Chapter 7

Create It! Extend It!
Evolution of Comics Through Narrative Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the historical process of DC Comics and Marvel Comics which are the leading companies that have made way for the comics to develop and take form in terms of advertising narrative. First of all, the history of DC Comics and Marvel Comics has been analyzed in a general framework in order to question the process in advertising history. At this point, the advertisements of these companies have been limited to the ones they have on the internet and the ones that give relevant data for the study. In addition to this, the study of narrative advertising of comics today, apart from the examples of DC Comics and Marvel Comics in their own cinematic universe, has been narrowed down to the Pegasus Airlines’ commercial relating to Marvel Comics and Turkish Airlines’ commercial relating to DC Comics. The result of a general review indicates that DC Comics and Marvel Comics have come to a turning point in terms of narrative advertising by creating a cinematic universe and with the means of new media becoming popular around the world.

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle states in Poetics “...the story is the main principle of a tragedy, so to say the soul of it. The characters are the second principle” (Aristoteles, 2015, p. 31). It’s possible to say that in the digital age the advertising industry overrates Aristotle’s element in tragedy because narration is getting more and more significant in advertising. Improving communication technologies and the usage of this technology within the internet universe are the positive improvements in advertising industry. Thus, this industry creates alternative strategies with the improving communication technologies -especially with the internet- in the digital age. It has been known that consumers in the digital age, unlike conventional media consumers, have taken up an active role. This also shows that the consumer will be more picky, questioning and demanding towards a product. Therefore, the main purpose of the advertising companies is to

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stand out among millions of unnecessary messages that exist in the cosmos of digital media age while presenting a product to the consumers. In order to realize this purpose, the role of the narrative that will make the product reach the consumer is huge. “...because of the potential diversity of the content in the new system, message is just a message. The thing that makes it the most competitive is the capacity to differentiate a product” (Castells, 2013, p. 491). This difference has created by narrative advertising in the digital age. On the other hand, it’s possible to put the “universe” element next to the “story” element in today’s advertising. The original narrative advertising opens up in a certain universe and maintains the same impression in the marketing process of a product. Hence, the success of a product in the digital age advertising depends on the continuity, difference and activity in terms of the universe and the narrative in this period. In this study, it is aimed to analyze the correlation of two important comics companies, which are DC Comics and Marvel Comics, with advertising in a periodical context in a general framework in order to put the assumptions above to the test. The birth of comics dates back to the late ‘30s and its influence on social media and adaptations today cannot be denied. It’s possible to say that comics have a really close connection with the new media, particularly in the last decade. With this deduction, it is aimed to analyze the ages (Golden Age of Comic Books, Silver Age of Comic Books, Bronze Age of Comic Books, Modern Age of Comic Books) that have been divided in their own historical context of DC Comics and Marvel Comics, which have been using all the resources the new media presents, in a general view of their advertising adventure. TV commercials of DC Comics and Marvel Comics which are used in the study are limited to the commercials in the internet archives. On the other hand, in the chapter of the analysis of the new media and the modern age of the comics, top box office movies (The Avengers, Deadpool, Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice) and the advertising campaigns that were carried out by Pegasus and Turkish Airlines, which are based in Turkey, are studied in the context of the cinematic universe that these companies have created.

A SHORT VIEW OF DC COMICS AND MARVEL COMICS

When one looks at comics history that have come to life with the evolution of comic strips that have gone through on the back pages of newspapers, the traces of DC Comics and Marvel Comics can be seen as the basis. There is a chronology of comics history that is approved. This chronology is:

- Golden Age of Comic Books (Late 1930’s – Mid-1950’s).
- Silver Age of Comic Books (Mid-1950’s – 1970’s).

Regarding the chronological order that has been mentioned above, it’s possible to say that the adventure began with the Superman that was introduced in 1938 with the label of Action Comics by DC Comics (Snider, 2011, p. 188). The success of Superman, who was adopted as a modern day Hercules, came to life with the efforts of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster and it was the incentive that forced comics companies create various superheroes and made them pursue this mighty adventure. Thereby, DC Comics introduced Batman in 1939 and then Captain Marvel to the readers. Marvel Comics, which had gained readers with superheroes like Namor the Sub-Mariner and Human Torch, didn’t want to fall
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