

Chapter 5

A Song of Transmedia Storytelling: A Case Study on Game of Thrones TV Series

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how being one of the outcomes of new media, convergence culture enables individuals to participate in the production process of media. The active and participatory nature of the members of the modern web society has led media conglomerates to seek new methods. Transmedia storytelling is the concept which emerged as a response to this. It can be seen that this type of storytelling is commonly adopted for tv series which have lately become popular. In this chapter, being delivered with transmedia techniques, Game of Thrones tv series is analysed in terms of transmedia storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Human identity is defined as stationary and unchangeable when we look at anthropological folklore, however it is observed that it becomes highly dynamic in the modern world. The French sociologist and anthropologist Gustave Le Bon has stated that our time is in a period where human thinking is constantly changing, and that there are two essential facts on the basis of change. According to Le Bon, the first of these events is the loss of religious, political and social beliefs that are the source of all elements of civilization. The second phenomenon is the emergence of new life and thinking possibilities that are born of new discoveries in science and technology (Le Bon, 2009). It can be said that a person who is a hunter, gatherer and a tribe member in the pre-modern society can choose his identity and even produce it in a parallel to the change and development of living possibilities by acquiring self-consciousness with modernity.

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Communication is an integral part of human socialization process and a rapid change takes place in both communication field and mass media as in every field of life as an outcome of the developments in science and technology. The 21st century, which is also known as the age of information and technology is also known as The Information Age since the late 20th century. It can be argued that the reason for this is that a progressive network society is becoming more and more popular with the fact that the progresses in communication technologies redefine the direction of social, scientific and economic change in human history and that the internet is an integral part of our daily life.

The concept of “new media” has been introduced by bringing together many changes and applications of the internet which penetrates our everyday life rapidly. The new media uncovered new patterns in the course of their technological evolution without breaking away from the core elements of the old media. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be considered as the most important innovations brought by new media. It is seen that new media changed the dynamics of information flow in media, media perception and media consumption habits. Parallel to these changes, the passive media consumer of old media has become active and participatory due to new media.

Changes in the mass media production and consumption processes brought about the concept of “convergence”. Convergence is basically regarded as a technological process that brings together multimedia functions within the same device. However, Professor Henry Jenkins opposes this idea in his book entitled *Convergence Culture, Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) where he criticizes convergence in terms of media and puts forward the term transmedia storytelling in the context of convergence culture. To him, media will be everywhere and that it does not exist in one form. He says: “There will never be one black box controlling all media” in his book and this is called Black Box Fallacy (Jenkins, 2006). By convergence, he means the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they wanted (Jenkins, 2006).

Transmedia storytelling is a new aesthetic form that emerges in response to the media convergence and depends on consumers’ demands and the participation of information communities.

This chapter will first discuss the phenomenons “convergence culture” and “transmedia storytelling,” respectively. It is important to acknowledge that this chapter is based on the master’s thesis entitled *A case study on convergence culture and transmedia storytelling: Propp’s functions and Game of Thrones TV series* (Resuloğlu, 2014). As there are many definitions and arguments about aforementioned phenomenons, ideas of Professor Henry Jenkins will be mainly taken into consideration as he is widely thought and accepted as the pioneer and coined the term “transmedia storytelling”. The overall aim of this chapter is to provide a quintessential example of a transmedia franchise by analysing a popular Tv series, Game of Thrones in terms of transmedia storytelling. It can be seen that transmedia storytelling is commonly adopted for the Tv series which have lately become popular and the reason why Game of Thrones is studied in this chapter is that it is one of the Tv series which is delivered with transmedia techniques and gained an increasing popularity throughout seven seasons since 2011.

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