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Hollywood goes Graphic: The Intermedial Transposition of Graphic Novels to Films

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ABSTRACT

Comic books have always been consigned to the children's shelves at libraries and bookstores. Recently, however, a massive publishing of comic books designed for the adult audience – called graphic novels – has caught the attention of academics, critics and the film industry. Despite the existence of a vast theoretical bibliography of screen adaptations based on novels, those theories can not be satisfactorily applied to the analysis of films based on comics and graphic novels, since they do not conceive, among other aspects, the translation of the drawings in comics to the photography of film. In this sense, this thesis focuses on an area that has not received enough critical attention: the specific case of the translation of comics and particularly of graphic novels into films. In light of this, I discuss Alan Moore's *Watchmen* and Frank Miller's *Sin City* and their respective film versions. In order to support this debate, I will draw upon Irina Rajewsky's categories of intermedial relations as well as Pascal Lefèvre's considerations about film adaptations of comics.

RESUMO

Histórias em quadrinhos sempre estiveram relegadas às estantes infanto-juvenis das livrarias e bibliotecas. Recentemente, no entanto, um grande número de publicações de quadrinhos destinadas a um público adulto – os romances gráficos – tem atraído a atenção de acadêmicos, críticos e da indústria cinematográfica. Apesar da vasta bibliografia teórica existente sobre adaptações de romances, tais teorias não conseguem, satisfatoriamente, explicar as versões fílmicas de quadrinhos e romances gráficos, uma vez que não concebem, entre outros aspectos, a tradução da imagem desenhada dos quadrinhos para a fotografia do filme. Neste sentido, este trabalho pretende analisar uma área que permanece relativamente sem teorização – o caso específico da tradução de quadrinhos e em especial dos romances gráficos para o cinema. À luz dessas questões, analisaremos os romances gráficos *Watchmen*, de Alan Moore e *Sin City*, da autoria de Frank Miller e suas respectivas versões fílmicas. Neste debate, utilizaremos as relações intermidiáticas de Irina Rajewsky bem como as considerações de Pascal Lefèvre sobre adaptações fílmicas de quadrinhos.

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"If people failed to understand comics
it was because they defined what
comics could be too narrowly!"
(McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 3)

INTRODUCTION

A Short History of and between the Media

It is common knowledge that the origins of cinema date back to the 1890s, with August and Louis Lumière's celluloid experiments. Not many years later, cinema was already recognized as the seventh art and found a definite place within Film Studies departments in many academic institutions.

In general, cinema has always sought for material for their films from other media. The most popular inspiration comes from novels. Today, as Deborah Cartmell, Timothy Corrigan and Imelda Whelehan explain, film adaptations of works by Shakespeare and Jane Austen can be considered film genres on their own ("Introduction to *Adaptation*", 3). This tendency is due to a common – and certainly also erroneous – concept that what has achieved popularity in one medium will probably achieve it in another.

Modern comics are older than cinema. According to Thierry Groensteen, modern printed comics appeared in the 1830s, with Rodolphe Töpffer ("Why Are Comics Still in Search of Cultural Legitimization?", 29). However, comics still face resistance when it comes to being recognized as art. As a consequence, the critical and theoretical examination of this medium is fairly rare. European universities were pioneers in dealing with comics as objects

of study and creating research centers in this area. In Brazil, until the mid-eighties, the existing works were mostly related to the field of education, in which comics were seen as methodological tools for the development of a child's reading skills. Today, with a few exceptions of universities' research centers[1], the comics medium is still working its way towards academic and cultural recognition.

Nevertheless, since their origins, these two media have always conversed with each other. Hans-Christian Christiansen mentions that the inspiration for the 19th century comics involved cinema's motifs, storyline structure and subjects ("Comics and Film: A Narrative Perspective", 107). Will Eisner, one of the greatest comic artists of the 20th century goes further than that, using cinematographic angles and techniques of chiaroscuro in "The Spirit", published for the first time in 1940. The converse is also true: film adaptations of comics date from as early as 1900, with a series of films produced by the Edison Film Company based on Frederick Burr Opper's "Happy Hooligan" (idem).

This relationship is natural because both arts are essentially narrative, constructed under iconic signs. Both comics and films "have aesthetic qualities and formal properties, such as frames and panels, which have important visual resemblance (...) In addition, both comics and films also fit within a certain type of narrative tradition" (Gordon, Jancovich and McAllister, *Film and Comic Books*, xi).

Even though the relationship between cinema and comics is not a new phenomenon, the recent years have witnessed a considerable rise in the number of films based on comic books, which have been successful, if not for the critics, certainly in the box-office. Since the year 2000, forty-three adaptations of this kind have been listed[2] and, by the time this thesis is being written, a good number of other works are expected to be released soon. There is also a

1. Such as the Observatório de Histórias em Quadrinhos, at Universidade de São Paulo.
2. According to the website Box Office Mojo accessed on March 1st, 2010. <http://boxofficemojo.com/genres/chart/?id=comicbookadaptation.htm>

good prospect for sequels, prequels and remakes of previous works. And, in a few years from now, I imagine that comics adaptations will also be considered a film genre on their own.

This rediscovery of comics as source-texts for profitable films finds two possible explanations. First, the fact that some comics have 'grown up', bringing the need for a new category in comics genres. Second, the development of digital technology in cinema. Particularly in the case of adaptations of comic books, digital technology has redefined the aesthetics of film, creating a necessity to recreate the appearance of the comic book on screen. The influence of the comics medium is not limited to the adaptation of plot, characters and dialogues, but it also applies to its look, as a result of the transformation in film techniques.

Even though 'comics cinema' has become a recurrent practice nowadays, it has not attracted much attention from scholars and critics. In this sense, this work results from a certain feeling of personal frustration at the disdain with which comics and comic book adaptations are generally dealt with. I consider that the relevance of this thesis lies in the recognition of comics as an autonomous medium, with mediatic and literary qualities distinct from those of literature. Because of this, my argument is that the intermedial transposition of comics to cinema – and therefore of graphic novels to films – involves more aspects than the existing novel-to-film adaptations are able to comprise, which suggests the refutation of some recurrent practices in adaptation studies as well as a re-evaluation of the comics medium.

Defining Comics

The use of the word 'comics' may be confusing, even to those in the field. Robert C. Harvey in *Comics as Philosophy*, explains that "[t]he word has a plural form but is singular in application. And in its singular form, comic, it can be an adjective for something humorous or

another name for a comedian. In short, *comics* lacks the precision it ought to have for ordinary communication let alone serious philosophical deliberations" (16).

Perhaps because comics has always been overlooked as a medium, it was not granted a common name across the different places where it was established. In many countries, such as in Italy, France and Brazil, the label was defined according to aspects of the language of comics. In the United States, however, it has always been connected to the humoristic and entertaining purposes of the first strips published daily or weekly in newspapers.

The discussion of what can or cannot be considered comics is also controversial. In fact, in most of the existing theoretical publications, the definition of comics is a recurring matter. According to Driest (2005), there are two ways used to define comics. The first is by the combination of word and image. Inevitably, this definition leads to debates whether this combination characterizes comics as a hybrid medium (a mere combination of words and images, or of painting and literature), in contrast to a distinct medium on its own. Moreover, Driest calls our attention to the fact that, in this approach, sequences of images without words cannot properly be considered comics ("Subjective Narration in Comics", 8; 20-21). Second, comics is generally defined by the disposition of images in a sequence. With this characteristic in mind, Will Eisner coined the term 'sequential art'. In his definition, "comics always consist of at least two distinct images in a deliberate combination" (qtd. in Driest, 9). But Driest warns us that, in this case, single-panel compositions, such as political cartoons are not considered comics.

Although Eisner's term confers on comics the status of art, it may erroneously lead us to consider, for instance, Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Trajan's Column to belong to the same category as comics[3]. Although it is undeniable that these historical works may have been the precursors of comic art, even helping delimitating some possibilities and constraints

3. Other examples of works which are broadly considered by McCloud as 'sequential art' are pre-Colombian manuscripts, the Bayeux Tapestry, 'The Tortures of Saint Erasmus' (1460), and 'A Harlot's Progress' (1731). (McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 10-17)

of the medium, it is not possible to affirm that they are ‘sequential art’, as Eisner had probably conceived the term. On the other hand, as mentioned before, this term denies single-panel compositions a place within comics art. In my opinion, these compositions share more visual and cultural conventions with comics than do the Trajan Column and Egyptian painting.

Aligned with Eisner’s idea of images in a sequence, Scott McCloud elaborates his own definition for comics: “Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (*Understanding Comics*, 9). McCloud’s definition has proven to be useful in several aspects because it does not mention any kind of theme, style, material, nor does it make any aesthetic evaluation (22). Additionally, it rules out the chances of another frequent misconception involving comics: the idea that images are necessarily drawn. This characteristic is generally mentioned in contrast with film: while comics images must be ‘graphed’ by the hand of an artist, films must use photographic ‘real’ images. As the discussion in chapter five shall demonstrate, this distinction has become more and more useless, especially in our era of digital technologies and intermedial possibilities.

Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a definite answer to this apparently never-ending debate, a working definition of the term would be essential to the coherence of my work. And this definition would involve form, content and format.

Therefore, with regard to form, comics can be understood as pictorial and other images that: a. may or may not be combined with words; b. are juxtaposed in a deliberate sequence or, in the case of single-panel compositions, represent a narrative sequence within the static image, and; c. are meant to convey information and/or produce a response in the spectator.

But when one thinks about comics, the aspect of the medium that comes to mind hardly ever relates to the characteristics of the form, but is rather associated to the format and/or the content.

For theoretician Pascal Lefèvre, the format is of great importance because it helps shape readers' expectations to comics. The author says that format is defined by its materiality (size and paper quality), temporal aspects (publishing regularity) and editorial choices (the length of chapters or taboo issues, for example). (The Importance of Being 'Published', 98)

Basically, one can identify the following formats of comics nowadays: comic books, comic strips, single-panel cartoons, manga magazines, graphic novels, European album series, webcomics, fanzines, minicomics and small press comics in general. Yet, in many cases, the boundaries that define certain comics formats can be blurred. And needless to say, this categorization is open to the inclusion of new formats.

In relation to content, the word 'comics' is defined in this work as an umbrella term for several genres. In this sense, it is worth stressing that comics is not a (sub)genre of literature but it is a medium on its own. And as happens with other media such as literature and film, it has its own genres. The Michigan State University library has listed forty-five different genres of comics[4] and it is believed that this number may be even greater. This categorization of comics in genres may come as a surprise to some accustomed to "those bright, colorful magazines, filled with bad art, stupid stories and guys in tights" (McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 2). This common assumption portrays a wrong image of comics, one that narrows the medium down to a single genre, the American superhero comic book genre, considered an infantile, poor quality reading and seen as violent and vulgar by educators.

4. <http://comics.lib.msu.edu/rri/grri/genre.htm#genres> Accessed on May 20, 2009.

The three aspects proposed (form, content and format) work together to define comics for formal purposes and also personally. In the reader's mind, one aspect does not exclude the others; yet they overlap, working together to build a personal (but also culturally-influenced) definition of comics. This is why one can immediately recognize a work of comics, but cannot easily define or explain its characteristics.

From Comics to Graphic Novels

As Thierry Groensteen explains, during the nineteenth century comics was intended for adults and was published in book form. But as soon as it became a press phenomenon, it acquired the readership of children. Since then it has been consigned to the strips in newspapers and the children's shelves at libraries and bookstores. For many decades, comics distribution in the United States was limited to mass production of superhero comic books[5.] Academic studies on comics were limited to the works of educators who, mainly inspired by Dr. Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), believed that the rise of juvenile delinquency was a consequence of the negative influence of comics.

In the 1960s, comics started the process of re-conquering adult readership. The underground "comix"[6] movement came as a way to get around the censorship of the Comics Code Authority, which was set up after Dr. Wertham's book was published. Heavily inspired by the hippie wave of the sixties, underground comics such as the work of Robert Crumb, depicted the counterculture's view of political and social aspects of the time with humor and sarcasm.

5. In Europe, in opposition to what happened in the US, authors like Hergé, Hugo Pratt and Guido Crepax have had a fundamental role in keeping comics at a position of recognition among adult readers in the 20th century.

6. At that time, the letter 'x' from the word "comix" was said to designate the x-rated kind of comics, the ones that depicted excessive violence, use of drugs and sexual issues.

From the 1970s but especially from the 1980s onwards, the underground movement inspired the development of a more mature branch of comics, still designed for adults, but not necessarily with a subversive approach to sex, drugs and violence. Charles Hatfield labels them 'alternative comics'. He explains that alternative comics "have enlarged the comic book's thematic repertoire by urging the exploration of genres heretofore neglected in comics" (*Alternative Comics*: *An Emerging Literature*, x).

The inappropriateness of the label 'comics' when referring to such works forced the designation of a new term. Therefore, in 1978, Will Eisner coined the expression "graphic novel" as he referred to his work *A Contract with God*, a novel-length comic book. Two aspects differentiate graphic novels from comic books. The first are the themes, which abandon the superheroes of the Gold and Silver Age to which the most well-known characters, such as Superman, Batman and Spiderman, among others belong. Within the comics medium, the graphic novel category encompasses many different genres, with an emphasis on autobiographical, reportage and historical fiction themes.

The second main difference is the format. In opposition to the never-ending issues and episodes of superhero comic books, graphic novels do not usually have a large serialization. The linear narratives are often published in one single volume or in a limited series and are, for the most part, written/drawn by a single artist. In this sense, it is possible to say that graphic novels are closer to literature than comic books, due to the literariness of their narratives.

However, the label 'graphic novel' has caused some discomfort among theorists and critics because of the approximation to literature it implies, among other things. For Charles Hatfield, for example, the 'graphic novel' is often mistakenly invoked as a new form. It is also an inaccurate label because "it has lost its true meaning that was to denote a distinct genre and has become an all-purpose tag for a vague new class of social object" (5). On the

other hand, Hatfield points out that it has conveniently succeeded in attracting greater attention and recognition from academia and reviewers as occurred with the English novel, which was once considered a disreputable form of literature.

Along the same lines, Alan Moore thinks that his work *Watchmen* could be considered a graphic novel because of its density, structure, size, scale and seriousness of theme. However, in his opinion, the term has gone astray for marketing purposes and it has come to mean "expensive comic book". He alerts us that lately, DC and Marvel have repurposed old comics, putting together many issues under a glossy cover and calling it a graphic novel. This attitude tends to "destroy any progress that comics might have made in the mid-80's" (Kavanagh, 2000).

Artist Eddie Campbell has published a Manifesto (2004) in which he clarifies some disagreements and misunderstandings involving the term. Among other points, he explains that 'graphic' does not mean anything to do with graphics and that 'novel' does not mean anything to do with novels. For him, it signifies a movement rather than a form, so one should not worry about defining it. Yet, for this thesis, an attempt definition seems indispensible.

It is worth remembering that, similar to the situation of comic books, the discussion around the term and the characteristics of the graphic novel affects mainly the United States, where the genre is sometimes not fully accepted as a serious practice. In Europe, because the comics medium and its genres have reached a favorable position of artistic and cultural recognition, conferring literary merit to graphic novels seems to be quite unnecessary. In Brazil, as in the States, the translation "romance gráfico", was an alternative to characterize comics which are especially designed for adult readers.

Even though the controversy surrounding the nomenclature and aware that it is really not the most adequate label, the fact is that, in opposition to Eisner's 'sequential art' or Hatfield's 'alternative comics', the term 'graphic novel' has caught on. And even though one

may not agree with the formal characteristics implied by the term, it is still useful for practical purposes, once it has become usual.

In this thesis, the terms ‘comics’ and ‘graphic novel’ are not going to be used interchangeably. The latter will be used to designate the category of comics intended primarily for adult readers and published in a single volume or within a limited series. The term ‘comics’ will be used to refer to the comics medium in general and its characterizing elements.

Although the most commented and profitable examples of comic book adaptations have been those of American comic book superheroes (with some exceptions), I have deliberately chosen to work with graphic novel adaptations instead of comic books. They are Frank Miller’s *Sin City* series and Alan Moore’s *Watchmen*, two groundbreaking works that helped define the graphic novel category. This option is mainly justified by the finite narrative of the graphic novel, which is similar to that of the novel, in contrast to the usual never-ending serial narrative structure of the comic books. This characteristic is fundamental once the adaptation theories from which I depart are those which focus exclusively on the relations between novel and film.

The choice of graphic novels does not mean that a comic book-to-film analysis is not possible. In fact, some scholars have successfully taken the first steps in this direction[7]. Yet, this would require a more thorough analysis, one that would certainly demand space and time beyond the possibilities of this thesis.

Methodology and Chapter Division

7. This is the case of two articles on the X-Men franchise in *Film and Comic Books* (2007) and Will Brooker’s chapter “Batman: One life, Many faces” (Cartmell & Whelehan, 1999).

In the first chapter of this thesis, I will present the theoretical works that will guide my analysis. These are works on formal aspects of comics and films as well as on the intermedial relationships involving film adaptations. Two reasons justify the necessity for references on intermediality. First, the hybrid, intermedial nature of both comics and films. Both are mixed forms, where verbal and visual elements work together. The second reason is that they may serve as support for a kind of adaptation that transposes elements from one medium to another. In both respects (the relations within and between the two media), Irina Rajewsky's categories of intermedial relations will be an essential theoretical tool.

Supported by Pascal Lefèvre's article "Incompatible Visual Ontologies?", this thesis analyzes the incompatibilities between comics and their film version. Among all the critical works researched, this is the only one in which I could see a bold attempt to consider, not only the correspondences between the language of comics and of films, but also the issues involving the process of adaptation itself. For this reason, and because of the clarity of Lefèvre's classification, chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 will be organized according to this critic's four categories: the deletion/addition process when transposing comics into film; the unique characteristics of page layout and film screen; the sound in film compared to the "silence" in comics; and the issues involving the translation of drawings to photography.

A discussion of the incompatibility of the narrative structure is carried out in Chapter 2. The narrative always undergoes changes when transposed to the cinema and these changes can be additions, condensations and deletions, caused by the discrepancy in the duration of the narrative in the two media. As the examples from Zack Snyder's *Watchmen* (2009) will show, these three changes can be aggravated by today's "cinema of interaction" and by the possibilities added by the DVD technology.

The second incompatibility discussed will be the difference between the layout of the page and the layout of the screen. Thus, Chapter 3 analyzes Frank Miller's *Sin City* in terms

of the elements that make up the comics page (the panels, the gutters and their disposition on the page, for instance) compared to the film screen specificities.

The third point mentioned by Lefèvre refers to sound in film, in contrast with silence in comics. In this respect, it is possible to say that sound elements in film include narration (through both the character's voice and the voice-over) and soundtrack. On the other hand, comics is regarded as a mute medium, in which "sound" can be expressed – but never heard – through the balloon/text font and the onomatopoeia, a strategy typical of comics. In Chapter 4, the sound aspect of Moore's and Snyder's *Watchmen* will be studied.

Finally, there is the incompatibility in the transposition of drawings in comics to photography in films. Therefore, Chapter 5 mentions the director's storyboard and the concept art panels as intermediary steps between comics and films. In addition, although it is true that, most of the time, comics are drawn images and films are photographed images, both media have been deeply affected by the use of digital technology. And the images that result from that intervention have created distinct visual aesthetics for cinema – as it happened with Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* – and for comics as well.

One aspect in Lefèvre's theory must be clarified. Although the author claims to be dealing exclusively with film adaptation from comics, it is possible to say that only the last aspect refers specifically to comics-to-film adaptations. Or, in other words, the first three of his points can also be applied to the case of novel adaptations. In this respect, my argument is that the main difference between novels-based films and comics-based films lies in Lefèvre's fourth aspect, since novels, unlike comics, do not have images.

Besides the above mentioned references, other supplementary theoretical support will be sought according to each chapter's specific subject.

As a final word for this introductory chapter, I would like to make clear that, although it is known that the boundaries and theoretical bases of this field are not yet well-defined, this thesis does not intend to propose a premise or to mention examples that will explain all cases of comic book adaptations. In fact, by the end of this study, the reader may come to the conclusion that I have raised more questions than answers. Nevertheless, my hope here is to foster the debate on comics, reaffirming their place in adaptation studies.

> In order to move in the direction of another medium,
> the "being" of the story, insofar as it exists,
> has to dress up in a space suit, as it were,
> which can allow it to confront a temporary but dangerous
> state of weightlessness. If the translation succeeds,
> the story will accept a greater weight, or a loss of weight.
> (Gaudreault and Marion, 69)

CHAPTER 1: INTERMEDIAL RELATIONS

Notions on Intermedial Studies

For many years, the relations between two media were mainly known as Interarts Studies or Comparative Arts. Indeed, any study in the field is generally conducted by comparing as many media and practices as possible. However, both terms – Interarts Studies and Comparative Arts – are inadequate in face of the impossibility of defining what can and what cannot be considered 'art', especially in recent times, in which there has been a proliferation of hybrid, popular and mass art forms. In this respect, the once legitimated academic disciplines – painting, sculpture, music, and literature – have had to co-exist with other forms: the faculties of *Beaux Arts*, with forms that are not judged so "*belle*" and not considered by many as "art" and the faculties of Letters, with texts formed by semiotic elements other than letters and words.

Another way of approaching the relation between two media is considering it a translation. For Roman Jakobson, there are three types of translation: the intralingual (a paraphrase of a text of the same language), the interlingual (the recreation of a text in a different language) and the intersemiotic (the interpretation of verbal signs by means of a non-

verbal sign system) (Jakobson, 1971). There are two inconveniences in Jakobson's category of intersemiotic translation, which tend to favor literature over the other forms: first, the term "translation" still has a strong connection to literary texts; second, if strictly considered, Jakobson's definition places the verbal signs as the only possible source-text. Since translation is not a one-way process – literature can be either the source-text or the target-text –, we should also consider the interpretation of non-verbal signs by means of a verbal sign system, not to mention the interpretations involving hybrid media. In this sense, and also in relation to the term "translation", Claus Clüver's concept of intersemiotic transposition seems a more appropriate alternative: "the transfer of one system of signs into another and, usually, from one medium to another as well" (Inter textus/ Inter arts/ Inter media, 15).

However, besides the relations *between* different media, for the purposes of this thesis it is also important to understand the intermedial relations *within* a single medium. A novel, for example, is made up of a verbal semiotic system, while comics, like films, is a hybrid medium, made up of verbal and visual systems. These characteristics must be taken into account in order to provide us with a more accurate analysis.

In this respect, the concept of Intermediality[8] offers a more suitable alternative for this investigation for its wider scope: not only does it conceive the relations between two or more media but also the intermedial aspects within a single medium.

The contribution of Irina Rajewsky

As explained, because it comprises both the relations within and between media, Irina Rajewsky's theory will be used to support the analysis of specific aspects of film and comics and between these two media. According to Irina Rajewsky, there are three sub-categories of

8. According to Irina Rajewsky, intermediality refers to relations between media, to medial interactions and interferences.

Intermediality: intermedial reference, media combination and media transposition. She also explains that one single mediatic configuration can fulfill the criteria of two or even three intermedial sub-categories.

a. Intermedial Reference

According to Rajewsky, in intermedial references a text of one medium evokes or imitates an individual work produced in another medium, a specific medial subsystem (such as a certain film genre) or generic qualities of another medium. This is an extremely common practice and it can be used for a variety of reasons and objectives. Generally, an intermedial reference is a way to pay homage to a particular work or to create an "illusion-forming quality" inherent to the techniques of a certain medium. It is therefore intertextuality between media.

In our *corpus*, for example, this reference occurs in Frank Miller's *Sin City* series, which evokes the aesthetics of the *film noir*, especially because of the strong contrast between light and shadow. Another intermedial reference can be identified in the structure and atmosphere of hard-boiled detective novels. *Sin City* makes reference to the typical characters of these novels – the femme fatale, the detective or the police officer – as well as to the style of narration – first-person monologues with short sentences of strong effect.

The opposite also happens: several films evoke formal qualities of comics. One of the most remarkable examples is Ang Lee's *Hulk* (2003). In several moments, the director uses the split screen to evoke the disposition of frames in the comics page (see fig. 1). Also, in the final credits, the names of the cast and staff appear within comics balloons. The result of this effect is that the spectator is constantly reminded of the "source-text": that what he is watching is not only a film, but a film version of a comic book.

