

Research Paper Annotated Bibliography

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For Professor Darren Wershler

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Archive Team. "The Archive Team Geocities Snapshot." *Internet Archive*, 2011.

Web. 11 June 2011. <<http://www.archive.org/details/2009-archiveteam-geocities-part1>>

This article discusses the Internet Archive's attempt to catalogue the now-defunct Geocities archive. When Geocities was shut down in 2009, a great deal of information was lost, and the Internet Archive is now compiling a "snapshot" of some of the material that was preserved at that time or has been recovered since. I will reference this news item when explaining the impact of digitalization on policies of preservation: because so much is now available to us, we sometimes neglect to preserve information properly. I will also tie this into my later discussion of Robert Darnton and the degradation rates of digital materials.

Beaty, Bart. "In Focus: Comics Studies Fifty Years After Film Studies—Introduction."

Cinema Journal 50.3 (2011): 106-110. Print.

Beaty's introduction to a section of a *Cinema Journal* issue dedicated to Comics Studies elaborates the state of the field in relation to Film Studies. Beaty

makes several useful points about the unique formal and narrative qualities of comics, and directs the reader's attention towards the imperative for Comics Studies to move beyond the analysis of key works and into theoretical work on the wider implications of comics for other media. Some of my goals closely echo Beaty's and I intend to use his introduction as support for some of my own critical decisions when writing. In addition, his analyses of comics' form and narrative both shed light on points I hope to make about the effect of medium on narrative, receptivity, and overall experience.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov."

Illuminations: Essays and Reflections. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York:

Schocken Books, 1969. Print.

In "The Storyteller," Benjamin presents a dichotomy between two terms: knowledge, which has lasting power and value, and information, which expends its value in the first moment of its transmission. Time and again, I have found this theoretical terminology useful in writing about different media forms, and I intend to make use of it again in writing my research paper. While I hope to largely avoid making value judgments in my essay, these specific terms may prove beneficial when I try to describe the different biases of the various media in which my object of study has been produced.

Darnton, Robert. *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. Print.

Darnton's *The Case for Books* has proven to be a treasure trove of book history, digital publication and digitalization policies, aesthetic reception studies, transmedia studies, and more. The passages I have pulled from this text have contributed a great deal to forming my critical framework, citing examples of the impact of materiality on developing understandings of texts, and how our book culture has arrived at its current state.

Delany, Samuel R. "The Politics of Paraliterary Criticism." *Shorter Views: Queer Thoughts & the Politics of the Paraliterary*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1999. Print.

For the most part, this essay is a critique of various aspects of Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, a critique I may take advantage of to balance out the comics studies aspect of my paper. Because of its massive influence, *Understanding Comics* is hard to ignore when writing academically about comics as a medium, but I believe it is important to avoid blindly following one voice that seeks to make definitions. Therefore, Delany's piece, along with Dylan Horrocks's "Inventing Comics" article, will be essential in providing balanced critical background for comics as a medium. In addition, Delany's proposals for the study of

comics bear strong similarities to Latour's ANT methodology, a fact I will use to both inform and support my own methodology when analyzing my object of study.

Fogu, Claudio. "Digitalizing Historical Consciousness." *History and Theory* 48.2 (2009): 103-121. Print.

This *History and Theory* article mostly focuses on the effects of video games on how collective historical consciousness has shifted in the last 15 years, a subject with little to no bearing on my goals in writing my research paper. However, some of the general points Fogu makes about digital media not as a revolution but as just another remediation process will come in handy when writing my paper's conclusion, and some of the light he sheds on video games may be helpful if and when I analyze *Watchmen: The End is Nigh*.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Vintage Books, 1972. Print.

Foucault's treatise on how discourses are built within archives and in turn are built around documents has affected the formation of my critical framework in a number of ways. Amongst these are the assertions that books are nodes in networks, the revelation that the reader may only perceive the unity of the actual text so as to support the *discourse* of the unity of the text, and the claim of the necessity of suspending both the idea of the material text and that of an author's

body of work. Foucault's statement that "the book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands" is closely aligned with my views on the subject of study and interpretation.

---. "What Is an Author?" Trans. Josué Harari. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Ed. David H. Richter. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Print.

Foucault's well-known article on the relationship dynamics between texts, authors, and readers. I selected this article because of the number of ways that my paper will touch on authorship and oeuvre. When dealing with my object of study, I will have to examine questions of how its authorship is altered in its shift from media form to media form.

Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar, and Elizabeth A. Povinelli. "Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition." *Public Culture* 15.3 (2003): 385-397. Print.

