CHAPTER 4

Media Representation and Transmediation: Indexicality in Journalism Comics and Biography Comics

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The understanding that all media are multimodal and intermedial in some sense and share basic characteristics among them is now fully accepted by scholars at a time when studies focus on understanding the interaction between them. Comics are one of these originally intermedial arts, since

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meaning is constructed through the combination of several media, verbal and nonverbal. This is done through different qualified media and their modalities, such as the graphic image.¹ One of the characteristics of the perception of comics as qualified media² occurs quite simultaneously with their mediation. The combination of verbal and nonverbal languages found in comics, associated with the structure of the frames, is recognized even before the reading takes place (by word or image in this sense). This is how we associate the sequential combination of verbal language and graphic image immediately as comics, although comics media products may differ greatly in their qualities and functions. The same cannot be said about verbal literary narratives, for example: in this case, we cannot define merely at a glance whether we are looking at a novel, a tale, or youth literature. With ballet, a quick look at the ballerina's tutu is enough for us to recognize the genre. However, as soon as the dancer begins the movements on the stage, this dancer can be performing a role in a play or even street dance.

In this chapter, our interest is not to analyze this media combination in comics *per se*, but rather, to look into the strategies used by sequential art that prompt the term “journalism comics”, that is, how its modalities and modes differ from “fiction comics” in order to refer to the extradiegetic world. When analyzing the difference that seems most basic to us in comparing these two sequential art forms—the literary and the journalistic—the distinction between “fiction” and “history” immediately emerges. Another issue that arises from this comparison is the distinctions and similarities between biography comics and journalism comics. Although biography can be understood as a journalistic genre, the distinctions between these two at times can highlight the notion that it is part of the journalistic strategies. In this sense, the analysis of media products proposed here focuses on the strategies of indexicality established by journalism comics, which puts the semiotic modality of comics in perspective.

Our purpose is neither to analyze the *conditio sine qua non* of comics, nor to add complexity to basic concepts that are still the object of reflection and controversy (although they have already been settled in different areas), but to analyze the ways in which journalism comics and biography comics create indexicality through intermedial relations. We have selected some basic terminology to aid in the understanding of the ideas to which the concepts refer. Some additional clarifications are explained in footnotes. Lars Elleström's concepts of analysis will be discussed in section 11.3.

4.2 A SHORT HISTORY OF COMICS AS A QUALIFIED MEDIA TYPE

The tactic of narrating facts by means of successive drawings, which requires the sequential reading of images, is quite ancient in human history. To illustrate, one can refer to cave paintings in prehistory, ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, mosaics, frescoes, and tapestries from the Middle Ages. As a specific example, one is reminded that in 1064, the *Bayeux Tapestry* told the Norman conquest of England in 58 scenes embroidered on 70 meters of fabric. Also, the *Bible Pauperum*, directed to illiterate Christians, preached religious faith from a series of woodcuts depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments, focusing mainly on the dramatization of the life of Christ. And the *Harlot's Progress* series of paintings, produced by William Hogarth in 1730, consisted of six sequential paintings chronologically telling the life story of a prostitute in London. These classic examples of sequential narratives can be considered the precursors of comic books, which would have been recognized early in the print works of writer and illustrator Rodolphe Töpffer. Considered by many to be the great pioneer of comics—with the creation of *M. Vieux Bois* in 1827—Töpffer framed his work in the form of a caricatured novel, seeking to distance himself from the role of book illustrator. Töpffer's pioneer work was one of the first integrations between literature and graphic imagery to go beyond the merely illustrative function that nonverbal images had in their interaction with the word in literary works.

This hybrid nature of comics, derived from media combinations of verbal and nonverbal languages, leads to an increase in the complexity of their conceptual definition. Eisner emphasizes that the art of comics is an act of aesthetic perception and intellectual effort, since the reader needs to exercise verbal and nonverbal visual interpretative skills, considering that the rules of painting (perspective, symmetry, brush stroke) and literature (grammar, plot, syntax), for example, mutually overlap (Eisner 1995a: 8). The author believes that both functions are irrevocably intertwined, since “sequential art is the act of weaving a fabric” (1995a: 122). Although McCloud defines comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (1994: 9), it is clear that the idea of sequential art is the only definition we will need to understand comics. Still, for many authors, such as Chinen (2011), the mere fact that the definition of sequential art is also applied to cinema is enough for it to be

refuted in comics. When we connect the previous statement to Elleström's ideas (2020), we come to the idea that the spatiotemporal modality is narrative-sequential, though there are differences among the other modalities that make these media different.

This conceptual vagueness is justified; capable of assimilating and transforming the languages of various media, such as cinema, literature, theater, and painting, comics also adapt easily to new technologies, and regularly adjust their method of production and meaning to available creative platforms. This is the case of their specific relationship with journalism, since it was on the pages of newspapers that comics established themselves as a media product, before finding their narrative space and consolidating themselves as recognized qualified media.