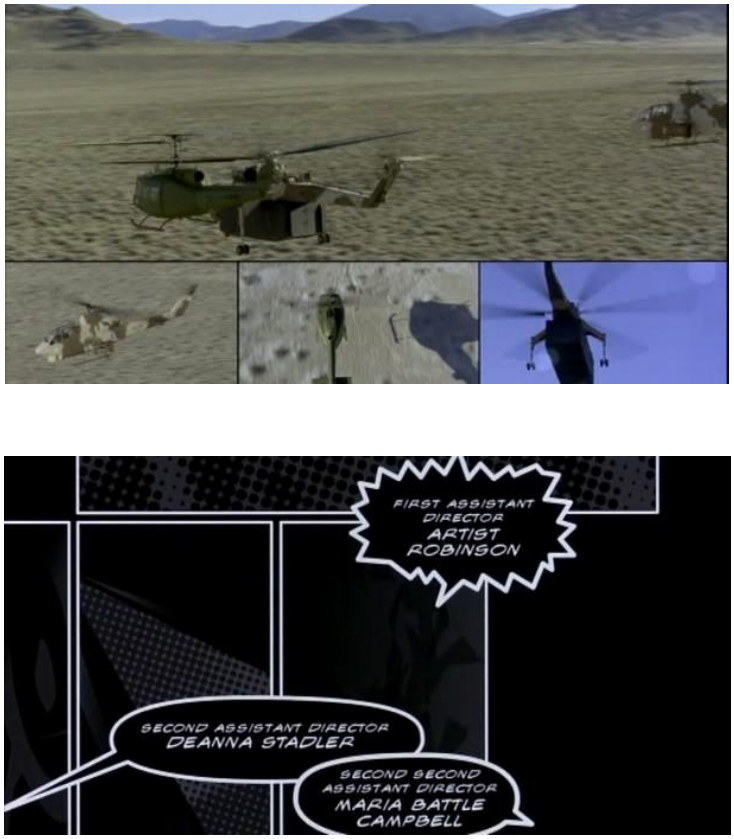


Fig. 1: The split screen and the final credits in *Hulk*

Despite its relevance to Intermediality and intermedial phenomena, which can be attested through the frequency it is used in all kinds of media, the focus of this thesis is not on intermedial references. Instead, for our purposes, the other two categories proposed by Rajewsky shall provide us with the necessary tools to examine two cases of graphic novel adaptations and their differences from novel-to-film adaptations.

b. Media Combination

This category considers the combination of "at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation" within a certain text (52). Most cultural products nowadays

are composite forms resulting from media combination and, depending on the way the signs are combined, they can be considered *multimedia*, *mixmedia* or *intermedia* texts.

Films, for instance, are considered multimedia texts, because they combine coherent separable texts, formed by different media. In fact, cinema is known to be the ultimate multimedia medium[9] because it is able to put together, more than any other form, several other media (music, dance, theater, etc). Although the media within a motion picture can be separated, it is almost certain that this separation would distort or neglect the overall meaning of the film.

Comics, on the other hand, is considered a mixmedia text because it "contains complex signs in different media that would not reach coherence or self-sufficiency outside that context" (Clüver, "Estudos Interartes" 8). Indeed, one of the main characteristics of comics is its juxtaposition of the verbal and the visual texts. And it is precisely this combination of pictures and words that represents one of the causes of prejudice against comics, especially in Western culture[10]. For a long time in our tradition, pictures and words have been appreciated separately. Forms in which the two are juxtaposed are generally despised: novels with images are considered illustrated books for children; paintings should not have titles that explain what the image has attempted to represent.

Indeed, as René Magritte would probably agree, the relationship between word and image is one of treason[11]. The drawing of a pipe is not a real pipe; in the same way, the word 'pipe' is a linguistic convention created to designate a real pipe, but is not a real pipe either.

In comics, word and image can be combined in multiple ways, causing different effects to the narrative. In old comics, for example, there was a strong parallel between both – most of the time, the text only confirms what the image shows. However, rather than simply

9. Or, as Clüver defines, a plurimediatic form (*Pós: 2*, 15).

10. In some Eastern cultures, image/text combination is not so problematic. One of the reasons may be because the pictorial element is present in the language; the letters are not completely dissociated from the image. Chinese and Japanese follow this pattern.

11. In reference to René Magritte's well-known painting *The Treachery of Images* (1929).

illustrating the text or explaining the image, in contemporary comics, new relationships have been established: words, for instance, can add a soundtrack or even contradict the image[12].

In fact, more than the meaning produced by either verbal or visual text considered separately, the relation between the two systems produces meaning that neither of them is able to express alone. It is possible to say that the juxtaposition of verbal and visual texts in comics offers the reader a third layer of meaning. It is a narrative that can only be perceived if both graphic and textual elements are equally considered.

One of the possibilities offered by this third layer of meaning came to be known as 'visual metaphor'. Although the number of studies on visual metaphors is still not enough to define it or to establish its differences from verbal metaphors, it is surely influenced by the shared social and cultural experiences that make it possible for readers to recognize and interpret a certain symbol or icon and relate it to the main narrative. Like verbal metaphors, pictorial metaphors "tend to represent the unknown, unresolved or problematic in terms of something more familiar and more easily imaginable" (El Refaie, "Understanding visual metaphor: the example of newspaper cartoons", 84). Yet, unlike their verbal counterpart, visual metaphors work within two semiotic systems – words and pictures – which, together with the already naturally recognized symbols and icons, exert a mutual influence on the interpretation of a certain frame or group of frames. Therefore, in this sense, the idea that images merely show what language tells or that visual metaphors are only equivalents of verbal metaphors is undoubtedly mistaken.

In relation to their function, visual metaphors generally involve images that metaphorically echo central themes of the story, "provid[ing] subtexts, thereby complicating verbal messages" (McCloud, *Reinventing Comics*, xiv). These subtexts can be references to previous episodes in the narrative or even to real-life events. In an interview to *The Comics*

12. See McCloud for seven main kinds of effects produced by image/text combinations. (*Understanding Comics*, 153-55)

Journal about *Paul Auster's City of Glass* (1994), David Mazzuchelli explains that visual metaphors were used to add symbolic and psychological aspects to the identity of the characters of the work of novelist Paul Auster. Moreover, the visual metaphors were a necessary solution to represent the non-visual text, in the sense that it was not necessary to keep Auster's complete text.

The metaphor of the maze, for instance, is used twice in *Paul Auster's City of Glass* and it represents two crucial moments in the narrative. The first happens throughout the first pages, in the description of Quinn, the main character. Auster's novel says that Quinn was "[l]ost, not only in the city, but within himself as well" (4). In the graphic novel, the image of the buildings in New York is transformed into a maze and, later on, into one's fingerprint on the window of Quinn's house (see fig. 2). Thus, it is possible to say that this visual metaphor provides two subtexts: the fact that Quinn feels lost in New York (the maze as a metaphor for being lost) and the fact that the character has lost his identity after his wife's and son's deaths (the fingerprint as a metaphor for identity) and has been living through the lives of others.

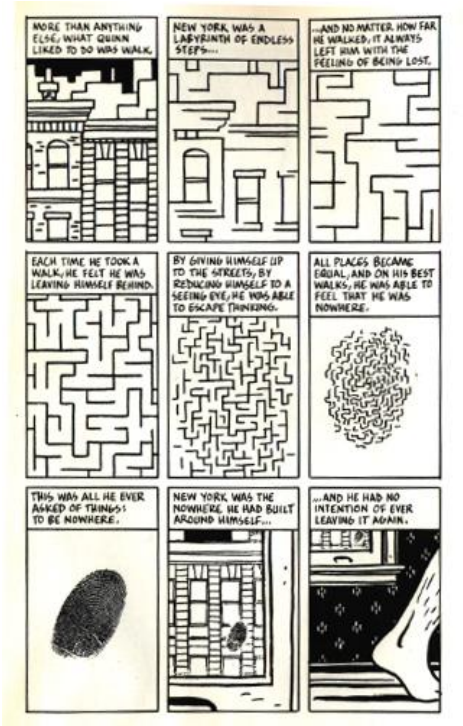


Fig. 2: *Paul Auster's City of Glass*, page 4.

Therefore, as far as Irina Rajewsky's second category of Intermediality, we can conclude that, while both film and comics are hybrid media (once there is a combination of multiple media within each of them), considered multimedia and mixmedia texts respectively, traditional novels do not fit any of the three categories of media combination because there is not a combination of different media in them.

And yet, after these considerations related to the media combination involving films and comics, I side with W.J.T. Mitchell, when he claims that "[t]he real question to ask when confronted with these kinds of image-text relations is not 'what is the difference (or similarity) between the words and images?' but 'what difference do the differences (and similarities) make?'" (*Picture Theory*, 91).

Answering Mitchell's question, I would argue that the analysis of mediatic specificities in comics, novels and films in this section offered a better understanding of the formal features of each media. This becomes a crucial step as I move on to the next section, in which the image-text relations within each isolated medium will profoundly influence the distinction between novel-to-film and comics-to-film adaptations.

c. Media Transposition

According to Irina Rajewsky, media transposition is "the transformation of a given media product (a text, a film, etc.) or of its substratum into another medium". In this category, "the 'original' text, film, etc., is the 'source' of the newly formed media product" (51).

Considered one of the best known processes of media transposition, film adaptations have conquered an important place in academic debate through the works of George Bluestone, Geoffrey Wagner, Brian McFarlane, Robert Stam and Deborah Cartmell, among

others. However, the scope of these works has been mostly limited to novel-to-film analyses[13].

Yet, while Bluestone's, Wagner's and McFarlane's works may be satisfactorily applied to novel-to-film adaptations, these theoretical models have proven to be unsuitable for comics adaptations to cinema due to the specificities of each medium and especially because of the presence of images in comics.

In fact, whenever a different medium is involved in the process of transposition, new tools for the analysis of adaptations are needed[14]. For example, the adaptation of Hamlet's "to be or not to be" excerpt to the comics medium by Will Eisner cannot be analyzed by means of the same theoretical approach used for Kenneth Branagh's film version of the same excerpt, because of the specificities of each target-text.

By the same token, when we change the source-text medium, new aspects must be considered. For instance, a novel-to-film adaptation cannot be analyzed by the same parameters as a theater-to-film adaptation. In the case of theater-to-film adaptations we must take into account that the dramatic text upon which the film adaptation is based contains several stage directions (character's costumes, movements, and body expression, for instance) that can play a relevant role in the director's choices.

The demand for fidelity has been until now intrinsic to the relations governing most – if not all – media transpositions. Gaudreault and Marion alert us to the fact that the fidelity to the original is impossible to be achieved because "in moving from one medium to another, the

13. Except, perhaps, for Cartmell, who deals with types of source-texts for film adaptation other than literary texts.

14. Besides the kind of medium, the analysis of adaptations must always observe circumstantial elements – the cultural values and norms at the time of the production of the adaptation. As Thaïs Diniz explains, the translation (and here, the adaptation is included as an intersemiotic type of translation) "is not produced in perfect laboratory conditions, sterilized and neutral, but in the in-between place of various traditions, cultures, and norms. Every translation is therefore a cultural translation" ("A New Approach to the Study of Translation", 40). A good example of the influence of the cultural context may be seen, for instance, in some of Shakespeare's adaptations to cinema, e.g. in Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) and in Gil Junger's *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999).

'subject' of a story . . . would necessarily undergo a series of informing and deforming constraints linked to what might be called the new medium's intrinsic configuration" ("Transécriture and Narrative Mediatics: The Stakes of Intermediality", 58). And, in their opinion, in the case of comics-to-film adaptations, the impulse towards faithfulness leads to even worse consequences. Chances are that, after watching the film, the reader of a comic strip becomes more disappointed than the reader of a novel because of the false idea of proximity of the relationship between film and comics media, based on the belief that both tell stories through images (68).

The prejudice against comics-to-film adaptations

Besides the lack of specific theoretical approaches, comic book adaptations are doomed to carry a double burden: first, the prejudice against comics and second, the prejudice against film adaptations. According to Thierry Groensteen, comics is a medium still in search of legitimacy from authorities such as universities and museums ("Why Are Comics Still in Search", 29). He mentions four types of frequent prejudice against comics, which he calls the "ninth art's four original sins".

The first prejudice is against the hybrid nature of comics, the result of a combination of text and image on a printed page. The conflict involving word and image is an old one, dating from God's creation of man in His own image or even to Adam's act of naming objects. The supremacy of the word over other forms of expression is intrinsic to our western culture, in which image is seen as a danger to our capacity of imagination. However, as Groensteen explains, this rivalry has not been prevalent in China and Japan, where the power of the word is equally combined with the power of image, resulting in calligraphic signs. For these eastern cultures, word and image are represented through the same written lines. In our

logocentric culture, this separation of text and image becomes particularly problematic in contemporary times, because of the predominance of intermedia and multimedia texts. Because of their hybrid character – in contrast with the 'pure' text –, new media are generally condemned to a mediocre, uncertain place within the current academic structure. Comics, for example, tend to drift in uncertain seas, somewhere between painting, drawing and literature studies[15].

The second prejudice towards comics refers to their lack of narrative ambition. Because of this, comics has been seen as synonymous with easy, sub- or para-literature. Although comics certainly has a narrative quality, this position overlooks the fact that comics is an independent medium and, as such, has its own subdivision of genres, which ranges from autobiography to new wave works. Groensteen says that the "only things it has in common with literature are: that it is printed and sold in bookshops, and that it contains linguistic statements" (39). Additionally, it cannot be considered easy or inferior literature for the reason that it is a distinct medium.

The third prejudice is based on the original connections of comics with caricature and satire, "inferior" branches of visual art. Groensteen reminds us that, since Ancient Greece, "humor has been regarded as the opposite of harmony and of the sublime" (40). As mentioned earlier, this prejudice is proved wrong in many genres of comics, on which tragedy replaces comedy. In the groundbreaking biographical *Maus*, for example, animal-faced characters retell the horrors of the Holocaust.

Lastly, Groensteen comments that comics propose nothing more than a return to childhood. Rather than refuting this last prejudice, the author lays claim to it, explaining that it is during the childhood period that we discover comics and learn to love them, once pictures offer a naïve pleasure to the illiterate. Although this may be true, it does not necessarily mean

15. Of course, this situation has been gradually changing because of the emergence of a strong visual culture in our western society.

that comic books are easier to read than novels only because they have pictures. In order to fully comprehend the seductive power of comics, pictures also need to be read, as much as words. And, unfortunately, while the traditional education in our schools is able to prepare people to satisfactorily interpret words, it fails in training people to interpret images.

In "Introduction to *Adaptation*" (2008), Deborah Cartmell, Timothy Corrigan and Imelda Whelehan explain that adaptations have been long neglected in literary and film studies even though they have been a common phenomenon since the beginnings of cinema. The authors point out ten reasons that help explain why adaptations are often characterized by words such as "impure", "secondary", "copy", "inferior", "betrayal", etc:

First, adaptations have long been seen as "impure cinema", dependant on two art forms – cinema and literature – and never reaching a mature status of art. The second reason is that, similarly to comics, film adaptations were seen as a threat to literacy, "crude usurpations of literary masterpieces". Third, adaptations were consigned to an undefined place within academia, with a secondary status within both literature and film departments, together with the idea that "anyone can teach it". Next, because of the primacy of literature over cinema, until recently, adaptations were evaluated only by their closeness to the literary source. The fifth reason is that, because of the commercial purposes of film, adaptations are accused of turning literature into a commodity. Next, there is the prejudice against the production of films in which many people are involved, in opposition to the "fetishization of individual genius" of the author of the book. Seventh, an adaptation is for some "merely a copy of a literary text", which would characterize it as an insipid version of the "original". Another reason lies on the fact that, because literature is considered to come first, criticism on adaptations used to take literature as the basis for comparison, thus emphasizing what had been lost instead of what had been gained in the adaptation. Ninth, the authors say that bad adaptations often receive more attention than good adaptations and the case is worse when it

is a screen version of a canonical text. On the other hand, people generally tend to forget that those adaptations which overtook their source-texts – such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Mary Poppins* – are, indeed, adaptations. And finally, adaptation criticism generally ignores "shifting social and cultural concerns, other films, genre considerations or even financial and production considerations".

These ten reasons corroborate the common use of negative expressions towards adaptations compared to the originals, such as violation, usurpation, deformation, vulgarization, profanation and bastardization. (Cartmell, Corrigan & Whelehan, "Introduction to Adaptation", 1-2)

Hence, in this respect, comic book adaptations are condemned twice: first, for being comics, a hybrid mass cultural product thought to be made for children; second, for being an adaptation, an inferior copy of the original, judged only by its fidelity to the primary literary text.

Literature Review on Comics and Films

Even though films and comics share narrative and visual aspects, theoretical works that approximate both arts are still scarce. And the great majority of them are attempts to find in comics equivalents to certain film narrative devices. In other words, most of the works in the field tend to concentrate on the category of media combination, analyzing the specific characteristics of each text separately. Instead, as I shall demonstrate, a better approach would be to focus on the process of media transposition.

In *Para Ler os Quadrinhos* (1972), Moacy Cirne, one of the pioneer comics theorists in Brazil, establishes a comparison between comic and cinematic narratives. First, he draws a parallel between the position of the camera and the manipulation of the surface of the image

in comics, stating that comics employed cinema's resources in its narrative structure and aesthetics. Other aspects were also observed: the balloon, the onomatopoeia, the angles, and the cuts. In the year 2000, Cirne discusses the subject again in "Cinema e Quadrinhos: Uma nova leitura". This time however, he concentrates on the differences rather than on the similarities between the two media. The differences are in the time of reading/projection, the cuts, and the agency of narrative. On the type of iconicity of the images in both media, the author says that film is not seen as a photographed image in motion or a static drawn image and that the use of live-action instead of graphic characters is a permanent reminder of this difference. As a conclusion, Cirne declares that cinema and comics are more connected by their narrative discourses than by the semiotic aspect centered on image. Yet, in some recent films, it is precisely the approximation of the images of the two media that plays the most significant role in the adaptation. In *Sin City* (2005), for example, the photographic "concretion" (as Cirne calls it) of the film blends with the graphic signs of the comic book page in a way that sometimes it is hard for the spectator to define whether a certain image belongs to the film or to Frank Miller's book.

Also in 1972, Francis Lacassin draws a parallel between the properties of comic strip and film language. He calls our attention to the fact that, although the two media share a common past of initial unfavorable reception, cinema has been for nearly forty years an art recognized and sanctioned by cultural critics, while the comic strip was, until very recently, ignored or scorned ("The Comic Strip and Film Language", 11). Because of that, when analyzing the relation between the media, there is a tendency to favor cinema, taking it as basis for an investigation of what the comic strip borrows from cinematic language. The most relevant aspect of this article is the recognition of this problematic, biased inclination. Lacassin's basic premise in this work is to confront this, proving that "with a few rare exceptions, the comic strip gathered most of its basic expressive resources without recourse to

the cinema, and often even before the latter was born" (14). In 1827, for example, Rodolphe Töpffer inserted long shots into a series of medium shots recounting the loves of his M. Vieux Bois. In 1889, Georges Colomb introduced what came to be known as the American shot (head-to-knees) in "The Fenouillard Family at the Exhibition".

Commenting on Lacassin's examples, comics theorist David Kunzle says that the basic language of comic strips, especially in relation to cinematic elements, was created even before Georges Colomb, in German, Dutch, and English broadsheets in the 17th century. According to Kunzle, three major figures of the 19th century have developed cinematic techniques in comics: Rodolphe Töpffer, Gustave Doré and Wilhelm Busch. Töpffer was familiar to parallel cutting, narrow panels, broad panels, panoramic scenes, close-ups to speed up the narrative, repetition of frames, camera panning and dollying back (20-21). Doré's images portrayed subjective-camera effects, silhouette effects and negative image – a white line on a black background, which was introduced in his *La Sainte Russie*, 1854 (21-22). Busch's relevance lies in the devices he developed for the rendering of movement, sound, and "pain" effects (22-23).

Another work that offers some thoughts on the subject is Hans-Christian Christiansen's article, "Comics and Film: A Narrative Perspective", in which the author examines the use of cinematographic style – continuing editing, close-up and point-of-view – in comics. Although it may look like a regression in relation to Lacassin's de-hierarchizing proposal, priority is not given to the cinematic text. Christiansen recognizes that "we should not look for exact semantic equivalents for particular elements, and that any discussion of the means by which the media are used, artistically requires some understanding of the aesthetic quality of the media" (112). In this sense, even though cinema and comics have equivalences in narrative style, Christiansen's analysis of cinematic devices serves a two-way process. The focus is not on how comics employ cinematic techniques, but rather on "the way in which

cinematic devices are used differently and have a different impact in the two media in the construction of time, space and identification" (113). The author explains that this different impact is due to distinct mediatic conventions, cross-cultural recognition of universal figures and techniques (such as face-to-face personal interaction) and aspects related to the deep structure of visual storytelling, which is based on the universal human experience, such as facial expressions and postures.

In "Du 7e au 9e art: l'inventaire des singularités", Thierry Groensteen explains that greater importance is generally given to the similarities than to the differences between the two media. And the reason for this is that comics is still not seen as an autonomous medium. Moreover, the paternity of the arts that narrate by means of images is often erroneously credited to cinema. Therefore, Groensteen's article proposes an analysis of comics in terms of its distinctiveness, focusing on how its principles have little to do with filmic enunciation. The differences between the two media are listed in three categories: a. the field of expression; b. the process of creation and; c. the mode of articulation. In the field of expression, Groensteen argues that there are at least five differences between the filmic and the graphic image which correspond, to a certain extent, to Cirne's considerations on the iconicity of the images. In the second category, the process of creation, Groensteen distinguishes three steps of creation for cinema (*mise en scène*, *mise en cadre* and *mise en chaîne*) and two for comics (*mise en dessin* and *mise en réseau*). The third category, the mode of articulation, relates to three sub-items under the *mise en réseau* step – the *decoupage*, the *mise en page* and the *tressage*. These categories will be fully explained in chapter 3.

Groensteen's article has proven to be a reference work among the studies produced in the field in the last decades. In my view, this happens for two main reasons. First, because the theorist examines the steps of production of each medium, providing comics with different steps from the ones often used in film studies, therefore reaffirming comics as an autonomous

medium, with its own characteristics. And secondly because, besides examining the equivalents in narration, film and comics are approximated in terms of *monstration*[16], a concept used by Groensteen to designate all aspects related to the representation through images (18). In this sense, Groensteen's text is broader in scope than Cirne's, Lacassin's and Christiansen's. However, Groensteen's analysis remains limited to media combination aspects, pointing out similarities and differences between the two media, failing in exploring the consequences of his inventory to a case of media transposition. Therefore, the title "Du 7e au 9e art" conveys the misleading idea of a transposition from cinema to comics, known as the 9th art.

The most recent attempt to bring films and comics together is *Film and Comic Books* (2007), edited by Ian Gordon, Mark Jancovich and Matthew P. McAllister. The authors recognize that, although both media have a common narrative tradition and formal properties that constitute similar visual parallels, they also have distinct audiences, which relates to each medium in a different way. Therefore, besides the problems involving comics adaptations, *Film and Comic Books* also deals with the reception of comic books-based films as well as recurrent themes adapted, such as the coming-of-age of comics characters.

Film and Comic Books represents a valuable contribution to the field, particularly for its first part, in which Pascal Lefèvre's "Incompatible Visual Ontologies? The Problematic Adaptation of Drawn Images" is inserted. The main contribution of this article is that it points out the elements in each of the media that may present a problem in the director's task of transposition. Therefore, instead of examining the relations of media combination in each medium separately, trying to find film equivalents for comics formal properties (and vice-versa), this article represents considerable progress from all other works reviewed before

16. Yet, Groensteen states that the combinations "text + drawing" and "narrative + *monstration*" are not equivalents. If the drawing is the exclusive agent of the *monstration*, the text is not the natural and exclusive vehicle of the narrative. However, the truth is that literature is still more related to narrative while painting and photography, to the *monstration* (18; 20). Italics added.

because it puts the media combination analysis into practice, applying it to a media transposition perspective. I believe this is the correct approach to analyze a comics-to-film adaptation and for this reason, Lefèvre's theory of adaptation should guide us in this thesis.

The contribution of Pascal Lefèvre

For Pascal Lefèvre, four main ontological differences between comics and film language devices are responsible for the fact that "comics fans may literally 'see' film adaptations as often unfaithful and even disrespectful". (3) And these differences influence the process of adaptation and generally make the work of the director more complicated.