This article examines the challenge of analyzing new media and technologies' impacts on public culture, a challenge made difficult by the fact that these technologies and media forms have sprung up so fast as to not allow for enough time to find new and appropriate ways of studying them. In essence, the article argues that we still rely on methodologies used to explore older forms of media,

methodologies that are inadequate. This piece addresses one of the same questions I intend to address in my research paper: how can we study one concept employed across multiple media platforms without employing multiple methods and strategies? While Gaonkar and Povinelli do not come to any conclusions that I find particularly satisfying, their purpose is also much the same as mine: to ask questions. In addition, the relation of this article to the concept of the circulations of culture and media forms and their impact on each other will come in handy when writing a project about differential media.

Gibbons, Dave, Chip Kidd, and Mike Essl. *Watching the Watchmen: The Definitive Companion to the Ultimate Graphic Novel*. London: Titan Books, 2008. Print.

Watching the Watchmen is, as stated by its subtitle, a companion guide to *Watchmen*. As Moore and Gibbons's seminal work and all its transmedia adaptations are my objects of study, this reader's guide may prove helpful in building my analysis of all things *Watchmen*.

Groensteen, Thierry. *The System of Comics*. Trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007. Print.

Groensteen's book traces the some of the history not just of the comics medium, but of some of the theory that that medium may claim as its own. I plan to

use *The System of Comics* to inform my own explication of the subtleties of the medium's inner workings.

Guillory, John. "Genesis of the Media Concept." *Critical Inquiry* 36.2 (2010): 321-362. Print.

Guillory uses this essay to attempt to uncover some of the philological origins of the concept of medium and media, and traces the history of the word from its earlier use to denote a simple channel of communication to its current status of reference to extraordinarily advanced technologies of transmission. As my research paper's broad subject is differential media, I found this article very useful in helping my construct and clarify certain aspects of my terminology.

Hyde, David. "DC Comic Announces Historic Renumbering of All Superhero Titles and Landmark Day-and-Date Digital Distribution." *The Source*. May 2011. Web. 1 June 2011. <<http://dcu.blog.dccomics.com/2011/05/31/dc-comics-announces-historic-renumbering-of-all-superhero-titles-and-landmark-day-and-date-digital-distribution/>>

This is a small news item from *The Source*, the Internet presence of DC Comics. In May of 2011, *The Source* announced a relaunch of all of DC's core titles to commence in September. The bulletin is only interesting to me in that included in it, almost as a side note, was an announcement that coinciding with the relaunch, DC

would rework its digital distribution policies to make virtual versions release the same day as paper editions. This signifies a powerful move toward electronic media in the comics industry, where digital media's symbolic importance to the business of comics (and consequently the experience of reading comics) is increased and altered. I intend to reference this item in my paper, most likely somewhere near the beginning as an example of the transforming fields of publication and readership.

Horrocks, Dylan. "Inventing Comics: Scott McCloud's Definition of Comics." *Comics Journal* 234 (2001): n. pag. Web. 11 July 2011.
<www.hicksville.co.nz/Inventing%20Comics.htm>

Much like the Delany chapter from *Shorter Views*, Dylan Horrocks's article from a 2001 issue of *The Comics Journal* offers a sharp and intelligent critique of some aspects of McCloud's *Understanding Comics*. As mentioned above, I find these counterviews to McCloud's largely accepted ideas about comics valuable in forming balanced ideas about what comics are and how they may be described.

Innis, Harold. *The Bias of Communication*. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Print.

In *The Bias of Communication*, Innis explains that different forms of transmission (i.e. media) are biased towards different forms of experience, such as

resilient, time-biased paper or space-biased cellular communications, easily transmitted over vast distances. In describing the different media forms that *Watchmen* has taken in its 25-year history, I will also have to analyze the different biases evident in each medium. Innis's ideas will be crucial in making this analysis, and frankly the analysis would not have been made without them.

Labio, Catherine. "What's in a Name? The Academic Study of Comics and the 'Graphic Novel'." *Cinema Journal* 50.3 (2011): 123-126. Print.

Here, Labio examines the inadequacy of the various terminologies available to describe comics, graphic novels, sequential storytelling, or whatever it is called. None of the words yet used to describe or define the medium is effective as a catch-all designation. I share both Labio's frustration over the debate on what comics should be called and her consternation that the debate takes up the energy of so many comics scholars. One of my motivations in using ANT to study *Watchmen* is that it is a theoretical foundation that allows me to focus on description rather than definition. I will use Labio's article to identify some of the issues of reliance on definitions.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2005. Print.

As it stands, Latour's book on Actor-Network Theory has informed the bulk of the core theory of my research paper. By employing ANT to describe the differences and connections in both form and reception of the multiple media representations of *Watchmen*, I hope to challenge conventional forms of literary analysis and ask questions about authorship. ANT is the best analytical methodology I have been able to find thus far to carry out the task of examining multiplicities as singularities and single ideas executed across multiple media. Latour's book has consequently become the backbone of my own critical techniques.