As far back as the mid-nineteenth century, newspapers were known for their pages with informative and opinionated material in the form of large blocks of text. Even before this period, in 1796, with the creation of the lithographic printing system, readers could access the news combined with visual elements. Created by Johann Alois Senefelder, lithography simplified paper printing through a planographic process and made it easier to add drawings, thus changing the way newspapers were read. This "visual addition", seen as an informative complement, enabled the emergence of periodicals, especially in the post-revolutionary France of 1830, which had their greatest attraction in caricature. According to Bruchard, in her preface to Daumier's book (Bruchard 1995: 4):

Caricature was part of a movement in which a whole generation of artists, conveyed by an increasingly agile press, were able to establish a way of observing, describing and judging what was trendy in the modern sense of the term, with the scope, impact and media developments that it maintains until today.³

The idea of caricature was based on the publication of prints containing political satire and social criticism, mainly targeting local rulers and politicians and their relations with the community. Honoré Daumier was one of the biggest names in caricaturism, devoting himself to political caricature and the defense of liberal ideals (Bruchard 1995: 4). His drawing "Gargantua", which criticized King Louis-Philippe, "made him spend six months in detention, first in the Sainte-Pélagie prison, then at Dr. Pinel's nursing home"⁴ (Bruchard 1995: 4). The author Philipon published a sequence of drawings in the 1834 newspaper *Le Charivari* that also

criticized the king in an iconic way: the king's face slowly turns into a pear—the French word *poire* meaning pear, but also meaning foolish. Fined for the publication, Philipon ironically repaid his debt by selling the same print separately (Bruchard 1995: 9).

As for the lack of resources for the visual recording of facts, since photography was still incipient,⁵ illustrations became an indispensable narrative and informative element of the press. This is why the idea of illustrated journalism became popular in the most diverse segments: local news, big parties, social events, and mainly war coverage started to be narrated with the aid of illustration, though not necessarily sequential. In the USA, the press began to cover actions such as the American Civil War in 1861 with illustrations that were independent from opinions regarding the journalistic event—they merely portrayed different moments of action, such as open battle scenes and the personification of heroes. In Europe, so-called special correspondents gained recognition, now covering illustrated wars and world conflicts. In this context, great names in illustrated journalism emerged, such as William Simpson (*Illustrated London News*), Sydney Prior Hall (*The Graphic*), and Melton Prior (*Illustrated London News*). In Brazil, the journalist Angelo Agostini was already developing modern concepts of the factual, documentary, and investigative idea of journalistic reporting with works such as “*Scenas da Escravidão*” (Slavery Scenes), published in *Revista Illustrada* in 1886. His historical comic books critically portrayed the brutality of slavery and denounced, in a crude, documentary form, the reality of punishment, torture, and murder committed against black slaves on farms, shortly before the signing of Lei Áurea, the Golden Law, in 1888. However, in the late nineteenth century, the improvement of photographic fixation, reproduction, and printing techniques was essential for photography to gain the pages of newspapers as an illustrative and informative feature of reports. The use of photography then provokes “a crisis of readaptation in the universe of representational art, ‘deprived’ of realism by another realism” (Sousa 2000: 24).

For photojournalism, conquering movement proved to be of vital importance, since it enabled one to ‘freeze’ action, impress it in an almost real-time image, capture the unforeseen, gain control of the snapshot and, with it, hint at the idea of truth: that which was thus captured would be true; the image would not lie (note, however, that although the snapshot allows for more ‘sincere’ and spontaneous photographic representations, the photographs are nonetheless representations). (Sousa 2000: 29–30)

At this point, photography began to occupy a privileged spot in journalism due to its indexical and iconic capacity to represent reality. This implied that the photographic representation would now be seen as an imaginary documentation of the world through a “realism” that painting and drawing could not portray (Sousa 2000: 33). Furthermore, “it also benefited from the notions of ‘proof’, ‘testimony’ and ‘truth’, which at the time were deeply associated to photography, deemed as a ‘mirror of the real’” (Sousa 2000: 33). Curiously, during a photographic exhibition in Paris in 1855, photographer Franz Hamfstangel exhibited, for the first time, retouched proofs of negatives, raising questions about the very essence of journalistic photography. According to Sousa, “if Hamfstangel invented the retouching of the negative, it also opened the door to the manipulation of the photographic image by trickery” (2000: 32).

With photography occupying the space of the illustration of reality in journalism at the time, the emerging media of comics adjusted to newspapers as a product of entertainment, based on fictional narratives. More specifically, comics sprang from a journalistic rivalry⁶ between William Randolph Hearst, owner of *The New York Journal*, and Joseph Pulitzer, owner of *The New York World*, who were fiercely vying for the market’s growing advertising dollars. Considered by most critics to be the first comic book, Richard Felton Outcault’s *Hogan’s Alley* series, released in 1896 in *The New York World*, portrayed the daily lives of various exotic and caricatured characters living in a New York alley. Among them there was the boy Mickey Dugan, who became known as Yellow Kid⁷ because he wore a yellow nightshirt on which criticism was written. The series established the new cultural and commercial advertising production of comics.

