

Tensions in the construction of memory: editorial intervention in the inclusive biographical space of the Colombian Truth Commission's transmedia project

Tensões en la construcción de la memoria: intervención editorial en el espacio biográfico incluyente del transmedia de la Comisión de la Verdad de Colombia

Tensões na construção da memória: intervenção editorial no espaço biográfico inclusivo da estratégia transmídia da Comissão da Verdade da Colômbia

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This article set out to explore, from Leonor Arfuch's theory, the biographical space of women and the LGBTQ+ community in the transmedia of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition of Colombia. It follows a qualitative methodological approach based on the pragmatics of enunciation. This work demonstrates that when the research and digital production team intervene in the testimonies, they are adapted to life models and biographical values aligned with institutional discourses.

KEYWORDS: Memory, transmedia, victims, gender, Colombia, justice.

Este artículo se propone explorar, desde la teoría de Leonor Arfuch, el espacio biográfico de las mujeres y la comunidad LGBTQ+ en el transmedia de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición Civil de Colombia. Adopta el enfoque metodológico cualitativo basado en la pragmática de la enunciaci3n. El trabajo demuestra que, al ser intervenidos por el equipo de investigaci3n y de producci3n digital, los testimonios son adaptados a modelos de vida y valores biogr3ficos alineados a los discursos institucionales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Memoria, transmedia, v3ctimas, g3nero, Colombia, justicia.

Este artigo prop3e-se a explorar, a partir da teoria de Leonor Arfuch, o espaço biogr3fico das mulheres e da comunidade LGBTQ+ na transm3dia da Comiss3o para o Esclarecimento da Verdade, a Conviv3ncia e a N3o Repetiç3o Civil da Col3mbia. Adota uma abordagem metodol3gica qualitativa baseada na pragm3tica da enunciaç3o. O trabalho demonstra que, ao serem trabalhados pela equipe de pesquisa e produç3o digital, os depoimentos s3o adaptados a modelos de vida e valores biogr3ficos alinhados aos discursos institucionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mem3ria, transm3dia, v3timas, g3nero, Col3mbia, justiça.

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INTRODUCTION

The world's first truth commission was established in Uganda. Between 1971 and 1974, it carried out the mandate under the name of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disappearances of People in Uganda. Based on that experience, 51 other countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have used the mechanism as part of a process of transition and reconciliation, following armed conflicts and dictatorships.

Colombia became the country that most recently established a commission of this nature in this region: it was called the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Civil Crimes. For approximately four years (2018-2022) the institution faced two historic challenges: to uncover the truths about one of the oldest armed conflicts in the Western world, and to do so with a cross-cutting gender focus, an unprecedented decision compared to previous commissions.

Like all commissions of this nature, Colombia had the challenge, in the words of international justice expert Priscilla Hayner (2008), to “lift the veil of silence and denial that conceals a controversial and painful period of history” (p. 54) in a country with approximately 9.7 million victims² of the armed conflict, in a period between January 1985 and December 2024. Of that total, 4.8 million are women and 6 307 are people from the LGBTIQ+ community (Unidad para las Víctimas, 2023).

Despite the magnitude of the data and the country's extensive history of violence, an official process of memory and reconciliation was only established in 2011, after the approval of the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2011).

Five years later, the government of then-President Juan Manuel Santos signed a peace agreement with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). To date, it is considered the most inclusive in the world due to its gender focus (Cabanzo Valencia & Gindele, 2023, p. 87).

² It was only with the creation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law in 2011 that a census of victims was conducted. Due to the complexity of the armed conflict, the state determined that victims can be registered for cases that occurred dating back to 1982.

Consequently, the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (SIVJRNR, for its Spanish initials) was established with a gender focus, making it an unprecedented transitional system. The macrosystem is made up of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Civil Non-Repetition (hereinafter, the Truth Commission), the Search Unit for Persons Reported Missing, and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (known as the JEP).³

The Comprehensive System will adopt a territorial, differentiated, and gender-sensitive approach, tailored to the specific characteristics of victimization in each region and each population, and with a particular focus on the protection and priority care of women and children victims of the armed conflict (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2017, p. 2).

