

## Chapter 24

# Aestheticizing Violence Within Transmedia Storytelling Context: *V For Vendetta* Case

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### ABSTRACT

*In this study, V for Vendetta (2006) directed by James McTeigue, is analysed based on Henry Jenkins's transmedia storytelling terms. Henry Jenkins defines re-creating a story with different media tools as "transmedia storytelling" and evaluates this new storytelling form that emerged in the digital age as a new aesthetic linked with active participation that creates new demands on the consumer. V for Vendetta with a large fan audience has a story that became the symbol of the social movements that emerged against totalitarian regimes created in the modern state and social organisation. The story V for Vendetta that was first published at the beginning of 1980s as a dystopic comic book prioritising violence and terror experienced changes in the story with the effect of different narrative media. Within this context, this study with Henry Jenkins's transmedia storytelling theoretical basis analyzes how the main narrative elements of the story such as terror, violence, fear, and freedom are reflected in the V for Vendetta movie by using semiotic methods.*

## INTRODUCTION

With digital technologies, we are constantly witnessing the invention of new technological devices or observing the transformation of current devices to new forms in this revolutionary process. Media device mediums are highly influenced by these radical changes and transformations. Technology-based media tools of today's world which are associated with "New" prefix have opened the doors of mass and active participation than old media tools referred as "Traditional" and created a more unique narrative structure. In this digital era where new media tools are intertwined with convergence tendency, story narratives are re-designed and re-created in this sense. This re-creation process experienced by the modern entertainment industry required "building new entertainment fields" as expressed by Henry Jenkins. The real meaning of this is that story can no longer be produced for one tool or platform. Jenkins explains this situation with his new term: "Transmedia storytelling." This term is used for explaining the re-creation of a story by using different media tools. According to Jenkins (2003), transmedia storytelling indicates a new aesthetic born against new demand creation, active participation-dependent media convergence on the consumers. Famous communication scientist emphasised transmedia storytelling as "the art of creating a world" stated that "a story can be introduced in a movie, expanded with television, novels and comic books and the world of it can be discovered and experienced with games" (2003). Therefore, the story can be re-shaped based on the properties of the tool or media and show a fluid property. In this sense, it is important to follow the contextual and stylistic changes and transformation when the narrative flows in different media to understand the narrative.

The story of V for Vendetta that started as a comic book but failed to gain attention in the first years turned into a popular narrative when it was adapted to a movie in 2005. The story of V for Vendetta that commonly has chaos, violence, terrorism, fear and freedom themes has become the symbol of the libertarian and revolutionary movement against the totalitarian regimes emerged due to the modern state and social structuring especially via V who was the protagonist of the movie. Later, this story flowed between media by being the subject of different media. According to Jenkins (2003), a good character in a transmedia narrative can sustain numerous narrative. In V for Vendetta, V's mythicised character and symbolic mask enabled contextual re-creation of the story on various media. Within this context, while the basic story structure was the same, V for Vendetta's movie adaption influenced masses and social structure rather than the comic book is important evidence that cinema's unique characteristics contribute to the narrative and presentation of the narrative.

In James Monaco's (2013: p. 165) "How to Read a Film", it is stated that "the drama and attraction of the movie lie in the fact that how it is filmed and presented rather than what is filmed (this is the drama of the topic)". In this sense, the main question is about how concerning content such as violence, fear, terrorism, chaos in V for Vendetta's comic book is presented in the cinematic media. According to Yuriy M. Lotman (2012: p. 63), everything in cinema has a meaning and transfer information. To him, the influence power of the cinema comes from the multidimensional structure with planned and highly intense information. This multidimensionality must be understood as the whole of all intellectual and emotional structures transferred to the audience. Lotman sees the investigation of this influence mechanism as the starting point of semiotic in the cinema. Therefore, this study with Henry Jenkins' transmedia storytelling theoretical basis must analyse how V for Vendetta story content aestheticize violence in cinema setting by using the semiotic method.

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