Lee, Benjamin, and Edward LiPuma. "Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity." *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 191-213. Print.

For the most part, this article by Lee and LiPuma is about the rise of circulation-based capitalism, global currency, and derivatives. However, as unlikely a source this article may be, it does provide an insight into the process of media consumption in its brief touching on the performative aspects of reading. With some reworking of application, I may be able to make use of this piece to describe both the act of reading and the way that ideas circulate from medium to medium.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1994. Print.

McCloud's book on the burgeoning comics medium is widely regarded as a powerful and perceptive guidebook for identifying the core qualities of comics. *Understanding Comics* has set the bar for the last 15 years of comics scholarship, and many comics academics have accepted and adopted a great deal of McCloud's terms and concepts. It would be difficult and likely to write a rounded article on the nature of comics' materiality without consulting this book. Because many of McCloud's terms and ideas are useful to me in making my own terminology and conceptual framework, and because they will be familiar to other scholarly readers, I will likely find *Understanding Comics* to be very helpful.

---. *Reinventing Comics: How Imagination and Technology are Revolutionizing an Art Form*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2000. Print.

A sort of sequel to *Understanding Comics*, McCloud's *Reinventing Comics* examines some of the ways in which digital techniques of production and online comics are changing the ways we think of the art form. While less popular than its predecessor, *Reinventing Comics* may actually prove to me to be the *more* valuable of the two, as it addresses the impact electronic media began to have on comics at the end of the 20th century. Though circumstances have progressed quite a bit further in the last dozen years since McCloud was writing the book, it still makes many important observations about the transition of a specific type of work from one platform of transmission to another.

McGann, Jerome. *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Print.

Radiant Textuality chronicles several of Jerome McGann's archival and editorial projects throughout the eighties and nineties, many of which are quite interesting and contributive to a greater understanding of the rationale of hypertext and digital media theory, but of key importance to my research project is the book's exploration of the impact of digitization on the study of literature. McGann makes many invaluable observations on how digital media alters all aspects of reading, from basic aesthetic concerns to intricate issues of critique, all of which flow along the same current as my examination of differential media. In addition, McGann's work on this book has contributed to my understanding of how digital forms of transmission offer new and unique opportunities for both authorship and fiction. All of these qualities make *Radiant Textuality* a vital part of my theoretical framework.

Moore, Alan, and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. Various editions. New York: DC Comics, 1986-2005. Print.

In its more than twenty years of publication history, *Watchmen* has been released in many different formats, each of which has its own unique qualities. First published as 12 installments over a period of a year, the work has since been collected in trade paperback form three different times in English, and as a large-

print hardcover “absolute” edition. Furthermore, there exist both official and pirated digital versions available for download. *Watchmen* has also been adapted into a motion comic, a video game, and a major motion picture. This multiplicity of editions makes the work a perfect object of study for my research paper, because my theory is that each different form must be read differently, and quite possibly understood differently as well. Additionally, because of its stature in terms of both popularity and complexity, it will make for an object of study that requires little further justification from me as regards its literary worth.

Moulthrop, Stuart. “See the Strings: *Watchmen* and the Under-Language of Media.”

Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives. Ed. Pat Harrigan and Noah Wardrip-Fruin. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009. 287-302. Print.

Moulthrop’s background as a *Watchmen* specialist makes this chapter especially interesting because it is one of the few studies of the book to be found that treat at once its content and form, and how the two interact and interplay with one another. This piece will be quite useful to me in forming my own thoughts and elaborating my analyses.

Ndalianis, Angela. “Why Comics Studies?” *Cinema Journal* 50.3 (2011): 113-117.

Print.

Ndalianis here provides several justifications for the study of comics, and addresses the transmedia logic behind the entertainment industry that gives rise to objects like video game and film adaptations. While the piece mainly appraises the politics involved in both the comics business and its academic audience, it also touches upon the 2009 film adaptation of *Watchmen*, a small section of the article that inspired a few key observations I intend to make about differences between the comic version of the work and its movie counterpart.

Slack, Jennifer Daryl, and J. Macgregor Wise. *Culture and Technology: a Primer*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2007. Print.

Slack and Wise have written a book that escorts the reader through some of the controversies and arguments given rise to by various rapidly-changing technological forms, taking care to explore the shifting impacts of these technologies on societal development and custom. *Culture and Technology* has provided me with a great deal of background information on the circumstances of technological innovation and the theory that follows from such developments, background information that may prove advantageous in buttressing some of my own arguments.

Sohmer, Ryan, and Marco D'Alfonso. "Gutters 108." *Gutters*, Mar. 2011. Web. 11 June 2011. <http://www.the-gutters.com/comic/108-marco-d-alfonso>

Straw, Will. "The Circulatory Turn." *The Wireless Spectrum: The Politics, Practices and Poetics of Mobile Media*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Print. 17-28.