The unprecedented gender focus in the SIVJRNR is primarily the result of the National Summit of Women and Peace held in 2012. The collective action was driven by nine organizations representing feminists, victims, indigenous, rural and Black women⁴ (Muñoz & Ramírez, 2013, p. 16). The organizations came together to assess the political role they should play in the peace talks with the FARC, that, like previous peace processes, were taking place without the participation of women.

³ It is a system composed of different judicial and extrajudicial mechanisms put in place to fulfill the rights of victims of the armed conflict, ensure accountability for what happened, guarantee the legal security of those who participate in the system, and ensure the transition from armed conflict to peace (Función Pública de Colombia, n.d.).

⁴ The following organizations are listed in the minutes of the first summit: Casa de la Mujer, Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, Red Nacional de Mujeres, Mujeres por la paz, Colectivo de Pensamiento y Acción Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad, Grupo de Seguimiento de la Resolución 1325, Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas (CNOA), Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la paz (IMP), Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas, Negras e Indígenas de Colombia (ANMUCIC).

“Women want to be negotiators and not subject to negotiations” (Muñoz & Ramírez, 2013) was the motto of the summit from which they demanded a women’s table from the delegation of Santos and the FARC in Havana, Cuba, where the dialogues were taking place. The gender subcommittee was established in September 2014 as an achievement of the collective action; it was given the responsibility to insert the gender focus in all agreed points.

In light of the above, upon fulfilling its mandate in June 2022, the Truth Commission –the institution on which this article focuses– delivered to the country and the international community the final report entitled *There Is a Future if There Is Truth*, which, unlike reports issued by other commissions in the world, contains an exclusive chapter on the impact of the armed conflict on women and the LGBTIQ+ community. The chapter was consolidated from testimonies and biographical journeys, which the theory of Arfuch (2010, 2015) recognizes as “biographical space”.

Compared to other commissions, the report includes an unprecedented transmedia project that allows users not only to read the testimonies of the victims, but also to hear and see them through a large multimedia experience that meets the expectations and demands of the contemporary digital ecosystem.

Therefore, this article set out to explore the characteristics contained in the biographical space of women and the LGBTIQ+ community in the transmedia universe of the Truth Commission. Among the various platforms used by the Commission, this study focuses on multimedia, particularly in the chapter entitled “Lives in re-existence”, which addresses the differential effects of the armed conflict on both populations.

This document opens with a theoretical discussion on the category of victims, based on the sociology of violence, as well as with a discussion on the concept of “biographical space” (Arfuch, 2010, 2015) in the first transmedia of a truth commission. Then, it introduces the methodological framework developed from a qualitative perspective, following the methodological approach proposed by Arfuch, based on the pragmatics of enunciation. The document continues with a discussion of the results, and it closes with the conclusions.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

The complex process of victims' de-subjectivation and subjectivation

According to sociologist Wieviorka (2016, 2017), the study of violence and the paths to overcoming it involves delving into two contradictory processes that occur in victims: subjectivation and de-subjectivation. The first one responds to the formation of identity, from where their agency in the world stems. The second, to the loss of a sense of identity and personal or group awareness (2016, p. 94).

In that regard, it indicates that the category of “victim” is characterized by loss and damage to lives, resources, and dignity –a condition that leaves them defenseless and that can cast a shadow on the identity of the individual or the collective. The idea of the victim as an immutable condition –which turns it into a passive individual or collective– gives rise to a process of revictimization and de-subjectification: “Such a reasoning comes at a cost, first of all, to the victims, who cannot highlight what destroyed –at least in part– their lives, as well as those of their community, their people, and their culture” (Wieviorka, 2016, p. 101).

The way to break free from the de-subjectivation imposed by violent actors and reinforced by governments is through processes to move beyond their lived experience to another in which the victimizing act becomes a constitutive element of the subjectivation process (Wieviorka, 2016, pp. 94, 95, 101). According to Wieviorka, this implies a legal and social process of recognition.

In Colombia, the Victims and Land Restitution Law recognized victims since 2011 as “those persons who individually or collectively have suffered damage due to events occurring from January 1, 1985 onwards... on the occasion of the internal armed conflict” (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2011, n.p.).

