

"TIRABIRAK / TIRAS QUE AFLOJAN": A TRANSMEDIA PRODUCTION ABOUT THE VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY THROUGH THE NEWSPAPER CARTOONS

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Abstract

"Tirabirak / Tiras que aflojan" is a transmedia production that revises the violence in the Basque Country over the last four decades through newspaper cartoons. Teachers, researchers, students and cartoonists have worked together in a work-in-progress and plural production that unfolds across a variety of media platforms both physical and online. In addition to the itinerary exhibition that will tour the Basque Country in 2016, the project contains, among others, an interactive archive, a webdoc, various linear audiovisual products, publications, training and co-creation activities that feed the exhibition and a summer course.

"Tirabirak / Tiras que aflojan" is the result of the collaboration between two research groups at the University of the Basque Country (UPV / EHU) and Donostia / San Sebastian 2016 European Capital of Culture. A transmedia production with a critical approach over the recent history of the Basque Country and built in a multidisciplinary and participatory manner.

Objectives

Four are the objectives of the transmedia production titled "Tirabirak / Tiras que aflojan":

- Design and produce a whole transmedia universe for the Donostia / San Sebastián 2016 European Capital of Culture that integrates the efforts of teachers, researchers, students of the University of the Basque Country and professional newspaper cartoonists.
- Applied the knowledge and practices of the academic field (research and teaching) to a real project that enables students to work with professional cartoonist and learn practically how to engage in a transmedia production.
- Provide students with the necessary skills to deal with transmedia projects in the near future and therefore deepen the transmedia literacy.
- Visualize the recent context of violence in the Basque Country with the aim of promoting reflection and critical thinking

Development

"Tirabirak / Tiras que aflojan" is a production weaved around an itinerary exhibition that will tour the Basque Country's capitals during 2016. The exhibition contains a selection of the cartoons published in the main newspapers and in relation to the context of violence experienced in the Basque Country in the last four decades. The exhibition shows many events and authors and different approaches to the conflict. The cartoons are dated from 1977 to 2016 and have been selected following 150 main events (attacks, kidnappings, arrests, illegalisations, demonstrations...). The members of the two research teams of the

¹ The three authors of this paper are lecturers and researchers at the University of the Basque Country and members of a research team dealing with transmedia storytelling from a practical point of view. We have received financing from the University of the Basque Country, the Basque TV Stations and other institutions to analyze and produce transmedia projects since 2011.

University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), with multidisciplinary backgrounds, have selected the cartoons in the newspapers published or that can be bought in the Basque Country

These are the newspapers included in the sample for these four decades: Deia, Egin, El Diario Vasco, El Correo, ABC, El País, Diario de Navarra, El Mundo, Euskaldunon Egunkaria, Gara and Berria. On the other hand, in some cases cartoons from the following newspapers have been included: La Razón, Diario de Noticias de Navarra, Diario 16, Ya, La Vanguardia, Enbata, Sud Ouest and Le Journal du Pays Basque.

In the first phase of the analysis of the cartoons we collected 15.000 newspapers and studied more than 30.000 cartoons in order to find if they were related to the violence in the Basque Country. Then we selected 3.500 cases where the content was linked to the conflict. In the exhibition almost 450 cartoons can be seen.

The sample included in the itinerant physical exhibition contains the more representative examples of a wide list of authors: Zaldieroa, Máximo, Zulet, Peridis, Tasio, Forges, Máximo, Oroz, Olariaga, Ripa, Mattin, Ricardo & Nacho, Martín Morales, Aós, Martintxo, Ramón, Iñaki & Pintu, Dusón, Idígoras & Pachi, Mingote, Angel & Guillermo, Jon Zabaleta, Michel Iturria, Juan Carlos Eguillor, Romeu, Puebla, Rafa Ramos, Adur, Antón, Apxi, Endika, Eneko, Ferreres, Gallego & Rey, Jon Pedro, Koldo, López & Pérez, Mad, Mokordo, Ori, Peli, El Perich, Ricardo, Romeu, Tulino and Xim.

Apart from the comic strips, the transmedia production contains many other elements that we will mention in the following lines, starting from the ones that are included in the exhibition itself.

- A Video containing a selection of images broadcast in the news of the Basque Television Station during the last decades. This video works as a background for the cartoons and creates the context to locate the events.
- A video offering the opportunity to listen to the cartoonists on how they understand their work, the political atmosphere and the role played by the newspapers in context of conflict and violence. This video shows also clips of interviews with representatives of the newspapers, researchers on the cartoons and the social meaning of humour, caricatures and satire. The different interviews have been recorded and edited by the students working in this project (last year students of Audiovisual Communication at the UPV/EHU).
- A fast motion video showing the process of each author when creating a cartoon.
- A huge table-like piece of furniture marking the 39 years and 150 events included in the exhibition. Each event contains the real headline used by a newspaper and gives the context of the event.
- An interactive web based archive (www.tirabirak.eus) where the visitor can browse through the collection of cartoons, the ones included in the exhibition and a lot more. In the data base the user can choose the cartoons by the authors, the dates, the newspapers...and many others that will be implemented during the year.

As said earlier, apart from the platforms implemented for the exhibition venues, there are many others that complete the transmedia production. Here there are some of them:

- A linear documentary based on the interviews (authors, media analysts, researchers...) by the students and the professionals of the Basque Television Station (ETB). The documentary will be broadcast by that TV station.
- A webdoc: this is the core platform of the online media. The web-based documentary will hold the whole information collected (cartoons, interviews, videos, chronological list of events...) and will serve as a starting point for the visitor to browse the content at his/hers own will. The webdoc will be the legacy for the years to come as it will be online far beyond 2016.
- A web site containing the central elements of the project (the webdoc, written information, pictures,

agenda...).

- Social media to spread the news about the exhibition and to promote the extra activities to be hold during the weeks to come.
- Supplementary activities: we will organize gatherings, guided visits and speeches given by the authors while the exhibition is open in each capital. Apart from this extra activities we have organized a Summer Course to be hold in Donostia/San Sebastian while the exhibition is there. On the other hand, we have planned some workshops on software for animation, webdoc production and Wikipedia feeding. In all of them graduate and postgraduate students will take part in the activities and upload the products created by them during the workshops

Conclusions and prospective

“Tirabirak / Tiras que aflojan” is a good example of transmedia productions that can be implemented from university and displays many interesting conclusions:

- Communication studies at university should include the transmedia prospective in their offer for the students and specially those conceived from a practical point of view. The professionals of the future (and of the present as well) need that knowledge and practice in multimedia and participatory productions. To engage the students in the real productions is a great way to spread the transmedia vision and, at the same time, enrich the productions with their own points of view and perceptions of every days life.
- Transmedia productions on themes as peace and reconciliation can contribute to processes of normalization as it is happening nowadays in the Basque Country. The use of so many platforms and ways to create and transmit content can help the increase of participation and the opening of doors to different points of view. Thus transmedia stories can serve to create spaces for peace, respect and coexistence.
- Multiplatform productions are ideal in stories where there is a huge amount of information in different media and that would like to offer the opportunity for the user to browse the content freely.

Questions and/or considerations for discussion

- How can we encourage students to engage in practical transmedia productions? Why should we?
- Are there many other productions on peace and reconciliation based on multiplatform and participatory designs?
- How can we coordinate successfully online and offline platforms?
- Transmedia productions and legacy for the future...