Straw's article takes the claims made in Gaonkar and Povinelli's "Technologies of Public Forms" article—that the movement of media forms through culture effects both the forms and culture itself—and breaks down the reasons that certain media forms produce a tension between stasis and mobility. It also addresses the specific biases of mobile media, particularly in how they relate to the urban landscape. This will be of use to me if I am able to describe the process of absorbing *Watchmen* using mobile media—especially the *Watchmen* motion comic, which can be viewed on a smartphone.

Timney, Meagan, Cara Leitch, and Ray Siemens. "Opening the Gates: A New Model for Edition Production in a Time of Collaboration." In Proceedings of the Modern Language Association (MLA) 2011 (January 2011). n. pag. Web. 5 May 2011. <<http://etcl.uvic.ca/files/2011/01/timneyleitchsiemens-socialedition.pdf>>

This article elaborates a number of collaborative measures being taken by digital humanities scholars to use electronic media to develop tools for constructing social editions, such as communal bibliography building, group tagging and annotation, and the utilization of social media software to bring teams together. The

piece not only describes major steps being taken toward the proliferation of the social edition, but also acts as a passionate call for further exploitation of digital technology towards making edition-building even more collaborative. In my paper, I will likely draw attention to the social edition as an example of how traditional ideas of authorship may be challenged by transmedia works, and this article will be beneficial in showing how digital humanities are changing what it means to be a work of literature.

Wershler, Darren. "Digital Comics, Circulation, and the Importance of Being Eric Sluis." *Cinema Journal* 50.3 (2011): 127-134. Print.

This article will be of special interest to me when I construct the part of my research paper that has to do with digital editions, both licensed and pirated. Wershler's essay touches on several points I hope to explore myself, including the material, aesthetic experience of reading, physical comics with digital counterparts, and the business of electronic publishing and dissemination. In my paper, I will draw connections between this piece, the announcement of day-and-date digital distribution from DC's *The Source*, and an examination of the official and pirated electronic versions of *Watchmen*.

Wolk, Douglas. *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2007. Print.

Reading Comics has been most valuable to my research as a signpost pointing me toward other pieces of useful theory. Wolk has directed my attention to several good critical essays, including Delany's "Politics of Paraliterary Criticism" and Horrocks's "Inventing Comics." The majority of the book, however, is dedicated to studies of individual comics creators, the only one of which that has really benefited my research at all is the section on Alan Moore. Still, there are little snippets here and there throughout the book that I may be able to extrapolate and exploit, including commentary on the fetishization of comic collecting (that I can use to draw attention to the importance of the comic book as a material *object*) and a critique of comic adaptations of movies and books (which I might reverse engineer when discussing the film and motion comic adaptations of *Watchmen*).

Watchmen. Dir. Zack Snyder. Perf. Malin Akerman, Billy Crudup, Matthew Goode, Jackie Earle Haley, and Patrick Wilson. Warner Bros., 2009. Film.

The 2009 mega-hit blockbuster of *Watchmen* is one of my secondary objects of study, and may prove to be one of the most interesting. In adapting Moore and Gibbons's comic for the silver screen, director Zack Snyder took arguably little artistic license in a seeming attempt to remain fiercely loyal to the original work—especially visually. In spite of the very close resemblance between the book and the film, the two must be entirely different by virtue of being produced and presented in two different media. If this is true though, what does that mean about the relationship between the original work and the motion comic version or the digital

editions? In what ways are frames taken image for image or chunks of dialogue imitated line for line completely new when performed in a different medium? These are the kinds of questions I will attend to in my research paper.

Watchmen Motion Comic. Dir. Jake Strider Hughes. Perf. Tom Stechschulte. Cruel & Unusual Films, 2008. DVD.

The *Watchmen* motion comic is a five-hour DVD (also available for digital download) that was originally broadcast online and on television. Somewhere between comic and animation, a motion comic takes the original artwork and adds limited movement of limbs and between foreground in background, as well as voice-overs and musical scores. I will explore the motion comic edition of *Watchmen* on both DVD and, hopefully, mobile media. Since this work is essentially *Watchmen* presented out loud and with movement, it provides an especially fascinating opportunity to study how the experience of readership is altered when pacing is determined by the work rather than the reader.

Watchmen: The End is Nigh. Burbank: Warner Bros. Games, 2009. Xbox 360.

This video game serves as a prequel to *Watchmen's* 2009 film adaptation. At the moment, I am still undecided on just what role an exploration of this game could perform in my research paper, primarily because it would be difficult to embark on such an exploration without devoting a great deal of space in the essay to it. On the

other hand, *Watchmen: The End is Nigh* is interactive with its user in a way that no other media representations of *Watchmen* are able to be. Because of this, I would be doing my paper a disservice to not include a study of the game.