Colombia's National Center for Historical Memory (2017) has worked to recognize acts of victimization committed against women because of their gender. Indeed, the entity highlights that four million have suffered forced displacement, a crime that has affected them differentially “not only because of gender issues, but also because of race, ethnicity and rurality” (Rettberg et al., 2022, p. 157).

Regarding the LGBTI community, Corporación Caribe Afirmativo (2022), which has documented the violence against this population, indicates on its website that “achieving the recognition of LGBTI people in the Victims Law made it possible to acknowledge the distinct impacts of the war, as well as its prejudicial and stigmatizing practices” (n.p.).

In addition to legal and social recognition, victims require a leading role in memory and reconciliation policies; in this process, collective action is fundamental (Wieviorka, 2016, 2017). In the Colombian case, women have led collective actions in two areas since the 1990s: demanding a negotiated solution to the conflict and political participation in official spaces. In this complex journey they have gone from victims to leaders (Gómez & Wills, 2006; Wills, 2000).

LGBTIQ+ organizations have also consolidated political processes in the fight for their rights; they transform victimizing events into triggers to work for peace. According to Erazo Gómez et al. (2023), the Planeta Paz project was launched during the dialogues attempted by the government of Andrés Pastrana and the FARC (between 1998 and 2002), which brought together 12 sectors, including the emerging LGBT sector. Based on that experience, the movement’s peace agenda was structured under the motto: “The body, the first territory of peace”.

In 2012, women’s achievement in Havana also became an achievement for LGBTIQ+ people. Consequently, “the three main entities of the SIVJNR have incorporated not only the gender focus, but also special measures to identify and repair the differentiated impacts that this population has suffered in the armed conflict” (Erazo Gómez et al., 2023, p. 11). This evolution underscores the importance of biographies not only as individual accounts of suffering, but as essential narratives that contribute to the truth.

The biographical space of armed conflict victims

Arfuch (2010) explains that “in the social sciences, emphasis has been placed on the testimonies of individuals, thereby giving substance to the concept of the social actor” (p. 18). That voice allows to trace the individual trajectory in order to connect it with the trajectories of others, in a cartography of subjectivities that accounts for historical processes of

a given society. These micro-stories about privacy and affection methodologically surpass what she calls “the great collective narratives”: the people, the party, the revolution (p. 17).

From this perspective, the biographical space is, in principle, a universe of genres through which life or experience is narrated and becomes an antidote to the failures of private and collective memory. Arfuch (2010) points out that for more than two centuries, biographies, autobiographies, confessions, memoirs, intimate diaries and correspondence have consolidated a space that contemporary times dispute with the formats or genres of mass media: interviews, profiles, testimonies, life stories (p. 17). However, the category cannot be reduced to “a random sum of genres and self-referential forms” (Arfuch, 2015, p. 818), but it should lead to a complex reading “of the reconfiguration of contemporary subjectivity” (p. 819).

To explain the complexity of the matter, Arfuch (2010) quotes Benveniste (1977), whose position she considers unavoidable: “it is in and through language that man constitutes himself as an individual, only language is the foundation of reality, of his reality which is that of being” (p. 88). In other words: the identity of any individual is manifested through a narrative.

As per Arfuch (2010), studying life narratives entails focusing on the different genres that shape them from a double dimension: intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The former refers to the successful life models that permeate the stories; the latter, to the discourses that unfold through various narrative processes. According to the author, her research is not oriented towards the validation of universal norms or the identification of a specific state of social discourse, but rather towards the definition of recurring trends and patterns, the prevalence of which allows us to characterize a certain cultural scenario (p. 50).

The aforementioned makes sense in light of the work undertaken by the Truth Commission. The institution established its method based on extensively listening (in time and space) to the victims. The value of the testimony prevailed over experts’ theoretical explanation of the violence. In fact, the Commission declares itself as “a great apparatus designed to listen to those who lived through the armed conflict directly”

(Castillejo Cuéllar, 2022, p. 30). In terms of the gender focus, the institution states that 10 864 women were heard: “the Commission believed their word, valued their testimonies and recognized the legitimacy of their complaint” (p. 30). Likewise, “it spoke directly with 408 LGBTIQ+ people and was informed of 369 victims, of whom 321 gave their testimony to the Commission and 48 were referenced in interviews. Of these, 64.2 % are men and 35 % are women” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022b, p. 393).

