories are created, shared, and experienced. The future of transmedia storytelling is likely to continue evolving, fueled by ongoing technological innovations and the desire for immersive, participatory narratives.

The impact of transmedia storytelling on the anthropological image of the consumer:

Active participation and co-creation. Transmedia narratives encourage consumers to actively engage with the content, often inviting them to interact, share, and co-create stories, thus blurring the boundaries between content creators and consumers. This participatory culture fosters a sense of agency and merges individual experiences within shared narratives.

Multiple lenses and perspectives. Transmedia storytelling offers consumers a wide range of entry points to engage with narratives through various media platforms. This fluidity in consumption allows users to interact with stories in ways that cater to their individual preferences and sensibilities, adapting to the diversity of modern anthropological profiles.

Digital identity and social engagement. As consumers immerse themselves in transmedia narratives, they often develop digital personas that interact and connect with others within these story-worlds. This may significantly influence their anthropological image, as their online presence becomes an increasingly important aspect of their identity, fostering a sense of belonging and contributing to the development of new communities.

Evolving cognitive frameworks and media literacy. Engagement with transmedia stories requires consumers to develop sophisticated cognitive frameworks that allow them to navigate complex narrative structures and make sense of the story-world. This process can contribute to enhanced media literacy, encouraging critical thinking, and empowering consumers to better comprehend and evaluate the media they encounter.

4.2 Radical Intertextuality and Non-Linear Form of a Story in TV Journalism

Jenkins (2011) defines radical intertextuality as “a movement across texts or across textual structures within the same medium.” He illustrates this idea using the Marvel Cinematic Universe example, where interconnected TV shows and numerous superhero movies share elements, such as plots, characters, and events in various configurations, constituting an intertextual phenomenon. However, radical intertextuality alone is insufficient to create the effect of additivity; it must be complemented by multimodality, which entails different ways and modalities of representing the same story. This course makes it evident that “a transmedia story is a radically intertextual story that is played out across different media, and each new text adds to our understanding of the story as a whole” (Wall 2019, p 2117).

Being a multi-episodic and fragmented story with components dispersed across numerous media platforms, news requires the reconstruction of not only a certain sequence of events but also their spatio-

temporal context from a specific perspective. This attests to their “seriality,” which, within the framework of traditional TV journalism, is based on two principles: firstly, narrative creation is connected with the construction of “part-whole” relationships between small fragments that progressively form a larger story and a unified storyline; and secondly, the elements of the series are typically organized linearly, where episodes are perceived one after the other. However, the development of social media (social news sites, blogs, image boards, wikis, etc.) transforms the news format by increasing its episodic nature (Page 2012). Most network platforms (for instance, Reddit) encourage collaborative news story creation, adding participation to the foundational principles of seriality that were established in the pre-digital era (segmentation and sequencing).

Modern technologies facilitate the development and extension of news’ seriality primarily in two ways: (i) convergence of storylines at one point, enabling the reader to choose news stories of interest and return to the main narrative; and (ii) branching, providing the reader with an option to choose from which moment to commence following the event, despite the formal temporal sequence (McIntosh et al 2010). The first type of expansion is characteristic of news coverage at the stage when discourse has already become established, allowing for control over the development of the news story, and most importantly, the desired resolution. In contrast, the second type is characteristic of the initial stage of coverage, when the frame or discourse has not yet been established.

There are also four strategies of narrative expansion (Scolari 2009):

Intermediate mini-plots are stories closely related to the main plot and can be broken into a series of consecutive subplots (e.g., the Russian military intervention in Ukraine can be divided into successive episodes such as the capture of Kherson and Mariupol, the battle for Kyiv, the liberation of Kherson, the battle for Bakhmut, and so on);

Parallel stories are narratives that unfold synchronously and are closely connected to the main plot. These develop over an extended period, potentially turning into spin-offs (for example, military actions in the Middle East and the European migration crisis, Russian aggression against Ukraine, and terrorist attacks in Paris);

User-generated content (UGC) platforms, such as blogs and wikis, promote story-related user-generated materials;

Peripheral stories are loosely related to the main story but occur simultaneously with the main narrative. Peripheral stories can develop as spin-offs. Events that took place in August 2016 exemplify this: the siege of Aleppo, the resignation of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign manager and political technologist Paul Manafort, and the Olympic Games.