The first point is the comics narrative, which must always go through changes when transposed to cinema, by means of additions and deletions. Indeed, this is a necessary procedure because every medium has its own "communicational energetics"[17]. Each medium offers devices that can be used to tell the story in a particular way. Therefore, the same narrative elements that work wonderfully in a comic book or a graphic novel may not work in a film. This can also be applied to the plot of a novel, which will always suffer additions and deletions when transposed to a film. Pascal's first aspect, therefore, is perfectly suited to novel adaptations too. The only difference in our case is that, in comics, both the text and the drawings represent the totality of the narrative, since images also have a narrative potential. Thus, when comics is transposed to cinema, the director has to adapt its narrative in two levels (text and image). This first point concerning the changes in the narrative will be dealt with in the next chapter.

17. Gaudreault and Marion use this term to designate the way each medium "exploits, combines and multiplies the familiar materials of expression – rhythm, movement, gesture, music, speech, image, writing" ("Transécriture and Narrative Mediatics", 65)

The second problem is the difference between the page and the screen layouts. While the comics page is generally made up of several frames separated by gutters, the film screen is usually filled with one photogram, unless the director chooses to use the split-screen device, explained earlier in this chapter. Additionally, filming and editing are two separate steps of production. First, it is shot; then, it is edited. In comics, the drawing and the disposition of frames are conceived together. The artist cannot think of drawing a story without first having at least a mental draft of the way the actions will be organized on the page. Moreover, with the comic book or the graphic novel in hand, one can choose his or her own reading speed, turning the pages at will. On the other hand, a film forces the spectator to follow the speed of the projection[18].

Again, I believe this incompatibility is also true in novels. One page of the novel does not correspond to one photogram; the story told in a page of a novel can take several film sequences. A similar point is the disparity between the reading of the novel and the speed of film projection. A two-hour film projection can condense several hundred pages of a novel and eight hours of reading time. Hence, it is possible to say that Lefèvre's distinction between the page and the film screen layout also relate to the pages of the novel. This will be examined in chapter three.

The third aspect raised by Lefèvre to be dealt with in Chapter 4 refers to the use of sound in films in contrast with the "silence" of comics. The author explains that comics are closer to silent cinema than to contemporary cinema. And the incorporation of sound in film (narration and soundtrack) changed the way the spectator perceives and interprets the images. In comics, music, voices and noise can only be suggested by written signs. For the characters' voices, for example, the format of the balloon and the font type can only suggest the characteristics of the sound and it is up to the reader to interpret it. Similarly to comics, novels

18. Except when viewed on a DVD player. In this case, the speed of projection can be manipulated.

are also “silent”: the reader does not listen to noises described in the novel or to the voice of characters. The sound can only be described, so the reader has to conceive a mental and individual impression of that sound. Once more, Lefèvre’s aspect functions for both comics and novels.

The last ontological incompatibility between comics and films is the difference between comics drawn images and film photography. It may be argued that this aspect does not refer to animated films because they are also drawn, which is probably correct. However, I believe that animated films represent a distinct case for comic book adaptations and deserve an analysis on their own. For now, one thing can be said about animated films: if they do not undergo the exact same problems of live-action adaptations, they certainly have to deal with other problems about their own specificities.

Lefèvre mentions some distinct qualities between comics and film images. Both use flat images and similar shots (long, medium and close-up). And, while in film images move, in comics they are static. These three characteristics – the use of flat images, the distance from the camera/reader and the moving/static images – would also bring together comics and photography, from which cinema is directly derived.

Therefore, the most relevant distinction between comics and film images is perhaps the nature of the image, drawn by the hands of artists in comics and photographed in films. Lefèvre claims that this is the reason (together with movement) why a film conveys a greater impression of realism than comics. Moreover, drawings necessarily contain the signature of one artist and, by extension, the artist’s visual interpretation of the world. And the more stylized or caricatured the drawing is, the more difficult it is to adapt to cinema because the signature of the artist is felt in a stronger manner. (9)

Lefèvre also calls our attention to the fact that long-running comic book series do not tend to have a unique defining style. Because they have been drawn by several artists in so

many different styles, there is not a stable iconic meaning to their characters. (10) This often happens with superhero comic book series, since most graphic novels are drawn by one artist[19]. This makes the analysis of graphic novel adaptations – the focus of this thesis – more complex because, unlike superheroes such as Batman or Superman, which have already become mythical figures with multiple incarnations, graphic novels have only one version, to which the comics readers hold on when they watch the film adaptation.

While Lefèvre gets to mention that "[i]n particular, the visual ontology of a drawing seems to be a central issue" (2), he does not acknowledge the reason why this distinction is central to the process of adaptation. As the discussion in chapter 5 shall demonstrate, from Lefèvre's four incompatibilities, this is the only one which cannot be applied to novels as well. This identification of comics graphic elements as the main aspect differentiating comics-to-film adaptations from novel-to-film ones represents my contribution to Lefèvre's work.

In this chapter, I have presented the theoretical background supporting the analysis of the *corpus*, which is developed in the following sections. First, after a discussion on the appropriateness of the term Intermediality, I have explained the three main forms of intermedial relations, as proposed by Irina Rajewsky: intermedial reference, media combination and media transposition and pointed to the categories to which comics and its adaptation belong. Then, I have assembled a *status questionis* of the field, up to Pascal Lefèvre's "Incompatible Visual Ontologies", from which I have derived the main argument of this thesis. In the following chapter, I examine the narrative aspects, according to Lefèvre's first category, of the graphic novel *Watchmen* and its film version.

19. *American Splendor* is an exception. Since 1976, various artists have narrated the daily life of Harvey Pekar, granting the character with each one's own personal drawing style.

> Hence, every time we try to speak of
> what we see, we speak falsely,
> distorting the very thing
> we are trying to represent.
> (Auster, *The New York Trilogy*, 77)

CHAPTER 2: NARRATIVE ASPECTS

Literature Review

The first aspect mentioned by Lefèvre refers to the narrative. Although the phenomenon of narrative has its roots in oral and pictorial traditions, it is always seen as the natural embodiment of written language. The assumption that narrative is an exclusively literary event causes the narrative function of pictures to often be ignored in hybrid media. However, pictures can narrate as much as words. In the case of films and comics, verbal and visual texts have distinct narrative functions, and it is crucial to devote to pictures the same amount of attention of the text.

In comics and in films, narrative[20] is the result of a sequence of images. In comics, the formal elements that narrate are mainly the disposition of frames and gutters on a page – which dictate the rhythm of reading and looking – as well as the pictures drawn inside the frames.

20. Narrative can be understood as "the representation of an event or a series of events" (Abbott, 12).

However, a single image can also be narrative. In this case, narrative is suggested by a single image, without directly representing the narrative events[21]. In Brueghel's "The Fall of Icarus" (1558), for example, movement is implied, but never shown. In the same way, in most single-panel cartoons, narrative is also implied either through a representation of a cause and a suggestion of an effect (as in fig. 3) or through distinct positions or moments of one or more characters (see fig. 4). Therefore we can say that, in comics, although narrative is a natural consequence of the disposition of pictures in a sequence, one panel can also be considered a narrational unit. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that narrative is not necessarily dependent on dialogues, as the first example also demonstrates:

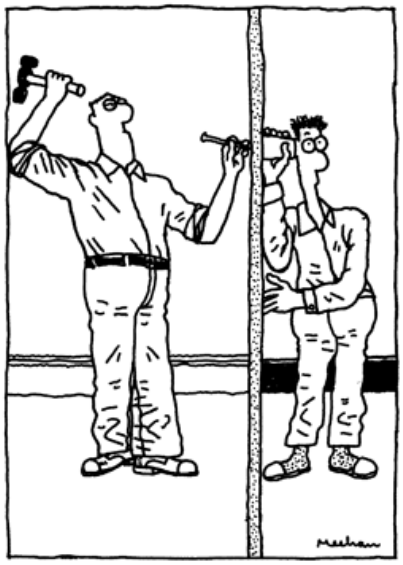


Fig. 3: Meehan cartoons: the representation of a cause and a suggestion of an effect.

21. Unless the several intermediary panels composing the movement are actually shown, such as in Jules Marey's pictures or as in Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2.(1912)"

Fig. 4: Narrative through distinct positions or moments of one or more characters in Frank Miller's *300*.

Because movement is an intrinsic feature of film, it is not possible to consider a photogram (a fixed cinematic image) a narrational unit. In films, narrative is the result of events, divided into sequences. Narrative is generally constructed by cinematic techniques such as "camera angle and movements, transitions, montage, as well as the particular repertoires of the nonvisual tracks". (Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative Across Media*, 196)

In order to understand the narrative events of any medium, the reader/spectator needs to be able to decode and "believe" in the formal elements of that specific medium. This constitutes a reading protocol that is applied differently for each medium. In order to understand a comics narrative, for instance, the reader has to understand the notion of frame and the disposition of several frames on a page. S/he must believe that the world of comics does not end with the frames borders. A character appearing on several panels is the same, represented in different moments in time. And if this character exits right of a frame, s/he will not crash against the frame line, but will continue his/her movement on the reader's mental construction of the continuation of the setting. Additionally, the reader has to understand that

the panels are often organized in a chronological sequence within the page and, in our western society, usually from left to right and from top to bottom. S/he also has to understand that between the panels there is a gutter, which represents discontinuation and requires the reader to mentally fill in the gaps, elaborating on the events not explicitly shown, in order to connect the two frames.

For film spectators, the situation is quite similar. The spectator also needs to have a protocol of cinematic techniques in order to fully comprehend the narrative. S/he must acknowledge that the fictional world does not end within the screen borders and that, generally, a 180° degree line is observed. S/he must also understand that, the cinematic world does not extrapolate the screen to the real world, in opposition to the effect intended by 3-D. The viewer must also be aware of the possible effects of the cuts and ellipses to the narrative, generally used in flashbacks and flashforwards. And when there are multiple plotlines, the spectator must recognize the chronology of each plotline and whether they are simultaneous or intersecting.

The protocol is based on previous personal experiences of the reader/spectator with that medium and with some particular genres. The protocol may also vary according to cultural conventions. In this sense, for example, a reader accustomed to American superhero comics may not have the reading protocol to decode the narrative structures used in Japanese manga. In the same way, someone used to classical Hollywood cinema might not be able to fully comprehend the specificities of narrative in experimental films.

In analogies between comics and films, the most recurrent aspect observed is the narrative structure, in which the narrative potential of comics has almost always been studied according to the narrative techniques of film or, in other words, based on what comics borrows from cinematic language. The privileging of film devices in the parallel between comics and films narrative aspects has frequently led to a depreciation of comics as an inferior

medium, incapable of having its own narrative system. It also conveys the idea that narrative in comics cannot be studied on its own, or without being compared to narrative in other media. In fact, as Francis Lacassin manages to prove in "The Comic Strip and Film Language", comics narrative devices owe little to cinema, most of them appearing even before cinema was born. (14)

From the authors mentioned in the previous chapter, two relevant works establish a parallel between comics and film, with an emphasis on narrative aspects. In *Para Ler os Quadrinhos* (1972) and in "Cinema e Quadrinhos: Uma nova leitura" (2000), Moacy Cirne explains that the central element in both narratives is the sequence – of frames in comics and of shots in films. And, in the two media, three elements relate directly to the narrative: the cuts (spatial, temporal and spatio-temporal), the ellipses (to mark temporal and/or spatial, discontinuity) and the articulation of reading of the comics page in contrast with the film projection.

In "Comics and Film: A Narrative Perspective", Hans-Christian Christiansen observes that while there are analogies, there are also interesting differences between the two languages. Both media, for example, have their own conventions, norms, cross-cultural universals and a deep structure of visual storytelling. On the other hand, the author also shows "the way in which cinematic devices are used differently and have a different impact on the two media in the construction of time, space and identification" (113). For instance, while cinema uses its techniques of cinematic transparency to create strong identification and emotional participation of the spectator, comics will never be able to reach that naturalistic effect because of its parodic tradition and artificial iconography (118).

However, while these two theories may provide insightful analyses delimiting and comparing individual media, they do not meet our primary concern, that is the analysis of media transposition.

One of the most acclaimed theories to examine adaptations – especially filmic ones – is Brian McFarlane's model, proposed in his book *Novel to Film* (1996). The author uses Roland Barthes's narrative functions to compare novels and their film versions, arguing that "transferred elements" denote the functions that are more easily and similarly portrayed in film, while the "adapted elements" are the ones that necessarily have to be altered in the film version, demanding more creativity from the film maker. He divides the elements of the narrative into two main functions, each with two subcategories (see table 1).

Although McFarlane's model has proved useful for a systematic study of the proximity of a film to its source-text, it seems that, in principle, two main issues are overlooked: the role of the reader and the visual subtexts and metanarratives present in comics and films.

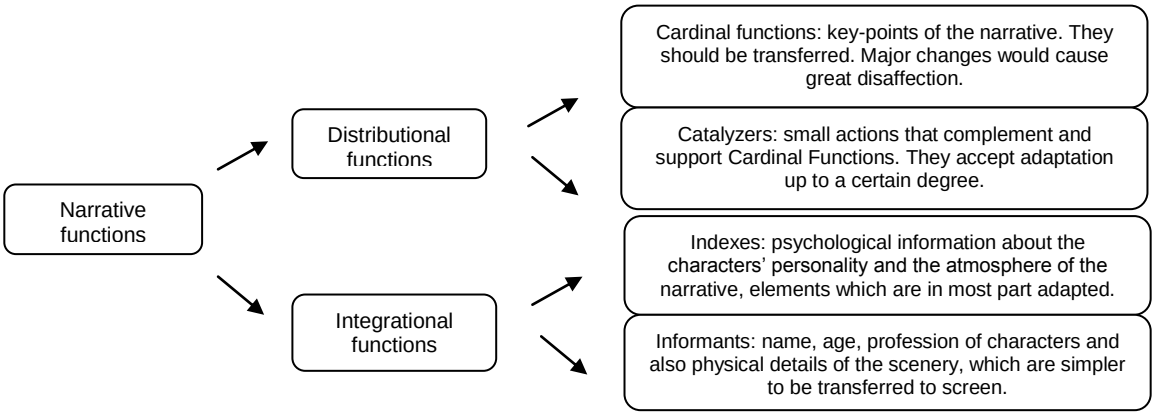


Table 1: Brian McFarlane's model for the analysis of film adaptations.

The categorization of the narrative elements in narrative functions by the reader presupposes an interpretation of the texts. An event that is considered a cardinal function by one may well be recognized as a catalyzer by others. Before a novel is adapted, its story must be interpreted. In a process of transposition, this will influence the understanding of the source-text and, consequently, of the target-text. The film adaptation will always be the

product of the screenwriter's or the filmmaker's understanding of the story. Therefore, in film adaptations, the interpretation of the source- and the target-texts represent a fundamental role in the process, establishing respectively the basis and the product for the reader's evaluation of the experience. It should also be taken into account that, for the categorization of narrative elements, the two media involved must be considered in relation to their specificities, according to their own capacities of narrative and mediatic characteristics.

The visual subtexts and metanarratives so constantly employed in films and in comics insert additional, significant meaning to the story and sometimes are so relevant to be regarded as catalyzers. Many times, the result is that film or comic adaptations of novels apply strategies that are proper to hybrid media, according to the medium possibilities and constraints, to create complex additional narratives to the source-text. And it seems that the narrative functions, as proposed by Barthes and McFarlane, fall short of comprising this specificity. A relevant contribution on this subject may be that proposed by Gaudreault and Marion, who believe that, in any case of transposition, the artist has to consider each medium's *mediativity* and *narrativity*.

Mediativity is the "medium's intrinsic capacity to represent – and to communicate that representation" and it "depends on the intrinsic features of the means of expression or representation that the medium requires or combines" ("Transécriture and Narrative Mediatics: The Stakes of Intermediality", 66). It is the ontological power of expression of a medium. Conversely, narrativity is included within the category of mediativity. It is "the ontological narrative potential of media which it possesses as a function of its own mediativity". (67) Certain events, such as crime stories and the life and death of celebrities are more easily transformed into narratives because they have a great narrativity potential.

The combination of mediativity and narrativity determines the *médiagénie* of the medium, which explains the fact that a certain narrative matches more or less with a certain

medium. The médiagénie assures that a narrative is "brought to life in the best way possible by choosing the most appropriate mediatic partner". (67) In works with a weak médiagénie, the fabula is more easily detached from its medium embodiment. On the other hand, some works seem unadaptable to other media because they have a strong médiagénie, as if some narrative events were "born" to that certain, pre-determined medium embodiment. And, consequently, the stronger the médiagénie of a work, the greater will be the dissatisfaction of the reader with any adaptation of that work.

In comics, for example, although artist Art Spiegelman does not use the term médiagénie, he knows that any attempt to adapt his graphic novel *Maus* to other media would be a major failure because of the strong médiagénie of the work, due especially to its metaphoric style. In an interview to David D'Arcy, Spiegelman states that he has rejected several offers to have *Maus* adapted to cinema because it took him a very long time – thirteen years – just to find the proper way to get it told. Another work with a very strong médiagénie is *Watchmen*, one of the works of our corpus, the object of discussion in the next section of this chapter.

Narrative in *Watchmen*

a. A multiple DVD experience

Watchmen is a twelve-issue series by Alan Moore, illustrated by Dave Gibbons, published between 1986 and 1987. It tells the story of a group of retired superheroes, in an alternate 1985, where the United States and the Soviet Union are on the verge of a nuclear war. The superheroes, which have been considered outlaws since the Keene Act was passed in 1977, start investigating the mysterious murder of a member of their extinct group. At the end

of each issue, there is some fictional material (newspaper articles, book chapters, letters and reports) that attempts to confer greater authenticity to the story by providing details of the plot background. *Watchmen* has a complex visual narrative, with details and allusions in almost every panel, extreme close-ups and zooms, iconic symbols and recurrent motifs. It also has a distinct coloring, favoring secondary instead of primary colors[22].

Watchmen won the Hugo Award in 1988 and was selected one of *Time Magazine*'s 2005 list of "100 Best English-language Novels from 1929 to the Present". Together with Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight*, it established a new genre in graphic novels, one that deconstructs the role of the superhero as it was conceived especially in the United States, from the thirties to the seventies. Mostly, they evade the common roles of heroes and villains, focusing on psychological issues of the characters. In *Watchmen*, for instance, depressive, tormented and twisted heroes are forbidden to fight crime because society has turned against them. They become outlaws and cannot wear masks, costumes or drive their own vehicles.

Many attempts to adapt *Watchmen* to cinema failed mainly because of its intricate narrative structure, with abundant cross-references and profuse use of metanarratives and subtextual details, which made it hard for any director to reduce it to a two- or three-hour movie. All these aspects, together with the graphic novel's strong médiagénie, granted *Watchmen* the title of being an 'unfilmable' text. The frustrated efforts were accentuated by Moore's reclusive life and his disdain for the film industry[23].

After several rumors and attempts as well as legal disputes concerning the production and distribution of the film, *Watchmen* was finally adapted to screen in 2009 by director Zack

22. Primary colors (red, blue and yellow) were widely used in superheroes comics of the Golden Age (from the 1930s to the late 1940s). In *Watchmen*, preference is given to greens, oranges and purples.

23. It is widely known that Alan Moore has never even watched any of the film adaptations of his graphic novels and that he does not want any connection of his name to these productions. Because of that, in *Watchmen*, Moore's name is omitted from the film credits. Instead, credits are given to Dave Gibbons as co-creator and illustrator, since he actively participated on the production of the film.

Snyder, who felt at ease with graphic novel transpositions after the success of *300*, Frank Miller's version of the Spartans' battle against the Persian in the Thermopylae.

Being a fan of *Watchmen* himself, Snyder tried to be as close as possible to the graphic novel, using its individual frames as storyboards for the film scenes. This is easier to be done with graphic novels because, differently from superhero comic books that have seen thousands of publications since their creation and reached the status of myths, graphic novels generally have a traditional narrative structure, with a beginning, a middle and an end, which is supposedly also the case of film narratives.

Yet, while Snyder certainly pleased die-hard fans by remaining loyal to the original text, he was also heavily criticized for that. The main criticism was that the film tried too hard to look like the graphic novel so that it did not find its own "aura" as a film. The attempt to be completely faithful to the graphic novel ignored the different mediativity of comics and film, and prevented the director and the actors from seeing what would work better in the film medium.

Although there are many instances where Snyder managed to find a good filmic correspondent, at others, his obsessive pursuit for a perfect adaptation was initially frustrated. In several instances throughout Moore's work, a secondary narrative is told concomitantly to the main storyline. The "Tales of the Black Freighter" is a comic book that tells the story of a marooned pirate attempting to get back home to his wife and kids. The pirate story is being read by Bernie, a boy who stands near a newsstand so he can read the comic book without having to pay for it. Together with the owner of the newsstand, the boy is part of a microcosm within the main narrative of *Watchmen*, generally commenting on the increase of political tension in the world.

In some moments, the "Tales of the Black Freighter" occupies the pictorial part of the frame, while the balloons remain connected to the central plot. At other moments, the

stranded pirate's thoughts, which are always shown in balloons in the form of scrolls, appear together with images of the main narrative. And, at other moments, two kinds of balloons coexist inside the same frame. The intervention of this second narrative begins in the third chapter and continues up to the eleventh and it never extends for more than four pages. Most of the times, it appears more than once in a chapter.

But most importantly, the "Tales" represents a significant counterpoint to the main narrative because of its metaphoric function. It comments on the main characters at crucial points of the narrative. There is, for instance, the moment when Dr. Manhattan, the only superhero to actually have superpowers, exiles himself on Mars, exposing the Earth to an escalation of violence and an impending Third World War. As Dr. Manhattan arrives on Mars, he contemplates the stars in the sky, while three scrolls comment the image: "That night, I slept badly beneath cold, distant stars, pondering upon the cold, distant God in whose hands the fate of Davidstown rested. Was he really there? Had he been there once, but now departed?" (ch. 3, p. 21) It is possible to establish a parallel between the meaning of this sentence in the pirate narrative and in Dr. Manhattan's position as a cold "God" on Earth, who had the fate of the Earth in his hands.

At another moment, entrepreneur Adrian Veidt, known as the most intelligent existing man on Earth, reveals his decision to carry out genocide in order to save the world. The announcement is commented by the pirate who, after killing his wife by accident, asks himself: "How had I reached this appalling position with love, only love as my guide?" (ch. 1, p. 9) Once again, the pirate's narrative is connected to the main story, since readers are invited to question Veidt's true reasons for initiating a massacre of huge proportions with the excuse of saving the world. Was it love that led the pirate to kill his wife? In the same way, is it possible to say that Veidt's monstrous plan was guided by love?

So, while comics readers can control the duration and speed of reading, taking their time to read – and reread, if necessary – the story, the film director is always constrained by the duration of the theatrical projection of the movie. In *Watchmen*, Snyder had to decide whether or not to include the "Tales of the Black Freighter" in the film. If he decided to keep the comic book narrative within the film, the projection time would certainly exceed the maximum tolerated by the audience. Nevertheless, if he simply omitted the pirate story, Moore's work would lose the density reached by the graphic novel and chances would be that a multitude of *Watchmen* fans would be terribly disappointed.

The solution found by the director was to separate the two narratives and release the "Tales" on a separate DVD, as an animated cartoon. The choice for animation instead of live-action was an appropriate one because it differentiates the main narrative of the watchmen (as if it were the real world) from the pirate narrative (the hand-drawn comic book fictional story).

However, by separating the narratives, the connection to Bernie and the newsstand microcosm was lost. Consequently, the social and political commentary on the critical historical moment was mostly erased. Likewise, the meta-commentary function of the "Tales" suffered a major rupture. And unfortunately, as a result, those who did not have the opportunity to read the graphic novel before watching the animation DVD will hardly ever understand the primary purpose of the "Tales of the Black Freighter" to the superhero narrative.

Nevertheless, VHS and more recently DVD[24] have also opened positive possibilities in cinema. Definitely, one is that the spectator takes control of the viewing experience, so s/he can pause, stop, rewind, begin and continue watching the film at will, at any moment of the narrative, by selecting individual scenes or chapters. Similarly to the reader of comics and

24. And even more recently the Blu-ray technology, which allows for a bigger capacity of film material – somewhat equivalent to that of four times of the DVD.

novels, not only can the viewer control the duration and speed of the reading experience, but also the order of events. In this sense, it is possible to say that DVD technology offered an approximation between the reading mode of novels and comics and the viewing mode of films.