According to Arfuch’s theory (2010), the narratives provided by the victims are not featured in a *pure* or unaltered form in the final report. Indeed, the Commission’s documents specify that during the interviews with the victims, the investigators followed certain procedures to collect information and classify the statements. Thus, “the direct or mediated presence of the researcher is always an essential interlocutory condition for the production of biographical genres” (pp. 52-53). Furthermore, considering that the final report contains a transmedia project, other actors who intervene in the testimony through digital production strategies are involved.

The transmedia biographical space

The biographical space is experiencing a dramatic shift in the digital age: the combination of languages and formats through which the genres that constitute the biographical space can be narrated today and which allows them to be in the digital ecosystem. Therefore, biographical stories have begun to appear in multiple formats and platforms.

According to Scolari (2014) and Romero Chamorro (2023), a transmedia narrative unfolds across various media and platforms, and a portion of the audience not only consumes the product but also takes part in expanding the narrative space by creating new pieces. In other words, “a transmedia experience involves designing an abstract system made up of a narrative world, media platforms, and a community of users” (Romero Chamorro, 2023, p. 52).

Therefore, a new contract takes place between the biographical space and the users: that of interaction and production. Faced with media changes, Arfuch (2010) perceives this shift: “We can now view the unique intersubjectivity generated by biographical forms as a kind of

agreement or harmony, rather than merely as a ‘pact’ signed and ‘sealed’ by the author” (p. 56).

In line with these characteristics, the Commission explains that this is the first report of a commission designed using a digital platform to facilitate public participation and widespread dissemination. In that sense, the commissioners affirm “that they deliver a living exercise, a social, political and cultural process of democratic debate” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022a, p. 15) whose essence is the testimonies of the victims –a biographical space that sounds and moves.

The transmedia project consists of 14 books, a YouTube channel, and multimedia that include testimonies, victim data, and victimizing events, as well as a digital archive containing all the materials the institution worked with.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative work analyzed 25 testimonies that constitute the biographical space of women and the LGBTIQ+ community in the transmedia of the Truth Commission, which are grouped in the chapter of the multimedia “Lives in re-existence” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022c). The corpus corresponds to all the testimonies included in the chapter.

The analysis is based on four categories proposed by Arfuch (2010), which are part of what she calls the “map of the territory of contemporary biographical space” (pp. 33-49): 1) the technology of presence, which embraces the multimedia characteristics of digital transmedia; 2) the narrative voice, a category addressed by the author to refer to that “self” that is narrated; 3) the biographical value, which allows for the analysis of signifying forms through which life acquires importance, and 4) the double narrative dimension, understood through intertextuality, which gives rise to life models shaped by cultures in specific periods, and interdiscursivity, which accounts for the points of view or opinions of the individual who narrates the life.

The analytical process was developed using thematic coding assisted by the MaxQDA software. In the first phase, the testimonies were transcribed and systematically reviewed to identify relevant segments in terms of biographical milestones –understood as moments

of rupture or reconfiguration in the transition from the traumatic event to the process of rebuilding life.

In the second stage, a cross-sectional analysis was conducted to allow the identification of patterns in the construction of biographical value and in the life models that emerge in the corpus, as well as in the multimedia resources that configure the technology of presence (image, sound, and video). This process was undertaken from an interpretative perspective, aimed at understanding the construction of meaning. Table 1 presents each of these categories, as well as the elements that allowed the analysis:

Category (Arfuch)	Analytical indicators in transmedia
Technology of presence	Interface configuration, articulation of formats (text, image, audio, video), interactivity resources
Narrative voice	Use of the first person, markers of subjectivity, tone of the narrative, narrative mediations (editing, montage)
Biographical value	Moments of breakdown and recomposition, forms of significance of suffering, resources of resilience (affective, spiritual, community, political), projection of the experience created by editors and producers
Dual narrative dimension (intertextuality and interdiscursivity)	Presence of life models (leadership, resilience, healing), intersection between intimate narrative and institutional discourse, positions regarding the conflict, cultural and political frameworks that permeate the narrative

Source: The author.