Transmedia technologies enable the dissemination of narrative elements across various media platforms, such as individual personal and collective blogs (The Huffington Post, Zero Hedge, etc.), news websites, well-known blog services (WordPress, etc.), and social networks and collaborative project servers (Wikipedia, Bellingcat, BuzzFeed, and others) (Norrington 2010).

The intertextuality of transmedia narratives entails the joint activation of overarching narrative meanings and the continuity of episodes through story arcs. A story can begin in one episode, continue in another, and reach its climax in a third. While traditional narratives are constructed on a sequence of events linearly narrated, news narratives report events in real-time, restricting their ability to manipulate and control the frequency and intensity of events (Ryan 2005, 2019). For instance, the terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015, and the attack on Mosul by coalition forces in March 2015 were both characterized by uneven intensity, requiring the use of such a feature of transmedia seriality as portioned submission of materials.

Despite carefully planned transmedia franchises (e.g., “The Matrix”), news stories are naturally

cyclical, with seriality being an inherent aspect of news narratives. Certain episodes of a news story transcend chronologically sequential and orderly presentations of events, making them non-linear (Rushkoff 2013). History, composed of separate fragments connected chronologically, causally, thematically, or teleologically, suggests another attribute of transmedia seriality, the expansion of the narrative. The architecture and interface of social media, which prioritize recency over retrospection, indicate that the organization of news narratives is not based on traditional chronological order, as materials often appear in reverse sequence.

Hence, the next feature of transmedia seriality, which logically follows from the previous one, is the synthesis of linear continuations and autonomous cycles, well demonstrated by the example of structured journalism. It assumes that every news story is a storyline (Caswell 2019). For instance, consider the New Year's incident in Cologne in 2016 when a girl named Jenny threw a firecracker into a hood (BBC News 2016). In parallel, another storyline was the European migration crisis, as the mentioned events in Germany on the eve of the New Year are directly related to the topic of refugees in Europe. Furthermore, the protests that swept through Germany as a result of the New Year's events are another story line.

Each individual plot component opens up more possibilities for interpretations, and an infinite number of events connected by numerous causal and temporal links generate various associative chains. This offers the audience many options for where to go and what to do within the narrative. Each person can choose which plot lines and in which sequence they want to learn. This approach achieves one of the key goals of transmedia storytelling: creating a universe within which many worlds can be placed. In this context, news plays an important role not only in reflecting and representing everything that happens around us, but also in actively constituting the audience's worldview. Radical intertextuality plays a crucial role in creating order out of chaos by constructing reality.

4.3 Media Configurations and the Hybridization of Audio-Visual Forms in Screen Art

The development of transmedia discourse is characterized by the formation of new symbiotic semantic-aesthetic relationships between "open works" based on modern digital technologies. As such, it is insightful to consider Rose's idea of "the digital means blurring of borders" from the book "The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories" (Rose 2015b).

Interaction with information, especially on screen, is facilitated by the techno-capacity of screen arts. This involves the interpenetration of complex dynamic systems (electronic, social, biological, etc.), which is accompanied by a synergistic effect. In addition, the blurring of lines between the author and the audience leads to the democratization of the creative process. Moreover, convergent processes between the entertainment industry and marketing result in the formation of more complex, multi-level media systems. The infiltration of gaming elements into the narrative contributes to further media hybridization and "gamification." The integration of amateur aesthetics into television and cinema strengthens the intricate relationships between factual, documentary, and fictional reality (Oppedisano 2017).

From the perspective of synergy, the modern media space can be viewed as a complex, open, dynamic system that, through the introduction of digital technologies, has survived a bifurcation point and reached a new level of differentiation and self-organization. It involves self-organizing informational chaos, which, thanks to the Internet, gives rise to unexpected and occasionally paradoxical symbiotic relationships, which manifest as non-linear aesthetic connections. It is no coincidence that the producer of the American company Lucasfilm, Roffman, comments on the "Star Wars Expanded Universe" as

having “fractal complexity” (Rose 2015a), and Duarte (2014) explores the actualization of the fractal principle in modern screen culture and introduces the concept of “narrative space” in his work “Fractal Narrative”.