In a good example of how DVD technology drew reading and viewing experiences together through the organization of film sequences in "chapters", in the "Recut, Unrated and Extended" double DVD version of *Sin City* (see fig.5), the intertwined plotline of the theatrical film version is reassembled so that viewers can watch each of the four stories separately.

Additionally, when transformed into DVD, many movie titles contain expanded versions or what is known as the "director's cut", which is a longer version of the film as it was shown in theaters. Besides deleted scenes, some DVDs also provide alternate endings, which affect the narrative storyline of the film if compared to the theatrical version. At each excluded scene or alternate ending seen, new reading experiences of the film arise. In the case of the alternate endings, these new possibilities blend with the reading of the original film, creating simultaneous different readings in the mind of the spectator. However, these readings do not confuse the spectator, who knows that there is an original order of the movie's linear narrative. Or, as Jay David Bolter explains,

> "The viewer still has a sense that there is a canonical order to the movie – the one that sometimes plays by default (by simply inserting the disk in the player without making menu choices). The viewer's interventions become experiments within and around this canonical order. The DVD allows a kind of synoptic view of the film – as if the viewer could examine the whole film and its possible versions simultaneously". ("Transference and Transparency: Digital Technology and the Remediation of Cinema", 24)

In this respect, the DVD becomes a complement of the original film and creates a different and, at the same time, simultaneous comprehension of the main film narrative. Therefore, the person who watched the DVD version of *Watchmen* will certainly have a very different experience than the spectator who just saw it in the movie theater.

Fig. 5: *Sin City*'s Recut, Unrated and Extended DVD version menu

Besides the mode of reception, DVD technology has also marked a fundamental change in the way films are produced. The DVD is not simply seen as a way of distributing the film to a wider audience. Richard Grusin explains that "[t]oday the production, design, and distribution of DVD versions of feature films are part of the original contractual (and thus artistic) intention of these films". ("DVDs, Video Games and the Cinema of Interactions", 76) In many cases, the conceptualization of the DVD precedes the production of the film.

In fact, the presence of special features on DVDs[25] has become so common today that one cannot experience the film completely if one does not watch the DVD. The movie theater experience can no longer be considered the ultimate film experience because the narrative of

25. See Grusin's "DVDs, Video Games and the Cinema of Interactions" for a description of other interesting DVD options in Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*, Nolan's *Memento* and Figgis's *Time Code.* (77-80)

the film does not end with the "The End" screen and final credits anymore. Instead, it is transformed and supplemented by deleted scenes, alternate endings, trailers, storyboards, pop-up commentaries, hyperlinked mini-videos, etc. To ignore this is to ignore a large part of today's cinematic experience. Therefore, it is also important that film and adaptation studies turn their attention to this fact, including DVDs' extra material as part of a film analysis.

In the *Watchmen* graphic novel, another significant source of narrative is the supplementary material that appears at the end of each chapter (with the exception of the last one) and which, among other purposes, provides readers with background stories of the characters. At the end of the first three chapters, there are excerpts from character Hollis Mason's fictional autobiography *Under the Hood* revealing, for instance, why he decided to become a masked adventurer and details about the formation of the Minutemen, the group of superheroes that preceded the Watchmen. In chapters four and five respectively, there is an article about Dr. Manhattan's origins and one about Entertainment Comics, the company producing the *Tales of the Black Freighter* fictional comic book. In chapter six, when Rorschach is arrested, we are shown his police and psychiatric record, a composition and a drawing he had done for school as a boy and a letter from his therapist at prison. Chapter seven shows a research article on ornithology from Dan Dreiberg, the Nite Owl II; and chapter eight shows a draft version of the *New Frontiersman* newspaper to be published on October 31st, 1985. Chapter nine presents many articles and letters kept in Sally Jupiter's diary. Chapters ten and eleven contain letters and brochures from Adrian Veidt's company and products (action figures, perfumes and video for a better body shape) and an interview with Veidt, who gave up his superhero career as Ozymandias to become a successful businessman.

According to Irina Rajewsky's category of intermedial reference, all these fictional elements in the graphic novel *Watchmen* work as intermedial references because of their "as

if" quality. They are references that evoke structures of other medial systems – novels, magazines, letters, newspapers and photographs – inside a comic book, as if they were real. Besides providing readers with a better background of the characters, they serve to construct a believable fictional world. It is as if they really existed, supporting the fictional events of the main graphic narrative, providing a "documented" historical background and a plausible alternate 1985, in a world on the verge of nuclear war.

In Snyder's *Watchmen*, most of this supplementary material was not included, often leaving first-time viewers with insufficient information about the characters. The only episode developed to a satisfactory extent in the film franchise is Hollis Mason's fictional memoir *Under the Hood,* the additional material at the end of chapters 1 to 3. However, once again, because of the restricted projection duration of the film and of the possible complexity in interposing it with the watchmen's narrative, *Under the Hood* was adapted into a pseudo-documentary, inside a fictional television program called *The Culpeper Minute*. *Under the Hood* was released on the same DVD as the *Tales of the Black Freighter*.

Besides adapting a great part of the content of the memoir, the documentary also mentions the additional materials from chapters 4 and 9, by including an interview with the physics professor who worked with Jon Osterman before he became Dr. Manhattan, and another interview with Sally Jupiter about her past as a masked adventurer and her being sexually assaulted by the Comedian.

Additionally, the documentary proposes a solution to a link that was lost in the main film. In *The Culpeper Minute*, Bernie, the newsvendor is interviewed, asked about his opinion about the vigilantes. Although this cannot be compared to the relevance of Bernie's share of the narrative in the graphic novel, as a counterpoint to the main storyline involving the watchmen's search for the person behind the massive killing, the presence of the newsvendor in the documentary was certainly a creative decision to the adaptation.

Also interesting was the use of television commercials during *The Culpeper Minute*, which helped increase the sense of reality in the documentary. Together with the commercial of the fictional perfume "Nostalgia", produced by one of Adrian Veidt's company branches, there are two other real commercials of products advertized in the eighties: Seiko first digital quartz liquid crystal chronograph and Sani-Flush®, a bathroom bowl cleaner by Reckitt Benckiser Company.

Therefore, it is possible to say that, although the supplementary material of the graphic novel was not entirely adapted in *Watchmen*'s motion picture, the pseudo-TV documentary successfully achieved the same effect on the viewer, conferring a greater authenticity to the fictional world of *Watchmen*. And, together with the *Tales of the Black Freighter*, the *Culpeper Minute* program provides an attempt to fill in the gaps of the film adaptation of the graphic novel.

Additionally, conforming with the initial intention of director Zack Snyder, after the DVD film version and the *Tales of the Black Freighter* DVD were released, the *Watchmen* franchise saw an extra version of the film. *Watchmen: The Ultimate Cut* combines the director's cut version (which is the theatrical version with additional scenes deleted due to the film's long duration for movie theaters) and the *Tales of the Black Freighter*. The "Tales" story is intertwined in the main narrative, as in the graphic novel.

b. Transmedia Storytelling in *Watchmen*

However, watching the film, the animated pirate story and the fictitious documentary is not enough for the viewer to learn the complete *Watchmen* film experience. Rather, the film narrative is spread among other media, characterizing what is known as *transmedia storytelling* or *transmedia narrative*. Drawing from Genette's concept of transtextuality

(1982), in transmedia storytelling the story is spread among a series of different media. Instead of working as a parasite of the main text as in the case of pastiche, allusion and plagiarism, transmedia narrative works in symbiosis with the main text, complicating or completing its narrative.

In *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins develops the term, saying that it designates a new kind of narrative, where the "story unfolds across multiple platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (95, 96). Although each medium makes a valuable contribution to the whole narrative, there is, however, the recognition of an ur-text, which must be preserved, while some moments in the narrative become "entrypoints" to be explored by other media. In most of the cases, the ur-text is the motion picture, which is unfolded across several media, such as internet websites, mobile communication, video games, etc[26].

For Jenkins, the first time a case of transmedia storytelling happened was in *Star Wars*, marking the beginning of a new cinematic era: the replacement of the blockbuster phenomenon with film franchises. In a franchise such as *Star Wars*, the film screened in the theater is only one element of the complex cinematic experience. Other media converge, integrating multiple texts to create a larger narrative the film is not able to hold.

However, one aspect of transmedia storytelling should be clarified. Although a single medium does not contain the whole narrative, every medium keeps its autonomous narrative quality, cooperating self-sufficiently to create a more complex transmedia narrative. Take, for instance, a film's narrative that finds several entry points, which are expanded across websites and video games. Often, in this situation, the viewer does not have to see the film to enjoy the

26. In *Iron Man 2*, for instance, fans have the opportunity to fill in an application for a position at Stark's Industries, whose owner is Tony Stark, the comic book protagonist and superhero. The <http://www.starkindustriesnow.com> is an internet domain exclusively created to promote the film, planned to be released in May 2010. In return, a fan may receive an email from the company's human resources department, complimenting on the high-level profile and confirming him/her among the considered candidates for the job.

video game or the website, because they are narratively self-contained. The opposite is also true: it is not mandatory to play the video game and access the website in order to understand the film. However, a broader, more comprehensive understanding of the film narrative can only be achieved through a transmediatic storytelling experience. In other words, the consumer who has played the game or surfed the film-related websites, will have a different, expanded experience of the franchise than the one who has simply watched the theatrical film version[27].

Transmedia strategies transform the role of producers and audience. As film theorist David Bordwell observes on his blog, transmedia storytelling was only possible because of the explosion of digital technology in cinema and this "has transformed the role of the filmmaker. Besides the script, the filmmaker should generate interaction trees and events that spill across film, websites, mobile communication, Twitter, gaming, YouTube, etc". (*On Transmedia Storytelling*) In many cases, the conception of transmedia events in media other than the film begins together with or even before the production of the film.

Actually, the transmedia events created by certain film franchises are so complex and wide that narrative expands beyond the follower's grasp[28]. Information is dispersed through a multitude of media – especially websites – and it seems an impossible task to trace all of them. In my view, this is a reflection of the way information is diffused in our society today, particularly in relation to the manner we access information on the Internet. In the World Wide Web environment, information is offered beyond our grasp, as links endlessly lead us from one page to another. Similarly, in transmedia storytelling, information is dispersed; the narrative does not end when the film ends. The impossibility of knowing everything on the

27. The intermedial transposition works in a quite similar manner. The one who has read the graphic novel before watching the film will certainly experience the latter differently.

28. One of the most notorious recent examples of transmedia storytelling is Christopher Nolan's *Batman: The Dark Knight* (2008), in which it was combined with an Alternate Reality Game (ARG), a phenomenon that blurs the line between fiction and reality. As part of a brilliant marketing campaign, fans participated in real-life tasks and had to collectively solve puzzles, find clues and access dozens of websites related to the film in order to have access to exclusive material of the film, months before its release date. The website <http://batman.wikibruce.com> presents a tentative compendium of transmedia tools used to promote the film.

Internet is replicated in cinema: the film franchise contains more information than anyone can retain from a single contact with the transmediatic events.

This marks a shift from traditional models of audience interactions with media. Jenkins describes participatory audience as migratory, in the sense that they will "go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (2). For Bordwell, audience must also identify themselves as part of a fandom. Only in this case would people be motivated to follow up on all pieces of narrative; and transmedia storytelling would generate a good profit margin. The fact is that, in transmedia narrative, spectators assume new responsibilities. Instead of simply watching the film from a movie theater seat, it is now required that they engage in other actions, seeking out new information in other media, buying products from the franchise, or interacting with other people with the same interests. Consequently, spectators assume new roles as consumers, users and "hunters".

This entire discussion on transmedia storytelling is indispensable to the analysis of narrative transpositions not only because it is a recent and notorious phenomenon in contemporary cinema and because it was used in *Watchmen* – as will be explained – but, most importantly, because film adaptations of comic books and graphic novels have provided the ideal soil for transmedia storytelling techniques. Two reasons apparently collaborate to that tendency.

First, the reader of comics is different from other types of reader. The motivations for an increasing number of film franchises with transmedia storytelling are mainly economic. Today, it is required that the film is explored to the fullest, aiming at profit beyond the box-office. Thus, franchises must attract a larger audience than that of a feature film. Comics readers are very different from readers of traditional novels in the sense that they are really part of a fandom, which provides the ideal audience for transmedia storytelling. Few novels

attract such a passionate and large group of readers and followers, willing to go to the theater to watch the adaptation and hunt for related information through several other media[29].

The second reason is the fact that fictional worlds created in almost the totality of comic books and graphic novels provide wonderful material to be explored in transmedia. Although the types of gaps filled in by transmedia events can be a film's open ending, uncertainties about a character's motivations or small roles of secondary characters with great public appeal, one of the most notorious functions of transmedia narrative is to create contextualizing devices, in order to provide fictional worlds with a greater sense of realism. "More and more, storytelling has become the art of world building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium" (Jenkins, 114). Few novels[30] are able to provide the necessary tools to create a fictional world complex enough to be explored across several media. Together with science fiction literature, comics have a special talent to construct detailed fictional worlds where superheroes are possible and violence abounds. The serialization of a comics title over decades creates a kind of mythological aspect to some culturally known environments such as *Gotham City* and *Metropolis*[31], which makes the transmedia task of world-building more effective, as a larger audience is reached. In the *Batman: The Dark Knight* franchise, for instance, a police department website provides fake reports on incidents that take place in the film. In *Watchmen*, the *New Frontiersman* newspaper website presents fake pictures and headlines that comment on events of the movie.

Therefore, because of comics fandom – which attracts a larger audience than simply moviegoers – and because of the mythology surrounding comics fictional worlds, comics adaptations offer the ideal conditions for successful transmedia storytelling. And indeed, year

29. Cases such as Harry Potter, *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Twilight* series would be exceptions.

30. Film adaptations with successful transmedia storytelling cases are generally based on multi-volume novel series.

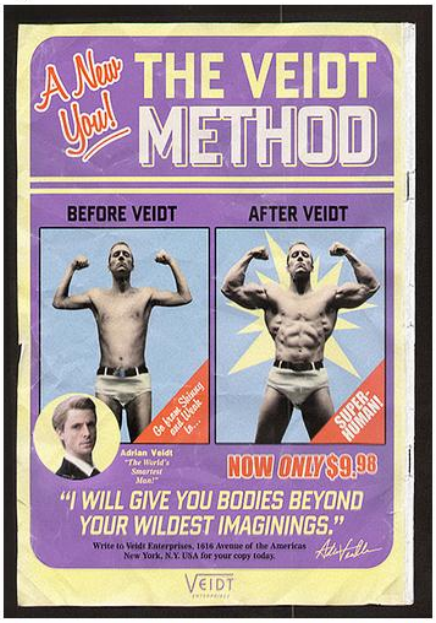
31. Cities where the stories of *Batman* and *Superman* respectively happen.

after year, the number of comics adaptations exploring transmedia storytelling has constantly increased. Consequently, more than a simple predisposition, my claim is that, when a film is adapted from a comic book or a graphic novel, transmedia storytelling should be analyzed together with other traditional elements in adaptation studies such as narrative, genre and montage.

In Snyder's *Watchmen*, transmedia storytelling is mainly used to support the alternate world of the graphic novel, providing fake documents, newspaper headlines and magazine covers that confirm the events in the graphic novel and the film. Actually, a considerable part of this fictitious material is already present in the graphic novel; thus, instead of constructing new narrative details, film producers simply provided them in other media. This was necessary because of movement in film, in contrast with the static image of the graphic novel. While in Alan Moore's work one could read all newspaper headlines and magazine covers illustrating the frames, in the film, it is impossible to observe all the details, not even by pausing the image at the exact time these elements appear; sometimes, they are not close enough for the spectator to read the same information s/he would be able to do in the graphic novel.

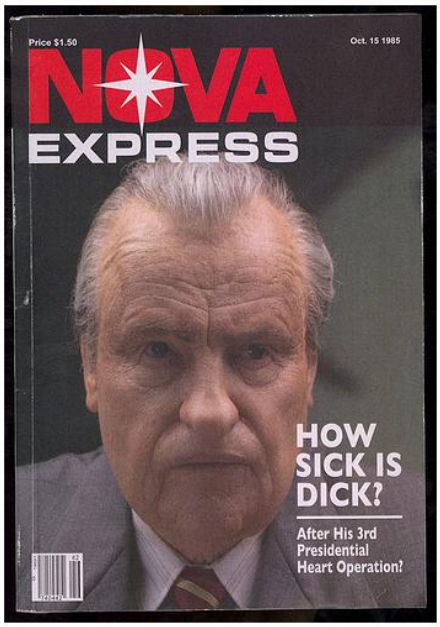
In this sense, the website domain *The New Frontiersman* was created with a link to the newspaper's profile on *Flickr* electronic photo album, with dozens of posters, magazine covers and newspaper pages that appear in the graphic novel, but are not seen in the film with great detail. The "Veidt Method" page appears in the graphic novel in several frames from chapters 3 to 12. And the front cover of the fictitious *Nova Express* magazine entitled "How Sick is Dick? After 3rd Presidential Heart Op?" appears in chapters 2 and 3 of the graphic novel (see fig. 6).

A New You! THE VEIDT METHOD



An advertisment for Adrian Veidt's self-help program THE VEIDT METHOD, appearing on the back of an issue of TALES OF THE BLACK FREIGHTER.

How Sick is Dick?



Nova Express (Oct 15, 1985) - leads with an article about the recent heart operation of President Richard Nixon

Fig. 6: *Watchmen* Photos at Flickr

Besides reconstructing material that is not seen in the film in great detail, the transmedia tools provided by the film franchise extrapolate in many ways the graphic novel narrative. Some of the photos published at Flickr are material not found in the graphic novel. At the *New Frontiersman* newspaper web domain, there is also the link to four videos, to which the graphic novel does not make any reference. They are a TV program on world politics, talking about the decisive role of Dr. Manhattan in the American victory in Vietnam; a government institutional video explaining the Keene Act and warning people against masked heroes; a program on Veidt Music Network imitating the MTV style; and a news report program aired on March 11th, 1970, looking back at ten years since the existence of Dr. Manhattan (see fig. 7). Here, again, the main purpose of these videos is to support the fictitious world of *Watchmen*.

Fig. 7: *Watchmen* YouTube videos: "Who Watches the Watchmen? A Veidt Music Network" and "NBS Nightly News with Ted Philip"

Another remarkable transmedia storytelling strategy in the film franchise is carried out by video games. The fan has the opportunity to interact with superheroes in situations that are transmedia extensions of the main work's narrative. The events narrated in the four video games available are seen neither in the graphic novel nor in the film. Additionally, the video games' narratives are completely self-contained: you do not have to see the film to enjoy the video games, although your understanding of the video game context will certainly be improved by doing so. In the same way, the user/spectator does not have to play the video games in order to understand the film.

In the online “Minutemen Arcade”, Snyder and his team produce an old-fashioned style video game designed as the arcade 8-bit video games from the eighties (as fig. 8 illustrates). The fan is able to choose between characters Silk Spectre I and Nite Owl I to fight against their archenemy Moloch and his gang in 1942 New York. The “Minutemen Arcade” was released before the film, with the aim of generating publicity for the theatrical screening release.

Fig. 8: “Minutemen Arcade” online video game.

In “Watchmen - The Mobile Game”, the fan is able to personify the Comedian or Nite Owl II characters by turns in five levels, each introduced by an excerpt of Rorschach’s

journal. In chapter 0, Nite Owl and Rorschach confront the villain Big Figure; in chapter 1 the character Comedian fights in Vietnam; chapter 2 shows a strike chaos in New York; in chapter 3, the Comedian is in Vietnam again but this time he fights with Dr. Manhattan's help; and in chapter 4, because of the Keene act, character Nite Owl fights in his final night as a vigilante[32].

In a web domain created for that specific purpose, fans are able to download the online multiplayer game "Watchmen: Justice is Coming" designed for iPhone and iPod touch. The game, which was released on March 2nd 2009, features *Watchmen*'s main characters and it is set in 1975.

The fourth video game of the *Watchmen* franchise is "Watchmen: The End is Nigh", a video game designed for personal computers, Playstation and Xbox. It is also set in 1975, ten years before the time of the graphic novel narrative and two years before the hero-banning Keene Act. In part one, Rorschach and Nite Owl must fight Underboss, a criminal who has just broken out of prison, and his gang. In part two, they have to solve the case of a missing girl, Violet Greene, but along the way Rorschach discovers that a woman from his past is involved in the disappearance. Since no mention is made to Underboss or Violet Greene either in the graphic novel or in the film, it is possible to conclude that "Watchmen: The End is Nigh" represents an extension of the main work's narrative in another medium, a good example of transmedia storytelling.

Besides the DVDs, video games and related websites with fictitious material, the film franchise also provides a central internet domain with a multitude of apparatuses to promote the movie. A fan gets access to information about characters, trailer videos, posters, wallpapers, buddy icons and screensavers downloads, picture gallery, CDs for sale with the movie's soundtrack and the music score and a shop website with items such as characters'

32. Chapter division taken from <http://www.watchmencomicmovie.com>

action figures, costumes, glassware, lunchboxes, and shirts[33]. Additionally, through the "I Watch the Watchmen" domain, the user can add the film's profile pictures and skins in her favorite social network (*MySpace* and *Facebook*, for instance) or even "grab" the widget to follow on the latest news of the film production and receive exclusive material, as shown in fig. 9.

These mechanisms also represent a distinct attempt to reach a larger audience but they cannot be confused with transmedia storytelling because they do not add any events to the narrative of the film. They are franchise mechanisms used in the promotion of the movie. In my opinion, there is a clear distinction between the contribution of a video game to the film narrative and the contribution of social network gadgets or action figures souvenirs. While the DVD, other related DVDs and video games may be considered transmedia storytelling, it seems that posters, trailers and social network devices may not. However, while this proposition may fit very well for the case of *Watchmen*, it still requires scrutiny in relation to how all these satellite events and ancillary tools work on other film franchises.

33. And, there is also the *Watchmen Motion Comics* DVD, a new medium which is a combination of both comics and animation cinema, whose analysis would certainly demand a whole chapter or maybe a whole thesis.

Fig. 9: Previous page: The main domain. This page: Tools for social network and material to promote the film.

Conclusion

In the past, the analysis of the relations involving film and comics narratives was limited to establishing parallels between the languages of the two media. Today, the cinematic experience has extrapolated that and the comics narrative is extended beyond the film across several media, generally used with the purpose of recreating the comics fictional world, granting it a higher level of veracity. In comic book adaptations, this has been more and more frequent and especially because of the mythology involving comic book superheroes. In graphic novels, this is also possible. However, as they are not narratives known to a wide public, there is the risk of a first-time spectator getting lost with so much information spread through several media.

In *Watchmen*, a solution to the graphic novel long storyline made up of 12 issues, was to separate the "Tales of the Black Freighter" from the superhero storyline, releasing it in a separate medium format (an animated film). "The Culpeper Minute" was an alternative to the graphic novel extra material at the end of each chapter. In the Flickr photo album, material

such as letters and newspaper articles – identified or not in the graphic novel – could be seen with greater detail than in the film. Four videos posted on YouTube also provide veracity to the fictional world of *Watchmen*. Four different types of video games also offer new elements to the graphic novel and the film's narrative, but the same function cannot be identified in some film-related elements such as wallpapers, buddy icons and social network devices.

The more transmedia storytelling elements a certain film franchise has, the more difficult it becomes to critically analyze and evaluate the film narrative. In spite of that, my claim is that the narrative analysis of a film today, and especially the analysis of a comics adaptation to cinema must always conceive its narrative extensions across other media.

"… let us leave the editing to the
cinema (and to the photo-novel)
and fasten ourselves to the study
of the page layout – which
the cinema cannot do".
Groensteen, *The System of Comics*, 102.

CHAPTER 3: LAYOUT ASPECTS

Literature Review

The fact that the page of a book or a comic book is different from the film screen – be it the theater, the television or the computer screen – is certainly not open to doubt. However, the aspects that explain this evident difference may not be so evident and must definitely not be overlooked. In this chapter, after a brief commentary on works that have dealt specifically with the layout of film screen and comics pages, we are going to examine the predominant types of page layouts in Frank Miller's *Sin City* and their effect on the reader of this graphic novel. Then, we will point out some of the principles that may have guided the directors' choices when deciding how the pages were to be transposed to the film.