It should be noted that the categories “Technology of presence” and “Narrative voice” are cross-cutting in the analysis, as they refer to the conditions of enunciation and mediation of the stories in the transmedia environment. The following two sections present the results.

RESULTS

Narrative voice and biographical value

The 25 narratives that make up the chapter “Lives in re-existence” (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022) deal with particular experiences in the armed conflict. The order in which they appear, the place they occupy, and what they try to signify constitute the biographical value.

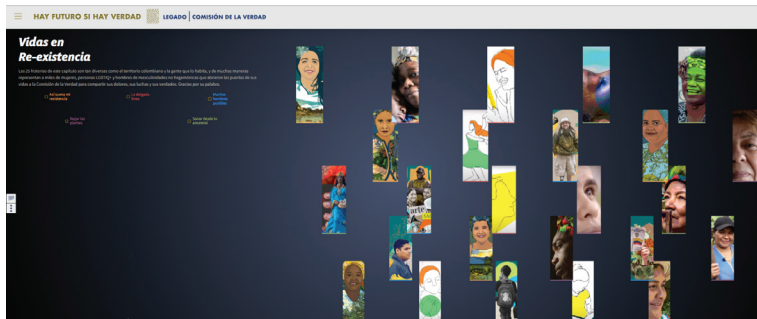
The first attempt at organization consists of the five titles that structure the chapter. An examination of the stories in each title revealed that the testimonies were grouped based on historical, political, and gender points of convergence, which were distilled into specific biographical values constructed by the Truth Commission. The analysis is presented below.

The title “This is what my resistance sounds like” groups together five testimonies of women from different parts of the country whose life journeys, after falling victim to the armed conflict, led them to leadership roles in their communities. The actions they lead are framed within the defense of life and their territories; therefore, they have the power to resist—following the core of the title—against armed groups or the multiple circumstances of a war.

Substantial elements that make up the digital narrative reinforce the idea of resistance: the illustrated portraits and the subtitle given to each testimony. The first element inscribes them in a symbolic dimension of unity between the individual and the territory. The dress worn by the women in the illustrations represents a narrative element in which rivers, mountains, and vegetation are integrated into the female body, shaping an identity in which life experience and geographical space are inseparable (see Figure 1).

The aforementioned is complemented by the subtitles of each narrative, in which the women are named after natural elements—“Libia, the moorland woman”; “Gloria Amparo, the river woman”; “María Flor, the reserve woman”; “Viviana, the plains woman”—which reinforces a symbolic (metaphorical) construction that gives them a transcendent, almost mythical character. In Arfuch’s terms (2010), it is a figuration that gives heroic value to the biographical experience (p. 57).

FIGURE 1
 TECHNOLOGY OF THE PRESENCE OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL SPACE
 OF WOMEN AND LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN THE TRANSMEDIA OF
 THE TRUTH COMMISSION OF COLOMBIA



Source: Comisión de la Verdad (2022c).

The five testimonies grouped in the title “Healing through the ancestral” tell the stories of women who take the wisdom of the ancestors—from black and indigenous communities—to ease the burden of war. Thus, the testimonies are accompanied by carousels of photographs showing the women in rituals, or in which the central image is a sacred object of the community.

This way of constructing biographical value risks shifting the processes of individual and collective reparation exclusively towards the sphere of cultural resilience, thereby diminishing both the complexity involved in any reparation to victims and the State’s responsibility in guaranteeing it. The risk is corroborated by the subtitles of the testimonies, as they reinforce the idea of the power of rituals to overcome emotions generated by victimizing events: “Sorrowing together”, “Cleansing the pain”, “Singing the absence”, “Restoring balance”, “Healing through ancestral wisdom”.

The title “Watering the plants” includes five stories in which three women, a man, and a lesbian woman testify to the impact of the war on their private lives. In this case, the audiovisual testimonies focus on the victimizing events and the personal tools that each victim used to try to

continue their life's journey. The strategies range from making bracelets that turned into amulets, to singing the victimizing story as a way to cope with the pain.

These testimonies portray women's struggles to support their families. One of them recounts how she has moved on with her life after the disappearance of her husband, and another narrates how she confronted an armed group to get her daughter back –a minor– who had been forcibly recruited. Also, a lesbian woman, orphaned because of the conflict, had to face not only the absence of her parents but also being bullied for being deaf.