Infinity, as an inherent characteristic of the fractal structure, guides us to understand the modern media space as a continuum containing a complex dialectic between similarity and infinite self-reproducibility on the one hand, and myriad artistic possibilities and the unfolding of events into alternative fictional universes on the other. This dialectic transforms screen aesthetics and generates diverse forms of transmedia works’ actualization in contemporary audiovisual arts within the integration of two or more types of media channels, media platforms, or media carriers to achieve a synergistic effect, so long as the elements retain partial or complete autonomy. This process enables the emergence of media hybrids and media symbioses against the backdrop of technical and technological convergence (Langer and Gruber 2020).

Examples of traditional “branded” media symbioses include a TV series with its social media communities, wiki-pages, and wiki-encyclopedias (“Game of Thrones”); a radio station with its accompanying website (chameleon.fm); newspapers with mobile applications (“The Times,” “The Guardian,” “The New York Times,” etc.); an electronic portal with a magazine (“Forbes”), or more intricate combinations centered on a “multilayered” image, such as the symbiosis of cinema, television, and performance exemplified by the theater production of the play “Hamlet: Cumberbatch,” which was broadcast live to cinemas worldwide on October 15, 2015.

Other instances of media symbioses involve the union of integrated marketing communication complexes with screen arts, including trailers and teasers, movie and literary work promotional videos. Notably, BMW is considered a pioneer in the production of quality artistic promotional films through its “BMW for Rent” project (The Hire, USA, producers D. Fincher, T. Scott, among others), featuring eight short films created and actively distributed online from 2001 to 2003. Additionally, “book trailers” are video ads that creatively introduce a literary work in the style of a film trailer. These trailers can take the form of documentary video essays (“Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won’t Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Health Care” by M. Makary), mock movie trailers (“Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children” by R. Riggs), animated textual “video quotes” from the featured book (“Mockingbird” by C. Wendig), or animated book trailers (“The School for Good and Evil” by S. Chainani).

The main difference between “media hybrids” and media symbioses is that they are formed under the influence of technical and technological convergent processes, which offer many opportunities for the infiltration of media species in creative activities to achieve synergistic and synesthetic effects. Media symbioses, on the other hand, are more focused on the integration of already existing media forms and complexes of marketing solutions and communications (Bányai, 2016). Demonstrative examples of media hybrids include multimedia exhibitions such as the series of “reinterpretation of nine classic paintings” by the British director P. Greenaway or video art examples, such as the exhibition of video installations by AES+F group titled “Inverso Mundus,” which combines styles of photography, video, and new technologies. Additionally, performance art forms that arise through the infiltration of elements of screen arts, such as the 3D musical “Pola Negri” directed by Y. Yuzefovych, represent media hybrids. Interactivity plays a significant role in the process of media hybridization, as it functions as an artistic and expressive tool that enables the interspecies synthesis of arts. New hybrid genres and forms, including interactive transmedia novels, mashups, video blogs, video and film essays, “film collages” as projects at the intersection of cinema and Internet videos, and more, require separate in-depth studies not covered in this article.

4.4 Focusing on Home Medialis within Digital Storytelling: Subject or Victim?

Today's media has achieved a unique synthesis with users due to the process of maximum adaptation to their features and interests. The transmedia expansion of narratives in multi-platform media space and the self-organization tendencies of this space present new challenges and opportunities for modern individuals as Home medialis (Pirner and Rath 2003). With search engines like Google collecting massive volumes of data about each person, analyzing it, and developing "interest filters" that directly affect the information user receives, Marshall McLuhan's notion of media as a "person expansion" is both confirmed and expanded in the context of transmediation and the hybridization of contemporary media, which leads to the transformation and hybridization of media users (Guins 2014). This process contributes to the formation of homo medialis as an integrative anthropological project that includes various aspects: "Transcendent Man," "Man with a Movie Camera," "Homo informaticus," "Homo Ludens," "Homo crepitus," "Homo technicus," and other media user modalities.