First, it is worth remembering that the screen layout is different from the film layout (or the layout of finished film images). While the former designates the format of the screen – standardized, with constant frames –, the latter is the product of the composition (the arrangement of settings and subjects within the frame), the cinematography (type of film stock, lighting and camera lenses, distances, angles and movements) and the editing processes. The screen layout, as meant by Lefèvre, is only affected by changes in the aspect

ratio[34] or by untraditional techniques generally used only in experimental films (Phillips, *Film: An Introduction*, 334).

Lefèvre enumerates four main differences between the layout of the film screen and the comics page. The first difference mentioned is that a closer range between the comics page and the reader implies a more personal experience than film viewing, since the spectator is generally positioned at a distance from the screen. In addition, the fact that the reader has to turn the pages of the book while the spectator watches passively as the movie story unfolds, conveys the idea that the reader is more committed to the act of reading than the spectator is to the act of viewing. In this respect, I feel more inclined to side with Linda Hutcheon, to whom the act of watching a representation of a story on the screen is "imaginatively, cognitively, and emotionally active" and not in any way passive (*A Theory of Adaptation*, 23).

The second aspect pointed out by Lefèvre is that the reader is able to choose his/her own reading speed and direction, with the possibility of coming back to previous panels for more details or even skipping panels. On the other hand, a film forces the spectator to follow the rhythm of the sequences being projected. In the previous chapter, we have already seen that the DVD technology has contributed to the approximation of reading and viewing experiences, allowing the spectator to organize his own viewing experience by selecting "chapters".

Third, while comics is generally made up of several frames spatially organized on the page, the film screen is usually filled with twenty-four photograms per second, arranged in a linear temporal sequence. Or, in Scott McCloud's words, "[e]ach successive frame of a movie is projected on exactly the same space – the screen – while each frame of comics must occupy a different space. Space does for comics what time does for film!" (*Understanding Comics*, 7)

34. "The aspect ratio indicates the shape of an image, specifically the relationship of the image's width to its height" (Phillips, 31). The main types of aspect ratio are: standard aspect ratio, wide-screen and letterbox format.

Comics panels can be presented in a multitude of dimensions, shapes and locations on the page. In contrast, films follow a standardized screen format. Thierry Groensteen has also analyzed that aspect concluding that "[i]n cinema, the constancy of the frame is a natural gift of the medium (with which some filmmakers sometimes enjoy playing); in comics, it can only be the result of an aesthetic choice"[35].

Finally, it is important to consider that in cinema, shooting and editing are two distinct and consecutive steps of production. First, scenes are performed and shot; next, this preexisting material is edited. In comics, the drawing and the disposition of frames on a page usually happen together; they are inseparable and simultaneous processes. The artist cannot think of starting working on a page without first having at least a mental draft of the way the chosen images and words will be organized.

For Will Eisner, the process of 'writing' comics can be divided into two steps: the first involves "the conception of an idea, the arrangement of image elements and the construction of the sequence of the narration and the composing of dialogue" (*Comics and Sequential Art*, 122). In the next step, the story is 'découpaged'; the plot is submitted to the limitations of space and technology of the medium. The size of the page, the number of pages, the process of reproduction and the available colors influence the *découpage*. (128)

According to Scott McCloud, in the process of creating comics, an artist must make five choices. There must be a choice of moment, in which the artist must decide "which moments to include in a comics story and which to leave out" (*Making Comics*, 10). After that, s/he must choose how to frame those moments. Next, the artist has to choose the characters, objects and environments to be drawn inside the frames, as well as picking words that collaborate with the images, but which do not merely repeat the message conveyed by the image. And finally, there must be a choice of flow, with the purpose of finding the best

35. "Au cinéma, la constance du cadre est une donnée naturelle du médium (avec laquelle certains cinéastes se plaisent parfois à ruser); en bande dessinée, elle ne peut être que le résultat d'un choix esthétique". ("Du 7e au 9e art: l'inventaire des singularités" p. 24) My translation.

arrangement of panels on a page so readers are guided "through and between panels" without confusion (10). For McCloud, the choices of moment, frame and flow generally precede the decisions of image and word. Although it is not clearly stated, it seems that all five choices influence the final result of the page layout and its effects on the reader, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the personal style of the artist and the desired effect.

One interesting approach on layout is developed by Thierry Groensteen in the article "Du 7e au 9e art: l'inventaire des singularités", as he examines the differences involving films and comics. Groensteen suggests that, in order to analyze the aspects concerning comics and films, it is important to distinguish three criteria: a. the material of expression, b. the process of elaboration and c. the mode of articulation. While the first criterion is the quality and type of image in both media – the subject of the fifth chapter of this thesis –, the second is more connected to the director's/artist's personal style, image choices (objects and characters to be shot/drawn, distance, angle, frame, colors, illumination, etc) and image making (shot and edited in cinema and drawn in comics). Although the choices made in these first two criteria will certainly affect the overall aspect of the page/screen layout, for the theorist, the criterion which grants the most significant results in terms of layout is the mode of articulation. The mode of articulation category is present both in film and in comics, although it comprises different procedures in each medium.

In cinema, the mode of articulation is called *mise en chaîne*[36]. This process is more commonly known as editing or montage and it denotes the articulation of pieces of shot material into a coherent filmic discourse, organized according to time which must obey the chronology and duration planned for the movie. (26)

36. In the process of elaboration and the mode of articulation of cinema, Groensteen uses the terminology *mise en chaîne* as proposed by André Gaudreault in *Du littéraire au filmique: système du récit*. Paris: Méridiens/ Klincksieck, 1988.

In comics, the mode of articulation is called by Groensteen as *mise en réseau*. The *mise en réseau* can be subdivided into three moments: the *découpage*[37], the *mise en page* and the *tressage*[38]. Whereas the main concern of the *découpage* and the *tressage* is the semantic articulation of narrative content between and throughout panels and pages (which, to some extent, was examined in the beginning of the previous chapter), it is the function of the *mise en page* to define the fundamental aspects of the page layout, assuring the best proportion and position of panels within a page, so as to ensure the reader a page with an efficient aesthetic global order.

The *mise en page*, as Groensteen terms it, defines a specific surface, form and place for each panel on the page. It deals with the contiguity of images, organizing on one page (or, in some cases, in a double-page composition) the proper number of frames, whose content had already been determined by the *découpage* (28). Even though choices on the *découpage* and the *tressage* certainly influence the final page layout, they do not determine it; this is the function of the *mise en page*. As a matter of fact, it is possible to say that the terms *mise en page* and page layout are absolutely synonymous for the Belgian theorist.

Therefore, while in cinema, the *mise en chaîne* category determines the layout, in comics, the aesthetic portion of the page is defined in a sub-category within the *mise en réseau*: the *mise en page*. This distinction reinforces the different procedures involving the *mise en chaîne* and the *mise en réseau*; they are not equivalent processes in the two media. This distinction is important because, as Groensteen argues, in cinema, "[t]he term *editing* (*montage*) is encountered sometimes in studies on comics, in order to designate either the layout or a sort of compromise between the layout and the breakdown" (*The System of*

37. The *découpage* – a term also commonly used in cinema – "consists in dividing the action in formally and materially autonomous units, the panels or frames" which have to offer the reader a "veritable illusion of continuity" (26).

38. The *tressage* establishes a dialogue between two or more panels within a page (contiguous or not) or within several pages, adding significant correspondences between them. These correspondences can result from the use of isomorphism, symmetry, opposition, repetition or the complementarity of colors (28).

Comics, 101). According to the author, this statement is wrong for two reasons. First, because, in opposition to the cinematic *mise en chaîne* – which obeys a single linear dimension (time) –, in the *mise en réseau* the pieces of material are subjected to a dual principle of organization: time and space. And second, because filming and editing in cinema are two distinct and consecutive processes – first, the movie is shot; then this material is edited. In comics, the drawing and arrangement of panels are solidary steps (see table 2). This means that, before starting working on a comics page, an artist must think about the appropriate images, angles, distances, words, panel split-ups and connections and their layout on the page. All these aspects are considered in tandem and concomitantly.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>CINEMA</th><th colspan="2">COMICS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Mode of articulation</td><td rowspan="3">*Mise en chaîne* (the organization of preexisting material pieces acc. to time)</td><td rowspan="3">*Mise en réseau* (the organization of panels acc. to time and space)</td><td>*découpage*</td></tr>
<tr><td>*mise en page* (page layout)</td></tr>
<tr><td>*tressage*</td></tr>
</table>

Table 2: Groensteen's mode of articulation compared in comics and films.

A large part of Groensteen's work has been dedicated to analyzing the principles governing page layout. In *The System of Comics*, the author discusses the ideas developed by Benoît Peeters, one of the few researchers who had considered the subject before him. In *Case, Planche, Récit*, Peeters suggests a typology of four conceptions involving page layout. According to him, panels are organized on a page with conventional, decorative, rhetorical or productive purposes. However, as Groensteen affirms, some pages can respond to several of Peeters's categories at the same time (93). Instead, in order to analyze and describe the layout of a comics page, one must answer three questions proposed by Groensteen: First, is the page layout regular or irregular? Second, is it discrete or ostentatious? And third, what is the artist's motivation for choosing that specific layout?

In order to determine if a page is regular, one may consider three elements[39]. First, if several pages are divided in the same way; next, if panels on a single page have the same height; and finally, if the width of panels is constant. An irregular panel may adapt itself to the width of the content to be represented. In Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, for instance, the layout is regular most of the time, in the form of a three-by-three (or nine-panel) grid or variations of it (see fig. 10). According to Groensteen, a regular division has certain advantages. Besides conferring a fundamental pace of narration to the work, it also increases the impact of those pages that move away from the traditional configuration. In *Watchmen*, this is the case of "Fearful Symmetry", the fifth chapter. Among eleven chapters of regular pages, it stands out by a change in the three-by-three grid pattern, creating a mirror-like quality, as the title of the chapter suggests. The result is that the chapter is symmetrically designed: the panels on the first page are reproduced almost identically on the last page of the chapter; the layout of the second page is practically similar to the layout of the page before the last, etc. Exactly in the middle of the chapter, a single image occupies the central portion of a double-page composition, as in a mirror.

Deciding if a page is discrete or ostentatious is absolutely subjective. It depends on the reader to determine whether, on a certain page, the emphasis is on the story being told or on the images being shown. In the case of the former, the page would be considered discrete; in the latter, ostentatious.

With the purpose of facilitating the task of answering the third question, Groensteen suggests that we look for the correlation between iconic and narrative contents. The connection between these two elements may help us understand the artist's motivation for choosing a certain layout for a page. However, one should be aware that, similarly to what

39. The three elements that define regularity (or levels of regularity) are discussed in greater detail in Groensteen's article "Tendances Contemporaines de la Mise en Page", 44.

happens in literary studies, the search for the artist's or author's motivation may lead to extremely problematic inferences.

Fig. 10: The regular grid page layout in *Watchmen* and one of its variations. (Chapter VII, 1; Chapter XI, 12)

Fig. 11: The mirror-like central double-page composition in "Fearful Symmetry" (Chapter V, 14;15)

Whatever the layout chosen by the artist, Groensteen argues that frames must be drawn and arranged in such a way that: a. They respond to compatible options, since the choice of one frame on a page restricts the range of possibilities for others; b. they offer the reader a reading route devoid of ambiguity and; c. they obey a principle of aesthetic order.

This aesthetic order may be considered in two distinct levels: the local level of a particular panel and the global level of the page (101). In the local level of a panel, the reader's vision is focused on a certain panel's aesthetic features, resulting in a moment-to-moment visual reading. In the global level of the page, the reader's vision is peripheral; s/he should consider the page's (or, in some cases, the double-page's) aesthetic qualities from a panoramic perspective. The page is visually read in its totality.

This dual aesthetic function of an image on a comics page is also discussed by two other authors: Charles Hatfield and Joseph Witek. For Charles Hatfield, for instance, it is one of the four tensions that are fundamental to the comics medium. A single image has to be considered in two ways at once: as a sequence and as surface.

> "From a reader's point of view, then, there is always the potential to choose between seeing the single image as a moment in sequence and seeing it in more holistic fashion, as a design element that contributes to the overall balance (or in some cases the meaningful *im*balance) of the layout. The latter way of seeing privileges the dimensions of the total page/ *planche*/ surface, yet still invokes the meaning of the overall narrative sequence to explain why the page might be formatted as it is"[40] ("The Art of Tensions", 144).

40. Author's original italics.

Therefore, while in the first situation the reader interprets the image as a single moment in the story (generally "read" in a linear, sequential fashion), in the second, the image has a nonsequential function; it is perceived from a panoptic point of view.

In the essay "The Arrow and the Grid", Joseph Witek substantiates this double function of the comics page, distinguishing between the "mere collection of entirely discrete individual panels" and the "overall visual composition" (152). Additionally, he claims that the reader must be "trained to perceive the comics page as both a linked sequence of separate panels and as a meaningful semiotic field in itself" (155)

At some point, however, it seems that Hatfield and Witek tend to consider the two levels of reading (sequence versus surface, or local versus global) only in relation to their narrative function, as if their importance were limited to the comprehension of the storyline. Nevertheless, it must be made clear that the two perspectives are also relevant in terms of aesthetics. Together, they are one of the several elements that characterize the page layout. Therefore, not only the narrative meaning, but also the design of the page must be considered in these two distinct image levels. This means that the reader should be able to observe the page layout in two ways at once: in a frame-to-frame and in a whole-page perspective.

Page layouts may significantly vary in comics and it is also possible to identify cyclical tendencies of page layouts. According to Groensteen, one of the most recurrent tendencies in contemporary productions – which is certainly marked by a great variety of styles – is the use of *images-bandeaux* or *cases paysages*, in which the image occupies the total width of the page. In a mostly regular layout work, a supersized panel such as the *image-bandeau* interrupts the rhythm of the story, causing a feeling of visual shock to the reader ("Tendances Contemporaines de la Mise en Page", 45).

Works from the same artist may also present different layout patterns. Frank Miller, for instance, is known for a great diversity in this aspect. Each of his present-day works

displays a distinct quality and some of them have unusual or totally irregular page layouts in which the idea of strips as an essential element of the comics medium is completely abandoned. In general, the artist regularly employs full-page, larger-than-a-page and even double-page panoramic compositions, upon which small frames are sometimes superimposed (see fig. 12).

Fig. 12: A larger-than-a-page and a double-page compositions (back and front covers in Miller's *300*).

These extremely large compositions sometimes get to cross the hyperframe of the page, causing the page to resemble a painting or even a film photogram. Perhaps because of this *auteurial*[41] characteristic, Miller's works have inspired several adaptations to cinema. This is the case of *300*, a 2007 film by director Zack Snyder, as shown in fig. 13.

Fig 13: A double-page composition from Miller's *300* and a frame in its film version.

41. A term derived from the expression *auteur theory*, generally used in relation to a film that embodies recurrent subjects, techniques, and meanings because of a particular set of attributes possessed by the filmmaker; the author is the dominant figure in the creation of the work. (Phillips, 540)

In the next section, I will analyze the page layout in Frank Miller's *Sin City* and the screen layout in its film version, according to Groensteen's ideas on the subject.

Page and Screen Layouts in *Sin City*

Sin City is a noir-style graphic novel series by artist Frank Miller, published during the 1990s. It is mostly drawn in black and white high contrast, although sometimes colors are used to highlight elements for specific purposes. *Sin City* is a typical hard-boiled detective narrative, with cartels, criminal enterprises, corrupt policemen and *femmes fatales*. The series has six main stories and several other independent short stories, brought together in one volume. The stories are all set in the violent Basin City, a fictional town in the American west, where the only law in effect is one's own sense of justice. The storylines in the *Sin City* graphic novels constantly overlap one another causing characters from different books to meet unexpectedly or creating situations in which a certain character refers to episodes found in other books.

The 2005 film by Robert Rodriguez condenses the plots of three books and each of them describes one man's personal journey: In "The Hard Goodbye", Marv sets out to revenge the death of a prostitute who was murdered in bed, right beside him. "The Big Fat Kill" tells the story of Dwight McCarthy who, after the accidental assassination of a policeman in the "Old Town", the red-light district in *Sin City*, attempts to protect his prostitute friends. In "That Yellow Bastard" the protagonist is John Hartigan, the last honest cop in town. On the day of his retirement, Hartigan decides to save a girl from the unscrupulous hands of Roark Jr., the demented son of a senator who kills young girls for the thrill of it. Besides the three books, the film's prologue is taken from the short story "The

Customer is Always Right" from the book "Booze, Broads, & Bullets", which sets the tone of the film.

In the movie, the plots from the three books and the short story are played in the following order: the prologue from "The Customer is Always Right", "That Yellow Bastard", "The Hard Goodbye", "The Big Fat Kill", "That Yellow Bastard". Also, at the end of the film there is an epilogue, where the character from "The Customer is Always Right" returns to murder Becky, a character from "The Big Fat Kill". This epilogue sequence was originally written for the film. It should be noted that the chronology used in the film version is not the same of the events in the graphic novel series, as John Hartigan's suicide, for instance, played in the film after Marv's and Dwight's plotlines, actually happens years before the events of these two stories in Miller's series.

Much of the success of the film lies in its faithfulness to various elements of the graphic novel, such as its hard-boiled writing style with an abundance of voice-over narration, as well as its uncensored violent events. However, the strict adherence to the graphic novel visual style is the main reason for the critical and commercial success of the film.

From all elements related to *Sin City*'s unique visual style, its characters, scenery and coloring processes will be discussed in the chapter 5. For now, the analysis will concentrate on the pages of the graphic novel and the photograms of the film on screen, which will be studied comparatively.

Completely different from Alan Moore's *Watchmen* in terms of page layout, in the *Sin City* series the layout is irregular. Yet, some specific layouts are seen repeatedly. Although panels are not treated as fundamental elements of a page, their use is recurrent; so is the use of strips, another trademark of comics. However, the way these well-known comics elements are employed is very different from their traditional use.

Regular three- and four-strip pages (strips similar in height and width), for instance, are quite uncommon. There are around eight of them in *Sin City: The Hard Good-Bye*'s 200 pages. Strips of similar height, but divided in different ways (columns of irregular sizes) are a little more common; they occur on approximately ten pages. Equally sized panels covering a whole page are extremely rare; only three cases were found (a three-by-three, a three-by-two and a two-by-three grid on pages 73, 36 and 19 respectively, as in fig. 14).

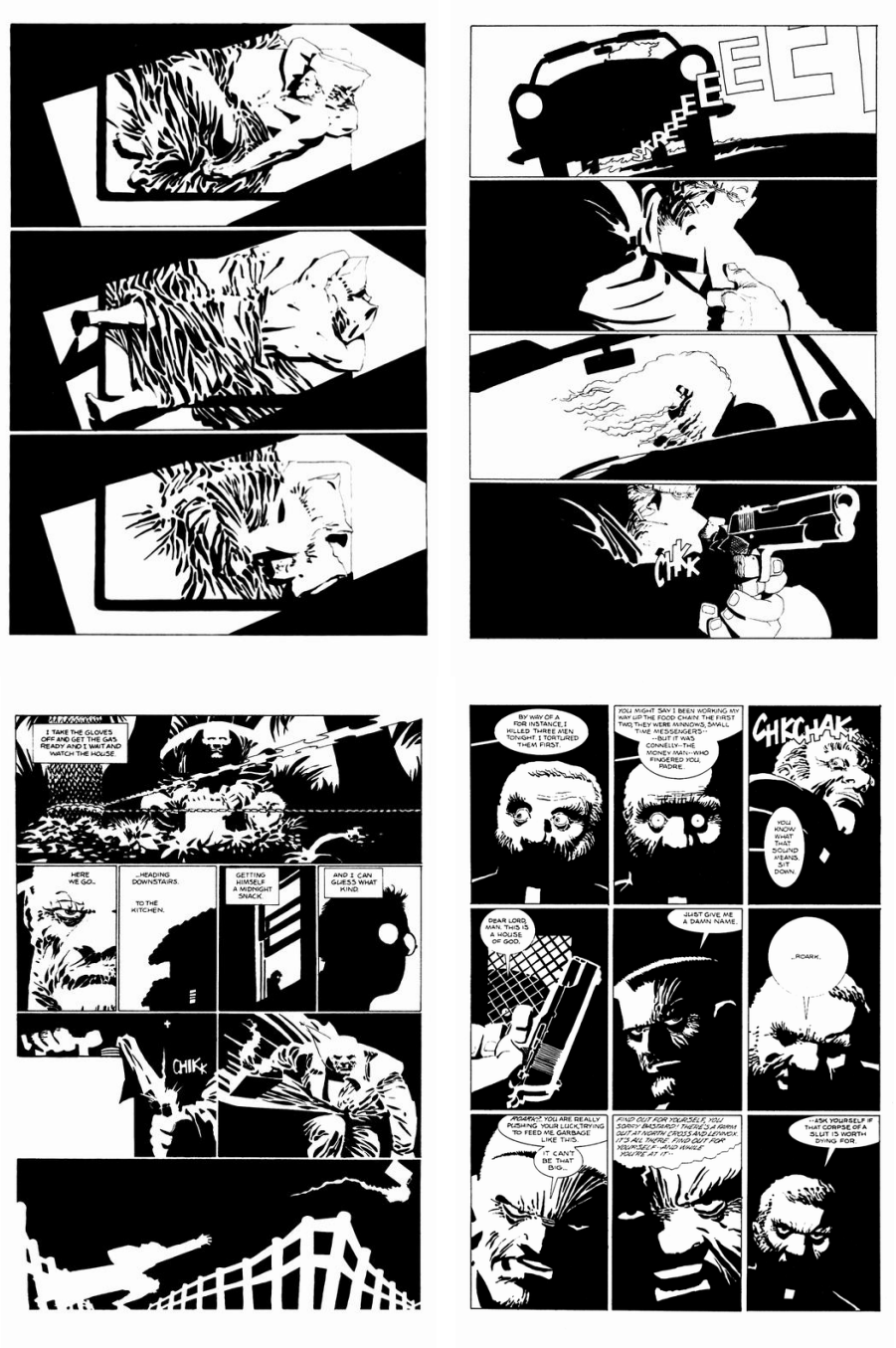


Fig. 14: Examples from *The Hard Goodbye*: Regular three- and four-strip pages (68; 77), strips of equal height, but divided in irregular columns (167) and equally-sized panels forming a three-by-three grid on a page (73).

As it happens with other works by Frank Miller, there is a profuse use of full-page compositions in *Sin City* that can either comply with the space of the white page margin or not. The difference from other works that use this same page layout is that, in the hard-boiled series, characters generally appear in completely blank or dark pages, because of the high black and white contrast style. In this type of layout, emphasis is given to the characters rather than the scenery, since no or sometimes only a few elements from the background are highlighted (see fig. 15). Also common are the double-page compositions, although they are not used as frequently as the full-page layout; the double-pages often exceed the page margins and are generally used in the opening of chapters. Another significant aspect is that both full-page and double-page compositions often have to dispute the reader's attention with other small superimposed panels (see fig. 16).

Fig 15: Blank and dark full-pages. ("The Hard Good-Bye", 34 and "That Yellow Bastard", 57).

Fig. 16: A full-page and a double page composition with superimposed panels. ("The Big Fat Kill", 160; 162-63).

With the exception of these identified layouts, the rest of graphic novel pages use a widely variable layout design in which abrupt changes occur from page to page for no apparent reason other than to visually shock and destabilize the reader.

Considering that in cinema the screen layout is completely regular, the inconstancy of layout in Miller's work may seem at first a huge obstacle. Nevertheless, the abundance of

full-page and double-page compositions in *Sin City* favors its film adaptation, as pages are successfully used as storyboards. Or, as Keith Booker puts it: "The [*Sin City*] graphic novels are used essentially as storyboards for the film, and numerous frames of the film can be recognized as virtual reproductions of specific panels from the novels" (*May Contain Graphic Material,* 159). Actually, it is the first time in the history of comics adaptations that the director has made a sincere effort to view the page as a storyboard for the film, ready to be shot in all its visual and verbal elements[42].

Yet, not all pages correspond to an identical frame in the film. In cases where multiple panels are arranged on one page or several small embedded panels are found in one larger panel or in a full-page composition, each panel is generally adapted as one frame of the film, as figures 17 and 18 below illustrate:

Fig. 17: A multiple-panel page. "That Yellow Bastard", 40.

42. The verbal elements of the page (the speaking balloons and the voice-over narration boxes, widely used in *Sin City*) are transposed to the film almost verbatim.