These testimonies do not include stories of female leaders; however, they highlight the ability of women to fight for their personal projects in everyday life, and the self-love of men and women that are part of the LGBTIQ+ community. Indeed, from Arfuch's perspective, biographical value is not defined by the public recognition of trajectories but by the forms of significance that make a life worthy of being told, for those who have lived it or for those who have investigated it.

However, this biographical construction raises a tension: by privileging a narrative focused on the individual's ability to overcome harm, it contributes to shifting attention away from the structural conditions that produced it.

Four testimonies from women who were members of illegal armed groups and one woman who was a member of the Armed Forces are grouped in the title "The thin line". Their accounts tell the stories from the other side of the victims, that is, from the side of the guerrilla, paramilitary, and state armies.

The set of digital elements that shape these narratives –the audiovisual production and the texts that introduce each testimony– were arranged to present the consequences of being on the side of those who wage war: exile, persecution, the effects on children, capture, and torture.

The testimonies of former guerrilla and paramilitary members reveal the paths these women have taken to move from illegal ranks to legal life, and the processes of transformation in their lives. Indeed, a form of constructing symbolic value that transitions from what is considered bad to what is considered good by society.

Contrary to what has been stated, the testimony of the woman who is a member of the state ranks responds to another type of biographical value. Her account shows military life as a dream come true, reinforcing the political role it played in building the gender focus of the 2016 peace agreements. Thus, the biographical value depicts a woman who works for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict despite being a member of an organization that legitimizes the coercive power of the state.

“Many possible men” is the title of the last chapter, which brings together the testimonies given by men who assume masculinity in a different way in the midst of an armed conflict. A transgender man, an army nurse, a former paramilitary fighter who is now a ballet teacher, an activist for the right to conscientious objection against mandatory military service, and a man who was a victim of sexual assault by armed groups.

This is the only set of testimonies that does not include audio or video. The testimonies are presented in linear texts, accompanied by photo collages. In these visual compositions, the individuals stand out in interaction with objects and words that symbolize their experiences. The images highlight the ability to cope with social criticism for living a different kind of masculinity.

The strength they showed in facing criticism from their social circles, enduring various forms of violence at the hands of armed groups and, in addition, transforming these experiences into a commitment to peace underscores the biographical value of their lives. Thus, the power of these testimonies lies in making tangible trajectories that depart from hegemonic structures regarding masculinity in contexts of war.

The analysis presented up to this point shows that the testimonies selected and produced by the Truth Commission privileged biographies in which the victimizing events did not mark an end, but rather served as a starting point and catalyst for transformation.

The aforementioned risks undermining the validity of adverse experiences and obscuring the responsibilities of both the state and the signatories to the peace agreement in causing the harm and in the processes of comprehensive reparation.

The dual dimension of storytelling

From Leonor Arfuch's perspective, intertextuality and interdiscursivity allow us to understand how life models are constructed and reproduced through diverse cultural discourses. The analysis of this category takes two substantial elements from the 25 narratives: the introductory text of each testimony (introduction), as it constitutes a compelling synopsis of each story constructed by members of the Truth Commission, and the stances on peace of those who give their testimonies.

The introductory texts describe a similar life pattern in most of the stories told. Initially, the character is introduced, followed by the victimizing events or the particular situations he or she faced as part of the armed conflict. Subsequently, the individual's efforts toward peace, reconciliation, or personal growth are highlighted. This reinforces the idea that, despite the effects of war, each person can find ways to transform themselves to overcome the role of victim and, in some cases, of perpetrator.

The narrative structure influences social expectations about how people affected by the conflict should act. From Arfuch's perspective, these intertextual elements are crucial to understanding how identities and aspirations are constructed and reproduced in a context marked by violence and reconciliation. The following introductions, quoted verbatim, illustrate this point:

Libia grew up amidst the sounds of the Sumapaz moorland, where the Army harassed, imprisoned, and displaced the farmers of her community. The conflict led her to defend the ecosystem, empower rural women, and build peace for non-repetition (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022c).