Taking into account tendencies in the realm of digital ontology and transmedia discourse, today, the problem of determining the status of this new anthropological type is being actively debated: Is it a digital double or a free personality, a new stage of evolution or mere dependence on gadgets? It seems that the advantages of transmedia technologies and "media hybridization" empowering passive viewers to transform into active users who can not only perceive and interpret media messages but also physically interact with audiovisual content (e.g., in VR360 Video or video essays) are clear and concrete. However, research by Ruckenstein and Schüll (2017) on the "datification" of health has shown that this technology creates the conditions for surveillance and control that shape and change human behavior, creating a sense of dehumanization as people increasingly perceive themselves as data visualizations, and further reinforcing gender and social inequality. In opposition to the Quantified Self movement, alternative trends emerge that practice active rejection of such technologies, which are currently seen as a form of resistance (Miller 2018).

Thus, the problem persists. Transmedia space transforms into a propaedeutic course for the existence of homo medialis. The advancement of media technologies contributes to the creation of an interactive project characterized by homes without walls and consciousness without borders, where, recalling J. Baudrillard, a digital type of relationship, based on the principle of "minimum reality and maximum simulation," prevails. This phenomenon threatens the loss of connection with the real "Other," desexualization of existence, and spiritual involution. In contrast, Horst and Miller (2012) argue that there is no need to resort to total annihilation and turn oneself into a victim of romanticized discourse, promoting the notion of greater authenticity in pre-digital reality. One alternative could be a more realistic transmedia discourse that will help not only develop stable models of behavior and self-realization in a multi-platform media space through media education but also, taking into account the non-linear structure that constantly models itself according to the principles of endless repetition and recursion, branching self-similar structures to embody the Nietzschean ideal of Self-Transcendence. This creation of an open personality enables continuous transformation through the possibilities of the transmedia universe.

We assess the influence of transmedia discourse on the creation, distribution, and consumption of media content as follows:

Enhanced narrative structures. Transmedia storytelling capitalizes on the diverse capabilities of various media platforms to create rich, immersive, and multi-layered narratives. This approach fosters a more engaging and participatory user experience, as well as greater creative freedom for content creators.

Audience engagement and active participation. Transmedia narratives often invite users to

become more actively involved and influence the storytelling process, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the story. This not only boosts audience engagement but also stimulates content virality and the creation of user-generated content.

Expanded distribution opportunities. The convergence of various media formats allows for a broader range of distribution channels, increasing content discoverability and tailoring experiences to suit specific audience preferences, platforms, and devices.

The impact on the media industry. Transmedia discourse has significant implications for the media industry, as it necessitates new business models and monetization strategies that can adapt to the complex ecosystems created by multiscreen consumption and audience fragmentation.

Challenges and potential drawbacks. Despite the many benefits, transmedia storytelling faces unique challenges in regard to intellectual property management, coordinating narratives across platforms, and ensuring consistent quality and continuity. Furthermore, balancing the need for creative freedom against audience expectations and demands can prove difficult for certain projects and creators. The influence of transmedia discourse on media content creation, distribution, and consumption is considerable, offering new avenues for storytelling, revenue generation, and audience engagement. However, it is important to recognize the ongoing challenges and potential pitfalls that need to be addressed in the continuously evolving media landscape.

Trends and future directions of transmedia storytelling in the era of digital technologies:

Immersive experiences and virtual reality. The advancement of virtual and augmented reality technologies is expected to shape the future of transmedia storytelling, enabling deeply immersive and interactive experiences that transcend traditional boundaries and engage multiple senses.

Personalization and data-driven narratives. As data analytics and artificial intelligence become increasingly sophisticated, transmedia narratives will likely leverage these technologies to create personalized storytelling experiences tailored to individual interests, preferences, and histories, enhancing audience engagement and emotional connection.

Convergence of media platforms. The ongoing integration of media platforms will continue to facilitate seamless audience experiences across various channels, thereby unifying previously disparate narrative elements and promoting a coherent and satisfying transmedia journey for consumers.

Ethical considerations and the protection of privacy. As transmedia storytelling evolves, concerns surrounding privacy, data security, and ethical storytelling practices will come to the forefront, necessitating the development of guidelines and best practices to address these challenges in a responsible manner.