Fig. 18: A shot-by-shot film sequence of the above mentioned page.

In addition, when a full-page or a double-page composition does not have any incrusted panels, it is observed that this page corresponds exactly to a frame on the film screen. This is the only moment when an extraordinary equivalence between page and screen

layouts of these two media is perceived. Maybe the only difference that occurs in specific moments of the adaptation is that, when a completely blank or dark full-page is transposed to the film, more details of the scenery are sometimes visible because of the few shadings of grey used in the film coloring and lighting processes, as opposed to the graphic novel black-and-white high contrast (see figs. 19 and 20).

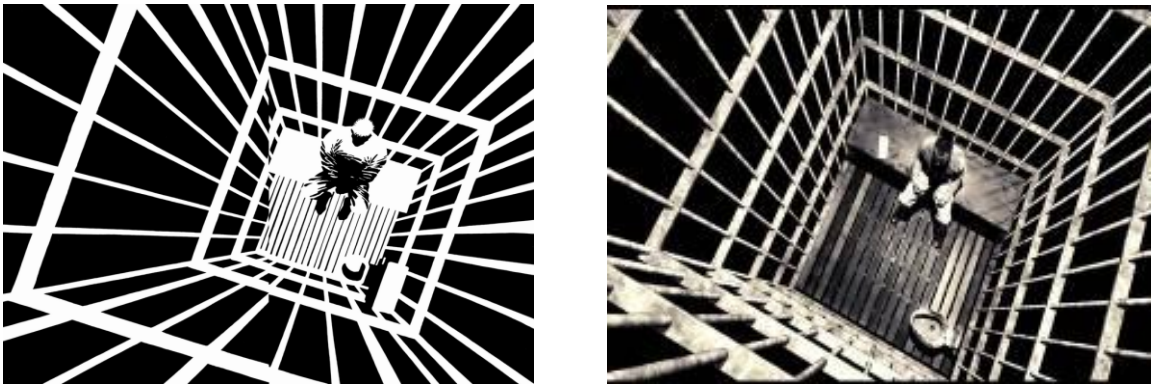


Fig. 19: A dark double-page composition in “That Yellow Bastard” (88, 89) and its film version.

Fig. 20: A blank full-page in “That Yellow Bastard” (31) and its transposition to screen, with details from the scenery.

Conclusion

For Pascal Lefèvre, the page of a book or a comic book is different from the film screen in four ways: first, the reader has to turn the pages of the book while the spectator watches passively as the movie story unfolds. Consequently, the reader is able to choose his/her own reading speed and direction and the spectator is not. Second, while comics is generally made up of several frames spatially organized on the page, the film screen is usually filled with twenty-four photograms per second, arranged in a linear temporal sequence, which provides an illusion of movement. Third, while comics panels can be presented in a multitude of dimensions, shapes and locations on the page, films follow a standard screen format. And fourth, while in cinema, filming and editing are two distinct and consecutive steps of production, in comics, the drawing and the disposition of frames on a page are inseparable and simultaneous processes. While these four premises may quite well summarize the differences between the comics page and the film screen, they certainly demand a more careful analysis, as was intended in this chapter.

Thierry Groensteen, one of the theorists with the largest number of works on page layout, proposes that the layout is determined by the mode of articulation, which is present both in film and in comics, although it comprises different procedures in each medium. He also states that, in order to analyze and describe the layout of a comics page, three questions must be answered: 1. Is the page layout regular or irregular? 2. Is it discrete or ostentatious? 3. What is the artist's motivation for choosing that specific layout?

As an attempt to answer Groensteen's three questions, we have observed that, each of Frank Miller's works has a particular layout style; some of them have unusual or totally irregular page layouts in which the idea of strips and panels as an essential element of the comics medium is abandoned. This is the case of the *Sin City* series. In complete opposition to

Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, the page layout in the hard-boiled narrative is irregular and almost always ostentatious, since it is the layout that tends to determine the narrative and not the opposite. Yet, although mostly irregular, some specific layouts can be repeatedly observed, as was demonstrated with examples from *Sin City: The Hard Good-Bye*. With the exception of the layouts discussed, the rest of *Sin City* uses a widely variable page design.

The abundance of full-page and double-page compositions in *Sin City* collaborates with its film adaptation, as pages are successfully used as storyboards ready to be shot in all their visual and verbal elements. But, in cases where multiple panels are arranged on one page or several small incrusted panels are found in one larger panel or in a full-page composition, each panel is generally adapted as one frame of the film, as the example provided from *Sin City: That Yellow Bastard* shows.

Finally, in order to answer Groensteen's third question, we can assume that the irregular and ostentatious layout chosen by Miller for the *Sin City* series – in which abrupt changes occur from page to page for no apparent reason – can be seen as an attempt to destabilize and impress the reader at each turn of the page. And this chaotic page layout configuration seems to appropriately reflect the chaos in the brutal streets of Basin City.

Scott McCloud, *Desvendando os Quadrinhos*, 26.

CHAPTER 4: SOUND ASPECTS

Literature Review

As Pascal Lefèvre points out, one of the incompatibilities between comics and cinema is that the first is a silent medium while the second can produce sound. In fact, as I hope to prove in this chapter, sound is intrinsic to all comics and it is a result of the way pictures and words are combined. In this sense, both media are able to express sound, albeit in distinct manners. And, by considering these two different modes of expression, we are provided with some interesting cases for an analysis of the acoustic approximation of the two media.

By sound, we mean the characters' voices and background noises as well as the ambient music or soundtrack which, among other things, often affects the emotional setting of the narrative. Both types of sound are possible in comics and in cinema and they are going to be treated separately in this chapter.

First, it is important to make it clear that any attempt to study sound and music in other media is threatened by a serious lack of a widely accepted methodology and terminology

designed specifically for that purpose. This deficiency may be explained by the fact that any theoretical material requires a double competence, in music and in another medium. This prerequisite of competence in music studies surely represents a challenge for the analysis to be developed in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is expected that this chapter contributes in pointing out some of the ways by which sound and music can be represented differently across distinct media and the possible effects of this difference on the reader/spectator.

First of all, it is relevant to observe that music, comics and cinema have one aspect in common. The three rely on rhythm and timing to create their desired effects. In comics, rhythm is a result of a division of space in panels and gutters. In music, rhythm is temporal[43]. And in cinema, there is the superimposition of division of space (through montage) and the temporal division of soundtrack music.

However, there are also significant differences in this aspect. In comics, in opposition to cinema, sound and music cannot be heard, but rather only represented. It is the reader's task to perform the sound of the narrative in his/her mind, using his/her imagination to recreate voices[44] and noises. But, in no circumstances does this means that comics is a mute medium or that the reader is free to recreate the sound represented the way s/he wants to. There are devices that guide the representation of sound, informing the reader of the quality of the sound represented. The shape and outline of balloons and the types of words within them, for instance, describe how the utterances should be "vocalized". Or, as Robert S. Petersen explains, "[c]omics utilize word/pictures and pictured/words, where the way something is written visually informs sound qualities in narrative action." ("The Acoustics of Manga", 163)

The first symbolic sign to give the reader clues to elaborate sound is the speech balloon, where verbal and visual elements intersect. Besides the linguistic message, the way a certain sentence or utterance is written conveys the characteristics of voice used by a

43. Although if we consider musical notation, rhythm may also be spatial.

44. Robert S. Petersen calls this process "subvocalization, which is a natural habit of readers to imagine the sound through the inaudible speech movements of the lips and throat." (p.164)

character. Generally, for instance, the size of the letters indicates the volume of voice and the shape of the letters (font type) conveys emotions such as fear, anger or excitement. A similar function is performed by the shape and outline of the balloon. A balloon in the shape of a cloud often means that the character is thinking, while a balloon with several sharp points commonly refers to a very loud noise, to a character screaming or to sound coming from an electronic device such as a radio or a television set. In addition, as Catherine Khordoc appropriately reminds us, "the position of the balloons in the panel also conveys information" ("The Comic Book's Soundtrack", 160). The disposition of balloons in a panel determines the path of reading, which is generally from left to right and top to bottom.

The tail of the balloon also cues aspects of sound, indicating the source of the voice. And when there is no tail connected to the balloon, it is presumed that it refers to a narrator's commentary or a description of the scene. The tail can also have different shapes, such as a bolt of lightning or little dots, generally connected to sharp-pointed and cloudy-shaped balloons respectively.

Besides the different types of speech balloons, tails and font types, sound effects can also be represented by onomatopoeia, which are usually words found outside balloons conveying sounds that result from actions. Onomatopoeic sounds were extremely common in the superhero comic books of the Golden Age and became, together with the balloon, one of the most recurrent symbols when referring to comics. An attempt to transpose this particular trait of comics to television was made in the seventies' Batman series, with a parodistic and exaggerated tone.

The two graphic novels composing our corpus provide us with two completely distinct examples in relation to sound and, particularly, onomatopoeia. Whereas in the *Sin City* series there is abundance of onomatopoeia (see fig. 21), in *Watchmen*, there is none. This may be explained by the different genres of the two graphic novels. Although the main characters in

Watchmen are superheroes, this is not a traditional superhero narrative. In this sense, the absence of onomatopoeia – so common in the Superman and Batman series, for instance – only confirms that. On the other hand, in *Sin City*, as in some of the most famous hard-boiled detective novels, brutal violence is a key element and, in this sense, the onomatopoeic effects certainly endorse that aspect.

Fig. 21: Onomatopoeia in *Sin City: The Hard Goodbye* (74; 81).

Sound in *Watchmen*

Although there are no onomatopoeic sounds in *Watchmen*, there are plenty of references to sound in its musical form. The most common ways to represent music in comics are through musical notes floating in the air, wavy lines coming out of a speaker or a musical instrument or even just the lyrics, written in a balloon with a distinct shape. In the case of *Watchmen*, no musical notes or wavy lines are used. All the musical references are made

through song lyrics and, most of the time, they work as ambient music, commenting or setting the tone of the narrative.

In seven out of the twelve chapters forming the graphic novel, there is at least one reference to songs – eleven in total. Heavily inspired by the folk and punk/pop rock movements of the seventies and eighties, the "soundtrack" of the graphic novel contains three songs by Bob Dylan and one by each singer/group: Iggy Pop, The Police, Devo, Elvis Costello and John Cale[45]. Romantic songs by Nat King Cole and Billie Holliday are also referred to. *The Ride of the Valkyries*, by Richard Wagner, is the only classical piece mentioned. In chapters one, two, ten and twelve, an excerpt of the lyrics appears in the title and in the final quote of the chapter. In chapters one, three, seven and eleven, the references to songs appear inside the panels or in the supplementary material at the end of each chapter, as shown in table 3.

Ch. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Desolation Row, Bob Dylan -Title and end quote **Neighbor-hood Threat,** Iggy Pop - p.10 **The Ride of the Valkyries**, Wagner – supplement. material	**The Comedians,** Elvis Costello - Title and end quote	**Walking on the Moon**,The Police -p.19				**Jocko Homo,** Devo - p.10 **Unforget-table,** Nat King Cole - p. 13 **You're my thrill,** Billie Holliday - p. 25 e 26			**All Along the Watchtower**, Bob Dylan - Title and end quote	**The times they are a-changin'** Bob Dylan - p. 32	**Sanities, John Cale** - Title and end quote

Table 3: Distribution of references to songs in the graphic novel

The profuse use of ambient music in *Watchmen* may be explained by the fact that Alan Moore had the habit of using ambient music when producing his comics. And he understood that a particular song or singer could certainly affect his creative process, intensifying or transforming the feeling of the comic:

45. See the Appendix for the lyrics of all songs analyzed in this chapter.

> "So I started listening to purely instrumentals until I found that the rhythms were actually getting in the way of the sometimes complex prose rhythms I was trying to set up in my writing. Then I thought ambient music would do it! So I started to listen to lots of Harold Budd, Brian Eno and things like that. That was best, but the atmosphere of the ambient music got in the way, it wasn't always the atmosphere of the scene that I wanted to be writing." (Shirley, *Can Rock & Roll Save the World?,* 142)

As a result, it is possible to think that all references to songs in *Watchmen* have a specific purpose, combining with the narrative in a sharp manner and producing an interesting effect for the reader.

For instance, the title and end quote of chapter one "Now at midnight all the agents/And the superhuman crew/Come out and round up everyone/That knows more than they do", taken from Bob Dylan's song *Desolation Row*, directly illustrates the events of that chapter, in which Rorschach goes out at night in order to find out the identity of Edward Blake's assassin. Similarly, the excerpt used as end quote of chapter two is part of Elvis Costello's song *The Comedians*: "And I'm up while the dawn in breaking/Even though my heart is aching/I should be drinking a toast to absent friends/Instead of these comedians". These lyrics comment on the main subject of this chapter (entitled "Absent Friends"), which is the funeral of Edward Blake, who used to impersonate a superhero called Comedian.

Because of each medium's specificities, the movie version of *Watchmen* could not keep all the musical references of the graphic novel. This would be an extremely hard task, especially in relation to the use of songs in the titles and end quotes of the chapters.

Six out of the eleven songs from Moore's novel were transposed to the film version of *Watchmen*. The film also provided other musical references, which resulted in new and additional meanings to the narrative. Some of them, as *Me and Bobby McGee*, performed by

Janis Joplin, and *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*, by the band Tears for Fears, appear as ambient music in the film, and sometimes are almost unnoticed by spectators. Although it is known that they still comment on relevant aspects of the film narrative, these types of references are not included in this analysis. Instead, I am focusing on those songs which play a more substantial role in the film, those in which the characters' dialogues are brought to a halt or become secondary in relation to the song being played[46]. In order to examine the place and context of the songs inside the film narrative, the 162-minute theatrical movie version was divided into twelve parts, as in the graphic novel, resulting in twelve chapters of thirteen minutes and thirty seconds each, in which the songs were placed, as follows (table 4):

Part 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Unforgettable 0:02:30 **The times they are a-changin'** 0:05:40		**99 Luftballons** 0:29:24 – **The Sound of Silence** 0:32:32 **The Ride of the Valkyries** 0:38:51 –	**I'm your Boogie Man** 0:43:50 **You're My Thrill** 0:53:29	**Pruit Igoe &Prophecies** 1:04:20			**Hallelujah** 1:44:24		**All Along the Watchtower** 2:09:12		**Mozart's Requiem** 2:29:51 **Desolation Row** 2:35:17 **First We Take Manhattan** 2:38:06

Table 4: Distribution of songs in the film

It is interesting to notice that, from the songs which are common to both the graphic novel and the film (in blue font), none of them, except for Bob Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower*, was used in the same context of the graphic novel. And, as expected, similarly to Alan Moore's work, the song also appeared in what would be the tenth "chapter" of the film. All the other songs were used in a completely different context in the film, resulting in distinct meanings.

46. Curiously, other songs that play a significant role in the film, such as Nena's *99 Luftballons*, Mozart's *Requiem Mass* and Leonard Cohen's *First We Take Manhattan* do not appear in *Watchmen: Music from the Motion Picture*, the official CD with the soundtrack of the movie. Because of the relevance and the impact of these three songs on spectators, they were included in the list of the songs which are examined in this chapter.

One of the songs from the graphic novel that also appear in the film, albeit in a different context, is Wagner's *The Ride of the Valkyries*. In the graphic novel, the classical piece is mentioned in the supplementary material of the first chapter, the introductory part of the fictional memoir *Under the Hood*, by Hollis Mason, former Nite Owl I superhero: "The saddest thing I can think of is 'The Ride of the Valkyries.' Every time I hear it I get depressed and start wondering about the lot of humanity and the unfairness of life…" (Moore, 29) Mason explains that "The Ride" reminds him of the owner of the mechanic shop where his father used to work. The man was listening to Wagner's opera when he discovered his wife had been cheating on him for over two years with one of his employees. He committed suicide on that same day.

In the movie, *The Ride of Valkyries* is employed in a completely different way. It plays during the participation and victory of the United States, with the help of Dr. Manhattan, at the Vietnam War. Curiously, there is a long tradition of using of this classical piece in films accompanying military actions. In D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), it was used in a sequence showing the American Civil War and in Bryan Singer's *Valkyrie* (2008), the Second World War. But, perhaps, the most evident inspiration for the use of Wagner's opera in that particular sequence in *Watchmen* is Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), in which it is used in a scene where a Vietnamese village is being attacked by helicopters. It could therefore be said that the use of Wagner's piece in that specific context in *Watchmen* is an intertextual reference that transforms the meaning of that episode, as spectators are led to remember the story of Coppola's film.

Another song used in the film in a different way from the graphic novel is Bob Dylan's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*. In the novel, it appears in an almost unnoticed manner, in the supplementary material at the end of chapter eleven. The title of the song is part of an advertisement piece for the Nostalgia perfume, inside the fictitious magazine *Nova*

Express. In this sense, the song directly refers to the idea of nostalgia conveyed by the perfume.

The film approaches *The Times They Are A-Changin'* in an entirely new way. In Moore's work, this historical background is provided by Hollis Mason's fake memoir, at the end of chapters one to three. In the movie, the song is the soundtrack for the initial credits, in which the Minutemen, the superhero group that preceded the Watchmen, are presented. The initial credits sequence serves as a summary of the fictional historical situation of the narrative, which helps situate the viewers, especially if they have not had previous contact with the graphic novel. And, from this point of view, not only the title of the song but also its lyrics serve to reinforce the meaning of the sequence, the idea that the times in which the Minutemen lived[47], when superhero activity reached the height of glory, have not continued; they have certainly changed. The title also conveys the appropriate message of social change and stark pessimism in relation to the present time of the narrative, when the Watchmen have incited the population's hatred and become outlaws and when the world is on the verge of a nuclear war.

Another interesting case is the one of Nat King Cole's well-known song *Unforgettable*. Although it is used in the film in the same way as in the graphic novel (in the TV commercial of the Nostalgia perfume), the fact that it appears in a different position and context inside the film narrative confers the song (and the story) a completely different meaning. In the graphic novel, for instance, Dan Dreiberg and Laurie are watching a news program on TV when Laurie reveals she feels attracted to him. As she kisses Dan, the song starts playing during the TV commercial for the perfume. *Unforgettable* serves as soundtrack for the almost-consummated love scene that follows. In the film, the song is also played during the commercial for the same perfume, but the episode does not show characters Laurie

47. The Minutemen group is officially formed in 1939 and lasts ten years. The Watchmen come together in the mid sixties and fight crime until 1977, when the Keene Act is passed and the superheroes are forced to retire and live normal lives.

and Dan. The commercial appears in the first sequence of the movie, as Edward Blake watches TV at home, right before he is attacked and killed. In this sense, the romantic song lyrics and the idea of nostalgia is not connected to Laurie and Dan's relationship anymore. Instead, it serves to illustrate Blake's longing for glamorous past times.

Therefore, it is correct to state that, by changing the place and context of some of the songs as they appear in the graphic novel (with the exception of Bob Dylan's *All Along the Watchtower*), the film version managed to attribute original and, in most of the cases, satisfactory meaning to the narrative, offering the spectator a different experience of the way music is used in the graphic novel.

However, not only by inserting the songs of the graphic novel in different moments and contexts is the film able to produce new meanings. This effect can also be perceived by those songs in the film that are not in the source text (in black font in Table 4).

From the songs originally included in the film, three cases that provide interesting examples are Simon and Garfunkel's *The Sound of Silence,* Nena's *99 Luftballons* and Phillip Glass's *Pruit Igoe and Prophecies*. First of all, it is worth saying that all the songs that are exclusive to the film were composed before the publishing of the graphic novel in 1986 and 1987. This can be considered a wise decision from film producers because it reaffirms the dystopic quality of the graphic novel, and fully concurs with the movie's attempt to remain as faithful as possible to the original text.

The Sound of Silence was composed by Paul Simon in 1964, in the aftermath of the assassination of American president John Fitzgerald Kennedy, on November 22nd, 1963. In the film, the song is played during the Comedian's funeral. Besides the obvious connection between the issue of death in the lyrics and the death of Edward Blake, the song can be related to the character's funeral in another way. In the initial credits, the scene of John F. Kennedy's assassination is carefully reconstructed and, immediately after that scene, Edward

Blake is shown holding a gun and escaping, as the one responsible for the president's death. In this sense, the choice for this song as soundtrack for the funeral sequence incorporates a new meaning into the narrative, since we are reminded that Edward Blake was responsible for President Kennedy's assassination. Also, it is possible to say that the song establishes a parallel between the Comedian's and the President's deaths. Edward Blake was killed by an unidentified person – only later is his murderer's true identity revealed – in the same way that he was not identified as the person who pulled the trigger against John F. Kennedy. Therefore, from a bleak perspective, the song helps convey the idea that, through the Comedian's death, justice to John F. Kennedy's assassination has been made.

Another original contribution of the film is given through the inclusion of the song *99 Luftballons*. Performed by German singer Nena, it was released in 1983 and it is a protest against the Cold-War era. It tells the story of 99 balloons being released to float in the air over the Berlin Wall producing an overreaction by military forces from both sides, Socialist and Capitalist. The theme of the song reproduces the historical situation in *Watchmen*, in which Soviet and American forces are still in a strong cold war dispute and world tension continuously escalates to an impending nuclear war. It could be said that the story told by the song describes a similar process through which the world's apocalyptical resolution is reached in *Watchmen*. While in the graphic novel the world thinks that a nuclear attack results from the conflict between the United States and the Soviets, it is actually the outcome of Adrian Veidt's successful plan (Adrian carefully prepares the attack in a way that it looks like it was caused by Dr. Manhattan). In the song, while the two antagonistic sides think of UFOs or of an attack from the other side, it is actually the 99 balloons that ignite war. However, while the nuclear attack brings a temporary peace to the world in the graphic novel, the misunderstanding in the song ignites war.

Finally, in the sequences showing Dr. Manhattan's argument with Laurie and his seclusion on Mars, two songs composed by Phillip Glass are played. *Pruit Igoe* and *Prophecies* were originally used on the soundtrack of the 1982 film *Koyaanisqatsi*, by Godfrey Reggio. The first song was inspired by Pruitt-Igoe, a large urban complex built in 1954-55 in Saint Louis, Missouri, and which soon acquired a bad reputation for decayed living conditions and episodes of crime. The complex of 33 buildings designed by architect Minoru Yamasaki (who also designed the World Trade Center) was demolished between 1972 and 1974. In Reggio's film, footage of the complex and of its demolition was used in slow motion, while Glass's song played in the background. *Prophecies*, the second song used in Dr. Manhattan's sequences, originally contains three prophecy chants, sung in the Hopi language, predicting disaster and destruction upon Earth.

There is an evident parallel between the motifs of the two songs and their meaning in *Watchmen*. The decay of Pruitt-Igoe echoes the decay of the 1985 world conceived by Alan Moore and the demolition of the buildings reminds us of the nuclear destruction of New York and other cities, caused unintentionally by Dr. Manhattan. And the Hopi prophecies which serve as the theme for Phillip Glass's song, particularly "A container of ashes might one day be thrown from the sky, which could burn the land and boil the oceans", foreshadow the nuclear disaster in the graphic novel. Therefore, it is possible to say that the choice of *Pruit Igoe* and *Prophecies* for the film soundtrack seems particularly appropriate for Dr. Manhattan's sequences, considering the themes in these two songs.

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to understand the representation of sound and music in comics and in films. The double competence that is required from any analysis of this type is

certainly an explanation for the small number of critical works on the subject. Aware of this obstacle, the analysis developed in this chapter did not intend to fill this gap, but hoped to contribute to the discussion by pointing out some possibilities in dealing with music and visual media. And, at least with regard to *Watchmen* (comics and film), I would say that the goal was achieved.

In films, sound can be perceived through the characters' dialogues, extradiegetic narration, ambient noises or soundtrack. In relation to comics, the representation of sound may be a result of the lettering and design of the speech balloons or of onomatopoeic sounds. The latter is generally used for action verbs and is more common among certain genres of comics. Sound in comics can also come in the form of song lyrics, wavy lines or musical notes. Alan Moore's *Watchmen* does not contain any onomatopoeic sounds but has several excerpts of songs, which are used, most of the times, to comment on a certain event of the narrative or to establish mood.

However, as common as (or perhaps even more common than) references to songs in comics is the use of onomatopoeic sounds. Therefore, the analysis proposed here does not have a generic quality; it does not refer to sound and music in comics in general, but could rather be considered a strategy to better understand a particular aspect of *Watchmen* and how the film adaptation deals with this important characteristic of the graphic novel.