Viviana grew up in La Julia, Meta, where she witnessed the dynamics of child recruitment and harassment of the community by armed groups. These experiences led her to work in defense of women's lives and rights (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022c).

The transition between the introductions to listening or reading the testimonies reveals some critical positions regarding peace, armed groups, and the state: "They say there is already peace, not true, that

is a big lie. That is a lawless territory” stated Blanca Suárez, uitoito indigenous woman from Puerto Santander, Amazonas (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022c, n.p.).

The army was part of the spiral of violence in which Colombia was ensnared: “We must show young people different life paths, so they know that military service is not their destiny simply because they are men and poor,” said Alejandro Parra, an activist for the right to conscientious objection to mandatory military service (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022c, n.p.).

These quotes open the discussion about the discontent felt by women and men in a country that is building processes of truth and memory without the armed conflict being resolved. Hence the underlying claim about ongoing violence. Indeed, guerrilla groups and self-defense groups coexist in the country, dominating rural territories and marginalized neighborhoods of cities, and there is a historical persecution against those who champion social leadership.⁵

The analysis of the double dimension of the narrative allows to determine that the Truth Commission sought to disseminate a biographical model in which the victims –particularly, but not exclusively– can move from the suffering caused by the violence of the conflict to working for peace, for the benefit of their communities. This commitment aligns with its own institutional genesis: the 2016 peace agreement and the consolidation of the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition.

However, the Commission did not omit the accounts of those who gave their testimony and had positions contrary to those of the institution. The inclusion of at least a few critical voices attempted to add legitimacy to the institutional narrative it championed.

⁵ After signing the agreement, Colombia has experienced unprecedented persecution against social leaders and human rights defenders, with a total of 1 300 of them being murdered between 2016 and 2023. The events have occurred in areas that continue to be affected by the conflict, where illegal armed actors compete for control of strategic corridors related to illicit economies (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis presented shows how a non-fiction transmedia project, based on the biographical space of victims of the Colombian armed conflict—such as the one developed by the Truth Commission—is influenced by the listening team (interviewers) who decide what to take from the testimonies, and, subsequently, by the producers, who decide how to structure and recreate those stories. In both processes, professionals consolidate biographical values and lifestyle models aligned with the official discourses championed by said institution. In other words, this intervention adds a layer of interpretation to the victims' original testimony.

Therefore, the structure they gave to the stories of women and people from the LGBTIQ+ community responds to editorial decisions of the Truth Commission, consistent with the discourse of forgiveness and national reconciliation that the institution upheld.

Thus, the testimonies that were analyzed follow a homogeneous narrative model, in which the individuals giving the testimonies first reconstruct the victimizing events and then emphasize on their transformation as leaders or professionals working for peace. Likewise, in the search for a minimum standard of impartiality—understood as fair and balanced information (Brewer, 2018)—the Commission incorporated a minimum of testimonies from those who did not manage to overcome violence or whose trajectories did not result in leadership. In contrast, the imposed narrative selection raises the importance of the diversity of biographical models in historical memory projects that are framed within transitional justice processes.

It is important to understand that testimonial diversity requires a greater number of stories from the LGBTIQ+ community. Even though the biographical space studied included them, it failed to achieve a balance with the number of women's stories. In short, it is necessary for the institutions of the SIVJRN to broaden the knowledge of the individual and collective experiences of this population whose stories have remained on the margins of the official narrative of the truth.

Finally, this article demonstrates how biographical space is a fundamental category for the study of the various processes carried out in the

SIVJRNR. First, because it serves as the official listener of the testimonies of those who suffered victimization during the conflict, as well as of those who caused them, making it a comprehensive repository that should be studied from the perspective outlined here. Second, because the institutions of the SIVJRNR are interested in promoting biographical models that respond to the peacebuilding project they champion, and they do so—as demonstrated in this article—through the narratives they present on their digital platforms.

This issue is not minor, and as Rizo García (2004) points out in a review of Arfuch's work:

Insight into people's lived experiences allows us to reflect on the specific characteristics of the social world in which they find themselves. In other words, the privilege of learning about individuals' experiences opens up possibilities for a better understanding of the contemporary world (p. 233).

REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION

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PROFILE

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