The historical development and evolution of transmedia storytelling reveals a shift from linear, cross-media narratives to a more dynamic, interconnected, and immersive experience facilitated by digital technologies. This transformation has significantly impacted the creation, distribution, and consumption of media content, as well as the anthropological image of the consumer. As we look to the future, the ongoing integration of digital technologies, data-driven personalization, and ethical considerations will further shape the landscape of transmedia storytelling, offering audiences novel and engaging experiences that transcend traditional boundaries.

5. Conclusion

This research demonstrated that transmedia storytelling is a distinct and self-sustained cultural and audio-visual practice, differing from cross-media 4.0 practices. It creates a separate discourse that critiques the inadequacy of monomedia approaches and emphasizes the deliberate use of each platform's narrative strengths and transmissibility. This affords opportunities for audience interaction with content

(interactivity) and the capacity to convey stories through all available means, both mass media and non-mass media.

Transmedia properties are particularly evident at the mental and technological levels, as demonstrated by the principle of radical intertextuality in convergent and TV journalism. This, combined with multi-modality, fosters performativity and extraction. Additionally, media symbiosis and hybridization processes in screen arts generate new audiovisual forms and “multilayered” aesthetics. Lastly, transmedia storytelling presents new opportunities and challenges for homo medialis in the context of digital anthropology.

By attributing the functions of a “cultural attractor” and “cultural activator” to the transmedia world, as it fosters the creation of a “knowledge community,” new types of relationships between audiences and the narrative world, and forms emotional connections, we enrich the understanding of the role of cultural and creative industries in the 21st century. As such, it is crucial to perceive and further investigate transmedia and its associated discourse not only as a direction of audiovisual practices, technologies, and industries but also as a methodological approach within the framework of media studies, literary studies, cultural studies, narratology, linguistics, political science, anthropology, education, and more.

During our research, we analyzed an extensive array of texts related to transmedia narratives, media hybridization, and digital anthropology. The primary data collected included various examples of media symbiosis, technological convergence, and their influences on contemporary communication and cultural practices. Our analysis revealed several significant trends and correlations in the prevalence of transmedia narratives and media hybridization approaches. Among these are the growing number of media platforms and formats intertwining to create immersive experiences, an increased audience engagement in multiplatform content consumption, and the heightened importance of digital mediums in shaping modern culture and communication.

The results of our research can be discussed within the framework of the prevailing concept of media convergence, which suggests that the integration of various media forms and technological advances can significantly impact cultural and social dynamics. Our findings support this hypothesis by demonstrating how transmedia storytelling and media hybridization contribute to shaping the way individuals experience, interpret and interact with content, ultimately fostering a more active and participatory media culture.

Our findings reveal critical insights into the ongoing evolution of media landscapes and its various implications. Among the most notable results of our study are: (i) the increasingly important role of digital technologies in promoting media hybridization and transmedia storytelling; (ii) the implications of these trends on user engagement, fostering more interactive and participatory experiences; and (iii) the emergence of a new anthropological type – the digital individual, characterized by an interconnectedness with technology that raises questions about issues of identity and gadget dependency in the modern world.

Incorporating transmedia storytelling and related discourse across various disciplines will enable an interdisciplinary understanding of its impact on culture and society. It will also contribute to a deeper, more comprehensive analysis of the role that new media technologies play in shaping our global consciousness and facilitating meaningful connections between people and stories in the digital age.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Igor Pecheranskyi: conceptualization and design of the study; analysis of principles of radical intertextuality in convergent and television journalism.

Tetiana Humeniuk: investigation of performativity, extraction, media symbiosis, and hybridization processes in screen arts.

Nataliia Shvets: research on multimodal storytelling techniques and non-linear narratives.

Marianna Holovkova: examination of the “aporia” of homo medialis within the context of digital anthropology.

Olena Sibiriakova: integration of research findings and overall synthesis.

The collaborative effort of these authors has resulted in a comprehensive exploration of transmedia discourse, providing valuable insights for media scholars, industry professionals, and educators adapting to the ever-evolving media landscape.

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