In the movie, the changes observed in the context and moments of references to songs were necessary due to the different specificities of the film medium in relation to comics. In Snyder's *Watchmen*, these changes produced a resignification of the narrative of the graphic novel, resulting in original and interesting meanings to the spectator.

"Because I used to be a cartoonist,
I used to draw as well, and I told Frank
that the beginning that moviemaking
is very much like drawing"
(Robert Rodriguez, *Sin City: The Making of the Movie*, 16)

CHAPTER 5: PICTORIAL ASPECTS

Literature review

The last incompatibility mentioned by Pascal Lefèvre between comics and films concerns each medium's distinct pictorial aspects[48] or, in other words, the difference between drawn forms in comics and photographed forms in cinema. In fact, from all the ontological incompatibilities of the two media suggested by Lefèvre, this is the only criterion that can be studied only in relation to comics and does not apply, not even in different circumstances, to novel-to-film adaptations. This is because, in contrast to the three other aspects (narrative, page layout and sound), only comics have pictorial aspects to be considered with regard to their film version. By tradition, novels do not make use of pictures to any great extent at the risk of being confused with illustrated books, another literary form often directed at child audiences.

Because both comics and cinema share some formal properties – both tell stories through sequences of images –, there is a persisting belief that a film adaptation from comics is easier than a novel-to-film adaptation (Hutcheon, 43). In fact, it is quite the opposite, given that "the visual ontology of a drawing creates problems for an adaptation from a comic book

48. Pascal Lefèvre actually calls this aspect "drawn versus photographic forms" or "visual ontology". However, in order to be consistent with the pattern of the titles of the previous chapters and to differentiate it from the subject on chapter 3 – which also deals with visual aspects – I have used here the term "pictorial".

to a live-action movie" (*Film and Comic Books*, xii). The same problem does not happen with novel-to-film adaptations since a single word may have infinite pictorial representations. The image a person has mentally constructed of any given object described in the novel is certainly very different from the director's representation of that same object in film. And because it is impossible to reach a consensus about the appearance the author had in mind when he described that object in the novel, any visual representation of it is valid. Of course, there are some reasonable choices of representation, but the possibilities are certainly quite vast.

On the other hand, the film representation of a comic book or graphic novel necessarily presupposes a visual resemblance with the original text. Live-action characters, décor, setting and costumes must, in some way, remind viewers of what they have already seen in book-form[49]. This demand makes the job of the director of a comics-to-film adaptation more complicated than a novel-to-film director, because the former's representational choices are much more limited than the latter's.

Besides, as Lefèvre points out, other formal differences between images in comics and in films may also represent obstacles in the process of adaptation. He says that, although both media use flat (or two-dimensional) images and similar shots, images in films are moving while in comics they are static. That is why film gives a greater impression of realism than comics and this consequently explains why violence is more acceptable in a drawn/stylized than in a photographic medium ("Incompatible Visual Ontologies", 9).

Revisiting Thierry Groensteen's tripartite classification[50] presented in "Du 7e au 9e art: l'inventaire des singularités", the differences of the images of both media fall within the "field of expression" category and they are basically five types (see table 5).

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49. In some cases, the reverse may also happen. Costumes used in a film, for instance, may be used afterwards to dress characters in the comic book.

50. As I briefly mentioned in the last chapter, Groensteen classifies the differences between film and comics in three main categories: the field of expression, the process of creation and the mode of articulation.

First, there is a consensus with Lefèvre that while in cinema image is moving, in comics, it is fixed. However, it should be noted that in comics movement is present, but it results from the reader's interpretation of the static images within the panels.

Second, whereas images in film are kept within a fixed frame size, in comics, the artist is free to create frames of different sizes and shapes. As I have explained in chapter 3, the size of the film frame may only change in exceptional cases, and this certainly causes a feeling of strangeness to the spectator.

Third, Groensteen states that while in cinema image should be poor, in comics it can be complex. This is because the cinematic image is not allowed to have many details or the viewer will not have enough time to interpret all the pictorial information on a frame. In contrast, in comics the artist is free to saturate the panel with as much information as s/he wants because the reader has all the time necessary to apprehend the visual material.

Fourth, while image in cinema is anonymous, image in comics is "signed" by the artist. That means that when the artist is drawing, s/he unavoidably imprints his/her own graphic style to the drawing, which results in variations on the type of trace, use of color, nuances involving light and shadows and even variations on choices between a more realistic or iconic representation. For Pascal Lefèvre, this aspect has another implication:

> "Usually long-running comic books series do not have a unique defining style: such series can be drawn and told in very different ways, costumes and looks can change in time. Series like Batman or Superman were not only written by different scriptwriters, but also drawn by scores of artists". (10)

The fact that long-running comic books series such as *Batman* and *Superman* have been drawn by different artists over time confers on these characters multiple faces. Consequently, rather than being identified by a particular drawing style, these figures are generally recognized by the mythology that involves them. The red cape with the "S"-shaped shield, for

instance, is immediately recognized not by its color tones, texture or particular trace because these aspects can differ depending on the artist; rather, the cape is part of the mythology involving the *Superman* character. Because these characters do not have a stable graphic identity, they generally assume the most varied forms in live-action cinema and, consequently, the director can exercise his/her creative skills, attempting to mark the film character with his/her own visual style.

On the other hand, because graphic novels are usually drawn by a single artist, they have a stronger "signature". Their graphic style is more easily identifiable and, consequently, the pressure for the film director to capture it and transpose it to cinema seems to be greater.

Finally, the last difference between comics and film images explained by Groensteen is that, while the former is docile, the latter is wild. This means that, in comics, the only image seen is the one which has been deliberately chosen and drawn by the artist. In cinema, the director has to intervene in the real image in order to produce the picture s/he wants to portray.

Cinema	Comics
Moving	Fixed
Fixed frame size	Different frame sizes
Poor	Complex
Anonymous	"Signed"
Wild	Docile

Table 5: Five main differences between film and comics images, as indicated by Groensteen (21-24).

This aspect can be illustrated by the case of the comic strip series *Dick Tracy* created by Chester Gould in 1931 and adapted to cinema by director (and actor) Warren Beatty in 1990. The main idea governing the film adaptation was to "look like" the comic strip's cartoonish style, even if this meant to produce artificial, implausible images. The attempt to capture the fake aesthetic of the comic strip – or the "aesthetic of artifice", as Michael Cohen calls it – involved the fabrication of settings, eliminating excessive decor but at the same time calling attention to specific details; the "cartooning" of props and characters through the use

of garish coloring and prosthetic make-up ("Dick Tracy: In Pursuit of a Comic Book Aesthetic", 14). The use of special framing and lighting of the main character emphasizing his frozen and heroic postures and the use of special camera positions and techniques (such as the fixed camera and diopter lens[51]) are some of the techniques used in *Dick Tracy* so that film frames could resemble the panels of the comic strip.

Therefore, because of this ontological incompatibility between film and comics images, Warren Beatty had to use several special techniques and strategies to control the filmic environment, "domesticating" the wild film image in order to produce a cinematic representation that could imitate the docility of the visual style of *Dick Tracy*'s comic strip.

One of the first Brazilian theorists to approach the comics medium academically, Moacy Cirne draws a comparison between film and comics in *Para Ler os Quadrinhos* (1972). In that work, the author's foremost argument was that comics borrowed several technical practices from cinematic language. Almost three decades later, Cirne returns to the subject in "Cinema e Quadrinhos: Uma Nova Leitura" (2000), arguing that the main differences between the two media lay, among other things, in the kind of image – moving and photographed in the cinema but static and drawn in comics. The author also mentions other differences based on the semiotic specificities of the two languages, such as the presence of the actor in the cinema versus the drawn character in comics and the fact that cinema is considered a spectacle while comics is not. We observe that Cirne's main concern is no longer on the influence of cinematic language on comics, but in emphasizing the main differences between the two media.

In relation to the aspect of image iconicity, the author describes the difference between the image in cinema – characterized by the photographic concretion – and the image in

51. A special type of lens in which foreground and background images remain in sharp focus on the same frame.

comics, marked by its specific graphism. He concludes that cinema and comics are more connected by their narrative discourses than by their semiotic aspect centered on the image.

Despite all these ontological incompatibilities between film and comics images, we are experiencing a moment in which cinema seems to have rediscovered comics. In relation to this supposed "boom", two questions seem pertinent.

First, why has this rediscovery happened now? The answer lies on the new possibilities that arise from advances in digital technology, unavailable until a few years ago. Over time, the quality of this technology has improved and its cost has decreased, which explains its regular use and popularity in film production nowadays.

The second question is: why has the attention of cinema specially turned to comics and graphic novels? As Booker explains,

> "until very recently, the technology available to filmmakers simply did not allow them the range and scope that have always been available to comics artists, whose creativity was limited only by their own imaginations" (*May Contain Graphic Material*, ix)

As some critics have claimed that cinema served as inspiration for comics in the early years of the twentieth century, it appears that today the opposite is happening. Yet, for Booker, this is a two-way process:

> "[J]ust as filmmaking technology has made it more and more feasible to bring the worlds of the comics to the movie theaters, the comics themselves have begun to provide a broader and richer array of material (…) from which films might be made." (x)

Again, this is not to say that adaptations of comics to cinema are a new phenomenon but, perhaps, the difference is that today the influence of the original comics text is not restricted to the plot anymore. Rather, there is also – and sometimes principally – a necessity

to recreate the aesthetics of the comic book or graphic novel on screen and this has only become possible through the use of digital technology in cinema, resulting in an innovative aspect within the long-lasting relationship between film and comics, which is their pictorial (visual) rapprochement[52].

This phenomenon, however, also applies to those films not adapted from a comic book original[53]. This is the case of *A Scanner Darkly* (2006) and *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004), which brush aside any idea of photographed iconicity in cinema. *A Scanner Darkly* is an adaptation from Phillip K. Dick's novel in which the director Richard Linklater uses interpolated rotoscope, a technique that digitally "draws" the scenery and characters over the original film footage, including new colors and textures in the film (see fig. 22). The approximation between the drawn and the photographed image is evident and the final effect of the film resembles animated movies and comics.

Fig. 22: The steps of the interpolated rotoscope process.

Fig. 23: Keanu Reeves and Winona Ryder in *A Scanner Darkly*.

52. Although filmmakers adapting from comics are now also able to choose to adapt its visual style, not all attempts to do that are necessarily successful. First of all, filmmakers must be able to correctly identify which comics's formal elements would find functional and effective equivalents in the film medium.

53. Yet, because of the pictorial nature of the comics image, it is more common to use these kinds of techniques in adaptations from comic books or graphic novels than from novels or in original film scripts.

The novel narrates Phillip Dick's personal experiences with drugs and, in this sense, the choice for the interpolated rotoscope technique accentuates the author's reality as a drug user, as it gives the film a delirious effect. The blend between "real" and drawn images causes the spectator a feeling of strangeness since it is known that the drawn images are representations of filmed images. And this comprehension is only possible because the viewer is able to recognize the real-life characters combined with the drawn images (as in fig. 23).

Another example of the intervention of computer technology in film is the use of Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI), a process in which three-dimensional computer graphics create "virtual" backgrounds to the footage of the live-action. In this process, actors do not perform before real-life landscapes but in front of a completely green screen, which is later filled by digitally-created images (as shown in fig. 24). This is the case of *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, one of the first films to be entirely produced using CGI[54]. In *Sky Captain*, dozens of digital artists have worked to recreate a late-1930s retro-futuristic[55] New York City background for the live-action footage that took less than one month to be shot in London, England. And, although the story takes place in New York, director Kerry Conran did not go to New York during its production, and had never been there. He based all his digital background recreations on old photographs of the city.

54. The only full physical set in the whole film is the office that belongs to Polly (Gwyneth Paltrow's character). <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0346156/trivia> 10 Feb 2010.

55. Retro-futurism or retrofuturism is "a revived enthusiasm for depictions of the future created in the past; also, the use of a style considered futuristic in the past" "retrofuturism." *Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon*. Dictionary.com, LLC. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/retrofuturism>. Feb 10, 2010.

Fig 24: From storyboard to final product: the steps of production in *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*.

In light of these examples, we observe that the argument proposed by Cirne and Lefèvre – that the comics image is drawn whereas the cinema image is photographed – does not seem to follow the recent tendencies in cinema. While Cirne seems to overlook the subject, Lefèvre manages to acknowledge this view in film production but apparently does it as an exception to the drawn-versus-photographed rule.

I am not myself pleased with this approach to the subject. In my opinion, CGI has given a distinct visual order for cinema, resulting in a new aesthetics for this particular medium; and this process has become too relevant and recurrent to be considered an exception. Today, it is possible to say that the great majority of film productions make use of digital technology to change or compose the photographed image in some way. So, as an alternative, I imagine that, as far as image iconicity is concerned, it is more adequate to emphasize the similarities (and not the differences) between filmic and graphic representations. Or, maybe, since the limits between drawn and photographed images have

been blurred, this may not be a relevant criterion to distinguish film images from comics images; in this sense, simply disregarding this aspect could also be an option.

While this may definitely be a controversial proposition, it is also part of a central discussion involving comics and films which is particularly relevant to the development of this chapter. Nonetheless, the idea that comics and film images may no longer be distinguished by their iconicity must not be interpreted as a conclusive statement; rather, it should be seen as a proposition meant to provoke a debate on this which is perhaps one of the most commonly mentioned distinctions between comics and film images: their different iconicity.

Besides *Sky Captain*, another film that is mostly known for its massive use of digital technology is Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller's *Sin City*, a case which will now be examined in detail.

Pictorial aspects in *Sin City*

Generally referred to as the most faithful translation of a comic book to film, one of the most striking characteristics in *Sin City* (2005) is the directors' attempt to closely match the look rather than just the plot of the source-text. For Booker, the film represents "a genuine landmark in the evolution of graphic cinema, a first revolutionary effort at translating the aesthetics of a graphic novel (or, in this case, novels) directly into film" (159).

However, it should be noted that, in fact, the search for the aesthetics of comic books began some time ago, as works such as *Dick Tracy* have proved. Therefore, what distinguishes *Sin City* from the previous comic-to-film adaptations is that, for the first time, the comic book effect is successfully achieved by means of digital technology. While in *Dick Tracy* the image is materially altered, – by means of fabricated props and prosthetic make up

– in *Sin City* it is altered digitally – through the use of CGI and digital interference on characters.

The process of image production in *Sin City* is divided into several steps. Basically, the drawn pictures are used as source for film shots, as director Robert Rodriguez explains:

> "[*Sin City* graphic novels] are the best shot, written, directed, lit, and edited movies that people have never seen, just on paper. So the idea was to take a work, acknowledge that it's already a valid graphic, visual story with character, and just change the medium, because the mediums of film and comics are really are very similar." (*Sin City: The Making of the Movie*, 16)

However, as distinct media, there are some pictorial elements in the graphic novels that did not find a good filmic correspondence. Albeit rare throughout the film production, these moments required special attention so that the actors and digital artists could fully understand what the directors had in mind. In these cases, in order to suggest better camera positions or to assist in the placement and movement of actors, Frank Miller provided sketches that served as storyboards[56] (see fig. 25). Because these were drawn by the same person that created the graphic novels, Miller's sketches are less similar to regular film storyboards and more similar to comics panels. Perhaps the only difference is the presence of notes describing camera positions and characters' movements. Besides Miller's sketches, 3D animatics[57] were also used in order to previsualize the scenes before real shooting (see fig. 26).

More than in film adaptations from any other medium, in comics-to-film adaptations the storyboards and animatics play an intermediary role in the process of adaptation. They are not just drawn panels; nor are they filmed frame stills. They stay in an intermediary space,

56. Storyboards are drawings and sketches used in preproduction to communicate visual ideas to the film crew. (Begleiter, 3)

57. Animatics are digitalized storyboards. They allow the director to visualize the storyboards in motion before actually shooting them. (Simon, 83)

borrowing representational practices from each medium. Therefore, especially in this case, because both the storyboard and the animatic are rough sketches not only of the panel, but also of the film image, they can be seen as the point of contact/convergence between the two media.

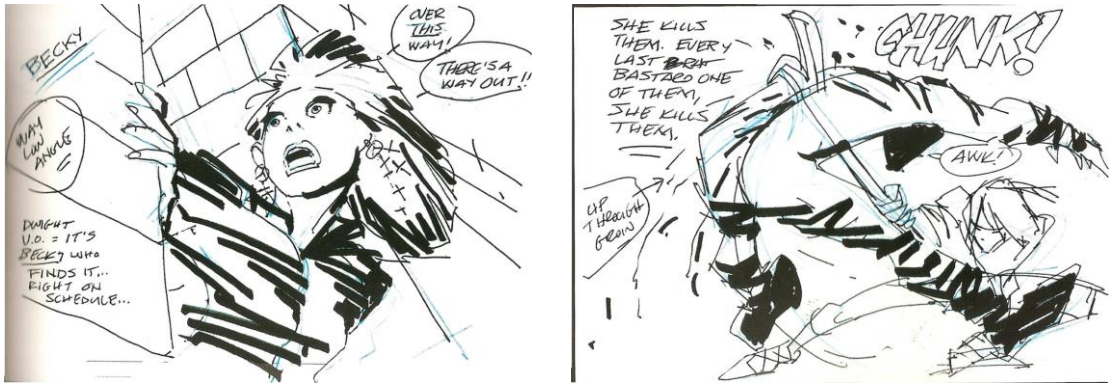

Fig. 25: Frank Miller's sketches for the film.

Fig. 26: On the top-right, the graphic novel original image; central image, the animatic version; on the bottom-right, the final filmic image.

The next step of production in *Sin City* is to shoot its characters performing. As in *Sky Captain*, in *Sin City* characters perform in front of a green screen and not photographed landscapes. Later, the CGI is included to compose the final look of the shot. Real locations and sets are replaced by computer designed backgrounds (as in fig. 27). There are only three real sets on the film: Kadie's Bar, the only location in which all objects are in color; Shellie's

apartment kitchen (the bathroom and corridors that appear in the same sequence are digital); and the hospital corridor in the epilogue (the interior of the elevator shown in the same sequence is digital).

Fig. 27: Film shooting before the green screen and the later inclusion of digital images.

Yet, the level of digital interference is greater in *Sin City* than it is in *Sky Captain* because in the former it also affects characters. In several moments, the colors of eyes and of other compositional details of characters are altered. Most of the time, this happens with the purpose of emphasizing certain parts of the image, conferring on them a thematic connotation within the story. As fig. 28 shows, for instance, Kevin's opaque white glasses contrast with the rest of the image, which is almost completely dark. The purpose of the dark face and background is to emphasize his villainy whereas the white glasses reinforce the idea of an

emotionless character. In the case of Gail, the red color of her lips highlights the character's strong sex appeal.

Fig. 28: Digital intervention on characters Kevin (previous page) and Gail.

Considering the substantial use of digital compositing and interference in film images in *Sin City*, it is correct to say that this film does not fit within the photographed nature of the cinematic image, as proposed by Cirne and Lefèvre. Rather, it seems to belong to a "postphotographic digital ontology"[58] that characterizes contemporary cinema in general. For

58. Grusin, Richard. "DVDs, Video Games and the Cinema of Interactions", 71.

Jay David Bolter, we are living in the era of "late cinema"[59], which is marked by a great influence of digital technologies that challenge the film industry and results in the development of new intermedial relations. In his article "Transference and Transparency: Digital Technology and the Remediation of Cinema", Bolter focuses on a particular kind of intermedial relation he calls *remediation*, a term which was first defined in *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (2000), by Bolter and Richard Grusin. In remediation, new media appropriate the older ones, refashioning their qualities, structures, techniques or specific representational practices in a struggle for cultural recognition. There is a combination of homage and rivalry between the new medium and the old. ("Transference and Transparency", 13-14)

Furthermore, as Bolter explains, computers are often used to "improve film's traditional style of transparent representation" (16). In live-action film,

> "computer graphics are composited into traditional footage and deployed along with miniatures, animatronics, stop-motion animation and so on, in order to create a seamless whole in which the marks of the digital technology are effaced. Often, the result is meant to seem completely "natural:" that is, the viewer is invited to imagine that everything he or she sees on the screen is a record of live-action filming". (idem)

In addition, while digital technology can be used with the purpose of creating a transparent illusion or 'natural' effect so that the viewer does not recognize the exact moments of computer interventions on screen, in other cases "the special effects are foregrounded and elided at the same time" (ibidem). In films with this characteristic, the visual effects are definitely not realistic; yet, the main goal is to make them look completely believable. In a very recent example, James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) uses digital technology

59. Bolter, Jay David. "Transference and Transparency: Digital Technology and the Remediation of Cinema", 13. *Intermédialités*, 6 automne 2005.

to transform the fictional Pandora into a plausible world. It is interesting to note that only a few film genres are able to do so successfully; these are generally science-fiction and fantasy films. Yet, films adapted from computer games and comics often produce unrealistic, but also appealing film images because their narratives do not take place in our "real" world, but within an imaginary world, where the realistic photographic image is not a standard.

However, while these two modalities – digital effects for transparent purposes and for constructing a believable fictional reality – are correctly identified as remediation phenomena, the same cannot be said of other examples of remediation given by Bolter and Grusin. As a matter of fact, any attempt to categorize products that include electronic and digital media are known to be quite problematical in Intermedial studies. This is because of the digital medium's ability to erase its own traces of mediation. For instance, referring to Bolter and Grusin's examples of remediation, German scholar Irina Rajewsky explains that

> "there are noteworthy differences between, say, a film *making use* of digital technology and a painting, which, using its own specific means, *imitates* a photographic quality (as in photorealistic painting)." ("Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality", 61)

As Rajewsky correctly points out, digital technology in film has become so common that it has been intrinsically absorbed into the cinematic production process, as "a standard feature in film" (62). In this sense, it is possible to say that digital technology is already "part of the *per se* plurimedial[60] quality of film" (idem). This means that, within its formal structure, cinema combines other mediatic forms of articulation such as photography, theater, music and now digital technology. Thus, "a film *making use* of digital technology" designates a particular case (which can be called remediation, as suggested by Bolter and Grusin themselves) within the category of media combination.

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60. According to Claus Clüver, plurimidiality is the presence of several media within a medium. ("Intermidialidade", 15)

On the other hand, a painting which, using its own specific means, imitates a photographic quality is considered an intermedial reference[61]. Perhaps one of the main premises of intermedial reference is to allow itself to be recognized as a reference to another medium or a product in another medium. Therefore, instead of aiming at an idea(l) of transparency, erasing its own traces of mediation, in intermedial references digital technology is used with the purpose of drawing attention to its own interventions so that the reader is able to recognize the source of reference.

Along the same lines with Rajewsky, it is also necessary to distinguish between a film making use of digital technology for remediating purposes – to create a richer, more believable experience than traditional photographic cinema can offer – and a film making use of digital technology in order to evoke or imitate a particular medium or product in another medium. In the last case, it would be an intermedial reference, not remediation; and this is precisely what happens in *Sin City*, the movie.

In opposition to the usual transparent ideal in film, or to the creation of a plausible fantastic world, the visual effects resulting from digital technology in *Sin City* serve to highlight the implausibility of traditional photographic image. In addition to that, it should be noted that the foremost purpose of the digital intervention is to imitate Frank Miller's *Sin City* graphic novel series drawing style, which typically characterizes a case of intermedial reference.

It is also worth mentioning that, in these cases of intermedial reference in films and as the term "intermedial reference" by itself indicates, digital technology is used in films to simulate a reference to another medium and not to itself. A film, for instance, generally employs digital technology so that it evokes or imitates computer games, comics, animation,

61. According to Irina Rajewsky, an intermedial reference makes references through the evocation or imitation of elements or structures of another medium. (52) A medium uses its own media-specific means either to refer to an individual work produced in another medium, or to refer to a specific medial subsystem or to another medium *qua* system. (52-53)

painting, etc. In the case of *Sin City* for instance, it is not possible to affirm that film is evoking or imitating some techniques of computer medium or vice-versa. Rather, it is using digital technology in order to imitate the graphic novel style, "as if" it were Frank Miller's graphic novels, just on screen. Thus, it is not that a film imitates or evokes digital technology or vice-versa but, because of its ability to simulate, digital technology is a vehicle to promote intermedial references between other media or media products.

However, it seems that for Bolter, the particular case of *Sin City* does not differ from his previous examples of remediation, except for the technique that was used in its production and its innovative aesthetic results:

> "A new style may be emerging in films that situate live actors in a space that is frankly acknowledged to belong to a different visual order. Two recent examples are *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) and *Sin City* (2004) (sic), in both of which actors perform in front of blue screens or on minimal sets and computer graphics fill in the world. There is no attempt to convince the viewer of the authenticity of the worlds depicted: these are highly stylized spaces drawn from the pages of comic books. Even in these cases, however – perhaps especially in these cases – the goal is still to fashion a seamless visual whole. The style of *Sin City* perfectly matches the dark vision of the original comic book: the film is probably the most faithful remediation of a comic book in the history of this genre." ("Transference and Transparency", 24)

But, in opposition to Bolter's statement, I understand that the case of *Sin City* is completely different from the one of *Sky Captain.* Although the type of digital technology used in both films is the same, this aspect should not be used to distinguish their particularity within cinema. It should not really matter if actors perform in front of blue (or green) screens later filled in by computer graphics, if interpolated rotoscope, performance capture and virtual

camera[62] or any other technique is employed. Rather, the focus should be on the intention of this digital intervention. While in *Sin City* digital technology is used with the purpose of imitating a specific work in another medium, in *Sky Captain* it tries to recreate a particular aesthetic style seen across a variety of different media, which denotes a phenomenon called transmediality by Irina Rajewsky[63].

To sum it up, the use of digital technology in film can be examined in two ways: first, in a broader scope, it can be considered part of the plurimedial quality of cinema, as it is also the case of theater and music. In a narrow scope, it can designate a case of remediation (in *Avatar*, for instance), of transmedial phenomenon (in *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*) or of intermedial reference (either to a specific product in another medium, as in *Sin City*, or to another medium's formal properties, such as in *A Scanner Darkly*).

Conclusion

The last incompatibility between comics and films examined by Pascal Lefèvre – the difference between the type of image in comics and in cinema – is generally the most frequently mentioned distinction between these two media. Among the four criteria analyzed by Lefèvre, this is the only one that can be studied only in relation to comics and does not apply to novel-to-film adaptations. The pictorial distinction often mentioned is that cinema image is characterized by photographic concretion while image in comics is marked by its specific graphism.

However, as we hope to have proved in this chapter, instead of emphasizing the differences between filmic and graphic representations, we would rather focus on the

62. Techniques used in James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009).

63. A transmedial phenomenon defines, among other things, "the appearance of a certain motif, aesthetic, or discourse across a variety of different media", such as the futurism. (Rajewsky, 46) In the case of *Sky Captain*, it is the aesthetic known as retro-futurism.

approximation between them. With the new possibilities arising from advances in digital technology, cinema's attention returned to comics and graphic novels in a new way. Today, the influence of the original comics text is not restricted to the plot but there is an attempt to recreate the aesthetics of the comic book or graphic novel on screen. Therefore, we can say that, in reference to Jay David Bolter, we are living in the era of "late cinema", in which image in cinema belongs to a "postphotographic digital ontology". Some recent productions simply brush aside any idea of photographed iconicity in cinema. This is the case of James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), Richard Linklater's *A Scanner Darkly* (2006), Kerry Conran's *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) and Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller's *Sin City* (2005).

While films using digital effects for transparent purposes and for constructing a believable fictional reality (as in *Avatar*) may be correctly identified as remediation phenomena, in *Sin City* and *Sky Captain* the visual effects resulting from digital technology serve to highlight the implausibility of the traditional photographic image. However, these two films also need to be set apart when considering the source of inspiration. In this case, *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* is a transmedial phenomenon, as the film tries to recreate retro-futurism, a particular aesthetic style seen across a variety of different media. In contrast, *Sin City* is a case of intermedial reference, as it imitates a specific product in another medium, which is Frank Miller's *Sin City* series.

> "There are things that we did with *Watchmen* that could only work in a comic,
> and were indeed designed to show off things that other media can't. (…)
> There are a couple of adaptations that are perhaps as good
> or better than the original work. But the vast majority of them are pointless"
> (Alan Moore on adaptations. Interview for *Entertainment Weekly*).

> "Comics and films have been doing an interesting dance
> the past few years. The two fields have always been related.
> I mean they're both visual forms, they share a lot of the same dynamics.
> Unfortunately, up until very recently the relationships have been enormously one sided.
> Comics have been the retarded second cousin of movies begging for scraps"
> (Frank Miller on film influence. *Frank Miller's Sin City: The Making of the Movie*, 12).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

For distinct reasons, both comics and adaptations are most of the times seen as inferior forms of representation. And, within adaptation studies, comics have always occupied a secondary role in comparison with other media such as film, literature, painting and music. As a consequence, the subject of this thesis – comics-based film adaptations – is condemned to carry a double burden of prejudice. First, because it deals with adaptations; second, because it deals with comics.

As a matter of fact, the relationship between comics and films – a long-term one – has been quite overlooked among critics and scholars. And, when the subject is finally raised, it has been generally limited to finding filmic equivalents for comics specific mediatic qualities and vice-versa.

In this sense, this thesis has been an attempt to reaffirm the place of comics within adaptation studies and its importance as an autonomous medium. It can also be seen as a modest contribution to reduce the deficiency of bibliographical references on the subject.

After the introductory chapter providing a historical panorama and the *status questionis* of the field, in the first chapter of this thesis I presented the theoretical works on intermediality that guided my analysis. I have particularly relied on Irina Rajewsky's categories of media combination (since both comics and films are hybrid forms, composed of text and image), media transposition (since I am dealing with film adaptation) and intermedial references (since most cases of comics-to-film adaptations appear as if they were their source-texts).

In relation to media transposition, Pascal Lefèvre's article "Incompatible Visual Ontologies?", proved to be especially useful in relation to the incompatibilities between comics and their film versions. As previously mentioned, this may be the only critical work which attempts to consider not only the correspondences between the language of the comics and films, but the issues involving the process of adaptation itself. Because of the clarity of Lefèvre's classification, the chapters of this thesis were organized according to his proposed categories, considering the specific cases of Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, Frank Miller's *Sin City* (volumes 1, 3 and 4) and their respective film version.

The discussion of the incompatibility of the narrative structure in Chapter 2 showed that the narrative always undergoes changes (additions, condensations and deletions) when transposed to the cinema and that these changes are caused by the discrepancy in the duration and type of the narrative in the two media. As examples from many films have proved, the DVD technology has allowed a reorganization of the movie's narrative, giving access to deleted scenes, supplementary material and to the possibility of selecting "chapters" from the menu, sometimes even separating those which were once intertwined subplots within the movie.

This aspect is complicated by the massive use of other media to complement the movie's narrative, a phenomenon called *Transmedia Storytelling* or *Transmedia Narrative*. In

fact, as we have observed, more and more often films are becoming franchises, with a main narrative plot – the movie itself – which is complemented and amplified by means of ancillary tools such as Alternate Reality Games (ARGs), websites and videogames. In some extreme cases, only the user/viewer/spectator that has access to exclusive material in these other media is able to have a complete understanding of certain episodes of the film.

In the case of *Watchmen*, transmedia strategies were used to provide all the necessary storylines and details that compose the graphic novel. Besides the main storyline of the watchmen, the history of the first vigilantes (the minutemen) and the "Tales of the Black Freighter" were also provided through a separate DVD. Additionally, the fan could also access the multiple official websites with games, videos and photos created with the objective of enhancing the verisimilitude of the story and increasing the expectation in relation to the release of the film on theaters.

The third chapter examined the layout of the page and the layout of the screen in relation to Frank Miller's *Sin City* and its film version. First, we observed the elements that compose the comics page, which is mostly irregular in this graphic novel (in opposition to *Watchmen*) and ostentatious, destabilizing the reader at each turn of the page, as an analogy for the chaotic Basin City. Then, we examined the usual procedures used in transposing the page to the film screen. In most cases, the full-page and double-page compositions in the graphic novel are successfully used as storyboards for the film. In other cases, where multiple small panels are distributed within larger compositions, each panel is generally adapted as one frame of the film.

As a general rule for the subject of sound in both media, it is possible to say that the sound elements in film comprehend the narration (through both the character's voice and the voice-over), ambient noises and soundtrack. On the other hand, comics is regarded as a mute medium, in which "sound" can be expressed – but never heard – through the balloon/text font

and the onomatopoeia, a strategy typical of comics. Sound in comics can also come in the form of song lyrics, wavy lines or musical notes. Alan Moore's *Watchmen* does not contain any onomatopoeic sounds (in complete opposition to *Sin City*) but has several excerpts of songs, which are used, most of the times, to comment on a certain event of the narrative or to establish mood. However, when transposed to film, these songs were either substituted for other songs or repositioned, which conferred on them new meanings within the film narrative.

Finally, it has been shown that both cinema and comics have been deeply affected by the use of digital technology, which brings together drawings in comics to photography in films. The images that result from that intervention have created distinct visual aesthetics for cinema – as it happened with Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* – and for comics as well. Although most films produced today have used digital technology for enhancing the film experience (which can be called remediation), this practice is particularly interesting in comics-to-film adaptations because it often aims at recreating the aesthetics of the comic book on screen, which characterizes a case of intermedial reference.

As a matter of fact, we may have come to a moment in which it is not possible to distinguish cinema from other media in terms of its photographic quality anymore. Films such as *A Scanner Darkly*, *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *Sin City* and more recently *Avatar* have combined digital technology to the usual filming process (albeit with different purposes) in such an amalgamated way that it is often hard for the spectator to distinguish 'real' from 'fabricated' images. From Lawrence Olivier's *Henry V* (1944) – widely criticized because of its poor scenery that reminded viewers of a theatrical play on screen – to James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) – the most perfect example of amalgamation between digital and photographical images up to this date –, it is possible to say that cinema has undergone hundreds of years of progress in this aspect within the last few decades.

Consequently, it is totally understandable that theories of adaptation developed in the 1950's do not provide a comprehensive and updated approach to the subject any longer, overlooking some of the main aspects of adaptations today. In this sense, not only but especially in relation to comics-to-film transpositions, theories of adaptation need to be constantly proposed and revised. And also this thesis, which was based on aspects and examples available at the present date, may also be subject to scrutiny in some years.

APPENDIX

Lyrics of songs analyzed in Chapter 4 (in alphabetical order)
Source: “Lyrics Time”

99 Luftballons – Nena (1982)

Hast du etwas Zeit für mich
Dann singe ich ein Lied für dich
Von 99 Luftballons
Auf ihrem weg zum Horizont
Denkst du vielleicht gerad' an mich
Dann singe ich ein Lied für dich
Von 99 Luftballons
Und das sowas von sowas kommt

99 Luftballons
Auf ihrem weg zum Horizont
Hielt man für UFOs aus dem All
Darum schickte ein General
eine Fliegerstaffel hinterher
Alarm zu geben, wenn's so wär
Dabei war'n da am Horizont
Nur 99 Luftballons

99 Düsenflieger
jeder war ein großer Krieger
Hielten sich für Captain Kirk
Das gab's ein großes Feuerwerk
Die Nachbarn haben nichts gerafft
Und fühlten sich gleich angemacht
Dabei schoss man am Horizont
Auf 99 Luftballons

99 Kriegsminister
Streichholz und Benzinkanister
Hielten sich für schlaue Leute
Witterten schon fette Beute
Riefen: Krieg und wollten Macht
Mann, wer hätte das gedacht
Dass es einmal soweit kommt
Wegen 99 Luftballons

99 Jahre Krieg
Ließen keinen platz für Sieger
Kriegsminister gibt's nicht mehr
Und auch keine Düsenflieger
Heute zieh ich meine Runden

Seh' die Welt in Trümmern liegen
Hab' einen Luftballon gefunden
Denk' an dich und lass' ihn fliegen

All Along the Watchtower – Jimi Hendrix (1967)

There must be some kind of way out of here
Said the joker to the thief
There's too much confusion
I cant get no relief
Businessman they drink my wine
Plow men dig my earth
None will level on the line
Nobody of it is worth
Hey hey

No reason to get excited
The thief he kindly spoke
There are many here among us
Who feel that life is but a joke but uh
But you and I we've been through that
And this is not our fate
So let us not talk falsely now
The hours getting late
Hey

All along the watchtower
Princes kept the view
While all the women came and went
Bare-foot servants to, but huh
Outside in the cold distance
A wild cat did growl
Two riders were approachin'
And the wind began to howl
Hey
Oh
All along the watchtower
Hear you sing around the watch
Gotta beware gotta beware I will
Yeah
Ooh baby
All along the watchtower

Desolation Row – Bob Dylan (1965)

They're selling postcards of the hanging
They're painting the passports brown
The beauty parlor is filled with sailors

The circus is in town
Here comes the blind commissioner
They've got him in a trance
One hand is tied to the tight-rope walker
The other is in his pants
And the riot squad they're restless
They need somewhere to go
As Lady and I look out tonight
From Desolation Row

Cinderella, she seems so easy
"It takes one to know one," she smiles
And puts her hands in her back pockets
Bette Davis style
And in comes Romeo, he's moaning
"You Belong to Me I Believe"
And someone says," You're in the wrong place, my friend
You better leave"
And the only sound that's left
After the ambulances go
Is Cinderella sweeping up
On Desolation Row

Now the moon is almost hidden
The stars are beginning to hide
The fortunetelling lady
Has even taken all her things inside
All except for Cain and Abel
And the hunchback of Notre Dame
Everybody is making love
Or else expecting rain
And the Good Samaritan, he's dressing
He's getting ready for the show
He's going to the carnival tonight
On Desolation Row

Now Ophelia, she's 'neath the window
For her I feel so afraid
On her twenty-second birthday
She already is an old maid

To her, death is quite romantic
She wears an iron vest
Her profession's her religion
Her sin is her lifelessness
And though her eyes are fixed upon
Noah's great rainbow
She spends her time peeking
Into Desolation Row

Einstein, disguised as Robin Hood
With his memories in a trunk
Passed this way an hour ago
With his friend, a jealous monk
He looked so immaculately frightful
As he bummed a cigarette
Then he went off sniffing drainpipes
And reciting the alphabet
Now you would not think to look at him
But he was famous long ago
For playing the electric violin
On Desolation Row

Dr. Filth, he keeps his world
Inside of a leather cup
But all his sexless patients
They're trying to blow it up
Now his nurse, some local loser
She's in charge of the cyanide hole
And she also keeps the cards that read
"Have Mercy on His Soul"
They all play on penny whistles
You can hear them blow
If you lean your head out far enough
From Desolation Row

Across the street they've nailed the curtains
They're getting ready for the feast
The Phantom of the Opera
A perfect image of a priest
They're spoonfeeding Casanova
To get him to feel more assured
Then they'll kill him with self-confidence
After poisoning him with words

And the Phantom's shouting to skinny girls
"Get Outta Here If You Don't Know
Casanova is just being punished for going
To Desolation Row"

Now at midnight all the agents
And the superhuman crew
Come out and round up everyone
That knows more than they do
Then they bring them to the factory
Where the heart-attack machine
Is strapped across their shoulders
And then the kerosene
Is brought down from the castles
By insurance men who go

Check to see that nobody is escaping
To Desolation Row

Praise be to Nero's Neptune
The Titanic sails at dawn
And everybody's shouting
"Which Side Are You On?"
And Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot
Fighting in the captain's tower
While calypso singers laugh at them
And fishermen hold flowers
Between the windows of the sea
Where lovely mermaids flow
And nobody has to think too much
About Desolation Row

Yes, I received your letter yesterday
(About the time the door knob broke)
When you asked how I was doing
Was that some kind of joke?
All these people that you mention
Yes, I know them, they're quite lame
I had to rearrange their faces
And give them all another name
Right now I can't read too good
Don't send me no more letters no
Not unless you mail them
From Desolation Row

First We Take Manhattan – Leonard Cohen (1987)

(Radio announcer's voice)
Was die Attentäter betrifft, die in Berlin den Anschlag auf die Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft verübt haben, ist die Polizei einen Schritt weiter gekommen. Die jetzt nach dem Anschlag...

They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom
For trying to change the system from within
I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'm guided by a signal in the heavens
I'm guided by this birthmark on my skin
I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby
I love your body and your spirit and your clothes
But you see that line there moving through the station?

I told you, I told you, told you, I was one of those

Ah you loved me as a loser, but now you're worried that I just might win
You know the way to stop me, but you don't have the discipline
How many nights I prayed for this, to let my work begin
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I don't like your fashion business mister
And I don't like these drugs that keep you thin
I don't like what happened to my sister
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby ...

And I thank you for those items that you sent me
The monkey and the plywood violin
I practiced every night, now I'm ready
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I am guided

Ah remember me, I used to live for music
Remember me, I brought your groceries in
Well it's Father's Day and everybody's wounded
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

Hallelujah – Leonard Cohen (1984)

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this
The fourth, the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
The baffled king composing Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah. Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you
She tied you
To a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah

Baby I have been here before
I know this room, I've walked this floor
I used to live alone before I knew you.

I've seen your flag on the marble arch
Love is not a victory march
It's a cold and it's a broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

There was a time you let me know
What's really going on below
But now you never show it to me, do you?
And remember when I moved in you
The holy dove was moving too
And every breath we drew was Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

You say I took the name in vain
I don't even know the name
But if I did, well really, what's it to you?
There's a blaze of light
In every word
It doesn't matter which you heard
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I did my best, it wasn't much
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you
And even though
It all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I'm Your Boogie Man – KC & The Sunshine Band (1977)

I'm your boogie man that's what I am
I'm here to do whatever I can
Be it early mornin' late afternoon
Or at midnight it's never too soon
To wanna please you to wanna please you

To wanna do it all all for you
I wanna be your be your lover boy
I wanna be the one ya love most of all - oh yeah

I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man
Turn me on
I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man
Do what you want
I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man
Turn me on
I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man
Do what you want

I'm your boogie man that's what I am
I'm here to do whatever I can
Be it early mornin' late afternoon
Or at midnight it's never too soon
To wanna take you to wanna hold you
I wanna give me all all to you
And I want you to completely understand
Just where I'm at and where I am - oh yeah

I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man, ...

I'm your boogie man that's what I am
I'm here to do whatever I can
Be it early mornin' late afternoon
Or at midnight it's never too soon
I wanna be with you I wanna be with you
Yeah we'll be together you and me
I wanna see you ah get near you
I wanna love you ah from sundown sunup - oh yeah oh yeah

I'm your boogie man that's what I am
I'm here to do whatever I can
Be it early mornin' late afternoon
Or at midnight it's never too soon
To wanna please you to wanna hold you
To wanna do it all all for you
I wanna be you be your lover boy
I wanna be the one ya love most of all
I'm your boogie man aha ...

Jocko Homo – Devo (1976)

They tell us that
We lost our tails
Evolving up
From little snails

I say it’s all
Just wind in sails
Are we not men?
We are devo!
Were pinheads now
We are not whole
Were pinheads all
Jocko homo
Are we not men?
D-e-v-o
Monkey men all
In business suit
Teachers and critics
All dance the poot
Are we not men?
We are devo!
Are we not men?
D-e-v-o
God made man
But he used the monkey to do it
Apes in the plan
Were all here to prove it
I can walk like an ape
Talk like an ape
I can do what a monkey can do
God made man
But a monkey supplied the glue
We must repeat
O.k. lets go!

Neighborhood Threat – Iggy Pop (1977)

Down where your paint is cracking
Look down your backstairs buddy
Somebodies living there and
He don't really feel the weather
And he don't share your pleasures
No, he don't share your pleasures
Did you see his eyes?
Did you see his crazy eyes?
And you're so surprised he doesn't run to catch your ash
Everybody always wants to kiss your trash
And you can't help him, no one can
And now that he knows
There's nothing to get
Will you still place your bet
Against the Neighbourhood Threat?

Somewhere a baby's feeding

Somewhere a mother's needing
Outside her boy is trying
But mostly he is crying
Did you see his eyes?
Did you see his crazy eyes?
And you're so surprised he doesn't run to catch your ash
Everybody always wants to kiss your trash
But you can't help him, no one can
And now that he knows
There's nothing to get
Not in this place
Not in your face
Will you still place your bet
Against the Neighbourhood Threat? [Repeat]

Réquiem – Mozart (1791)

Introitus

Requiem

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion, et
tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem:
exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis
caro veniet.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Sanities – John Cale (1982)

She was so afraid
Since her mother, white with time,
Told her
She was a failure.
She was so ashamed
Of everything she said
And everything she did
For her mother, white with time.
Everything around her mother
White with time.
And dirty.

Her mother was greedy with dirt.
Greedy.
Then she heard choirs of angels,
Singing choirs of angels,
Greedy angels,
Spitting glory on her failure.
That stardust of failure,
As if it was medicine
That didn't work,
Anyway.
Anyway
The windows they were closed
And the midwives had locked their doors.
They didn't understand.
And after all what was there to understand?
But the angels, sheer choirs of angels,
In a friendship.
No, more than a friendship,
It was a marriage, a marriage made in the grave.
In shivering night,
The searching of the river continued.
The bullet of searchlight,
That searchlight found her so cockleshell and sure,
Sick and tired of what she saw,
But cockleshell and sure.
Sure of what the world had offered a tired soul.
From Istanbul to Madrid,
From Reykjavik, to Bonn,
To Leipzig, to Leningrad,
To Shanghai, Pnonm Penh,
All so that it would be a stronger world
A strong though loving world to die in

The Comedians – Elvis Costello (1984)

I fell under such gentle persuasion
You can't refuse it's like a home from home
Meanwhile in the Motor car kingdom
They're finding that all that glitters is not chrome
The social circle have these cardiac complaints
Their hearts are empty when their hands are full
All these new found fond acquaintances
Turn out to be the red rag to my bull

[Chorus:]
And I'm up while the dawn is breaking
Even though my heart is aching
I should be drinking a toast to absent friends
Instead of these comedians

I've looked into these eyes upon reflection
They've seen the face of love, they've seen a few
What kind of love is this upon inspection
You'll be the last to know who's fooling who
[Chorus]

The Sounds of Silence – Simon and Garfunkel (1964)

Hello darkness, my old friend,
I've come to talk with you again,
Because a vision softly creeping,
Left its seeds while I was sleeping,
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence.

In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone,
'neath the halo of a street lamp,
I turned my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of
A neon light
That split the night
And touched the sound of silence.

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more.
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never share
And no one deared
Disturb the sound of silence.

Fools said I, you do not know
Silence like a cancer grows.
Hear my words that I might teach you,
Take my arms that I might reach you.
But my words like silent raindrops fell,
And echoed
In the wells of silence

And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon God they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
In the words that it was forming.
And the signs said, the words of the prophets
Are written on the subway walls

And tenement halls.
And whispered in the sounds of silence.

The Times They Are A-changin' – Bob Dylan (1964)

Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide

The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'

Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin’

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin’
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin’

Unforgettable – Nat King Cole (1951)

Unforgettable, that’s what you are
Unforgettable though near or far
Like a song of love that clings to me
How the thought of you does things to me
Never before has someone been more

Unforgettable in every way
And forever more, that’s how you’ll stay
That’s why, darling, its incredible
That someone so unforgettable
Thinks that I am unforgettable too

Unforgettable in every way
And forever more, that’s how you’ll stay
That’s why, darling, its incredible
That someone so unforgettable
Thinks that I am unforgettable too

Walking on the Moon – The Police (1979)

Giant steps are what you take
Walking on the moon
I hope my legs don’t break
Walking on the moon
We could walk for ever
Walking on the moon
We could live together
Walking on, walking on the moon

Walking back from your house
Walking on the moon

Walking back from your house
Walking on the moon
Feet they hardly touch the ground
Walking on the moon
My feet don’t hardly make no sound
Walking on, walking on the moon

Some may say
I’m wishing my days away, no way
And if its the price I pay, some say
Tomorrows another day, you’ll stay
I may as well play

Giant steps are what you take
Walking on the moon
I hope my legs don’t break
Walking on the moon
We could walk for ever
Walking on the moon
We could be together
Walking on, walking on the moon

Some may say
I’m wishing my days away no way
And if its the price I pay, some say
Tomorrows another day, you’ll stay
I may as well play

You're My Thrill – Billie Holliday (1949)

You're my thrill
You do something to me
You send chills right through me
When I look at you
'Cause you're my thrill
You're my thrill
How my pulse increases
I just go to pieces
When I look at you
'Cause you're my thrill

Hmmm-nothing seems to matter
Hmmm-here's my heart on a silver platter
Where's my will
Why this strange desire
That keeps morning higher
When I look at you
I can't keep still
You're my thrill

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