Comics then began to dispute available spaces in the colorful Sunday newspaper supplements, which were mostly a hit among children. In 1907, author Bud Fisher proposed the creation of a “strip-shaped” comic with a generally horizontal fixed format with few frames, facilitating both simultaneous production and distribution to various newspapers. With daily delivery and format limitation, the comic strips began to focus on the theme of humor, portraying comical situations that resembled jokes with generally unpredictable outcomes and simpler themes. This funny style of comics was so strong and influential that the expression comics is used to this day to specify any kind of comics.⁸ Parallel to comic strips as entertainment, all kinds of newspaper cartoons which assimilated the ideas of the old caricatures consolidated their role as political and social criticism, becoming tools of opinionated journalism and contestation.

With the emergence of a consumer comic book market, the most successful newspaper comic strips began to be compiled and printed in book form, then called comic books, the beginning of the form we know today. In 1938, with the publication of Superman stories, the golden age of superhero comics was born, ignited by a society crushed by the horrors of World War II and eager for examples of heroes. As Eco (1972: 107) states, quoting Superman's example, "the hero equipped with powers superior to those of the common man has been a constant in people's imagination—from Hercules to Siegfried, from Roland to Pantagruel all the way to Peter Pan".

In the 1950s, superhero comics, which were once examples of the values of unity, freedom, and overcoming difficulties, were challenged by rigid and distorted moral concepts at the time. It was in this context that the ideas of German psychiatrist Frederic Wertham, author of the book *Seduction of the Innocents*, were published and gained the spotlight in the USA in 1954, warning of a possible danger coming from comic books, and accusing them of stimulating juvenile delinquency. The destructive power of Wertham's book was immense and ultimately influenced an aggressive comic book censorship campaign, which eventually became the target of congressional investigation. The result was the creation of a comic self-censorship code—the Comics Code Authority (CCA)—which regulated the industry and wiped out numerous outstanding magazine titles that did not fit the moral standards of the time.

It was in this scenario that underground-styled comics stood out, a counterculture movement aiming at criticizing the values of the time. The main themes of the movement were sex, drugs, rebellion, and the Vietnam War. The underground comics intended to establish an anarchic and critical style, resulting in the development of misleading and irreverent characters and the creation of authorial and challenging stories based on the lifestyle of their authors.

In general, the printed newspaper never proved to be a receptive space for comics that featured longer and authoritative narratives: the preference was usually for the objectivity of the event in news production, which pointed to a journalistic need for informative material with daily or weekly update. Even when there was the possibility of developing longer and more investigative stories, comics were not a production priority due to the time required for production, delays, and the costs involved.

It was with the rise of underground-style comics reviews, usually published in magazines and books, that nonfiction author comic books were

consolidated, pointing toward the appropriation of the real inherent in history, journalism, and biography. Turning to biographical and autobiographical stories, comics began to concern themselves with portraying daily life drawn from the experiences of the author or the observed character, in the form of personal stories, family stories, or common dramas often intertwined with great facts of history. In this context, involvement with the characters' psychological, sentimental, and motivational issues emerges—illustrated by memory flashbacks—whose subjective nature reveals interpretations and opinions made in a very personal and particular way. The presence of this aspect in comics media products can be analyzed in different ways.

In comics, the very idea of the biographical narrative establishing itself as an element of social and cultural representation—while also acting as historical document and rescuing the past and contextual analysis of an era—eventually strains the limits of journalistic narrative. Since comics use iconic representations of reality, they seek to legitimize situations and contexts through indexical representations, such as graphic images of documents or factual situations, highlighting important and recognizable details to create models of reality representation.

This is how biographical comics often use journalistic resources to document this reality, trying to ensure the credibility of the reader, who needs to make a plausible connection between verbal and nonverbal elements and accept them as valid representations of a factual narrative. Thus, many comic book authors use representations of photographic images, excerpts from newspapers and official documents, as well as recurring methods of researching journalistic information, such as interviewing and investigating facts from different sources. This is the case of Will Eisner, Art Spiegelman, and Joe Sacco, authors who subtly or directly incorporated these features into their narrative styles and consolidated a path that would later be known as comic journalism.

Will Eisner was one of the precursors in the creation of biographical comics, portraying his life in New York City, especially in the autobiographical works *The Dreamer* (1986)—which presents a faithful portrayal of the universe of comics creation during the 1930s—and *To the Heart of the Storm* (2000b)—which portrays his life trajectory, especially his upbringing in a poor US environment in the early twentieth century. In this work, Eisner uses a continuous graphic feature to show characters reading the newspapers of the time, whose headlines project the reader in

time and space, chronologically showing historical facts pertinent to the plot.

The urban theme of his biographical stories is also present in comics such as *A Life Force* (2001), *Dropsie Avenue* (1995b), and *New York City Life in the Big City* (2006). In these works, Eisner connects the reality of his characters, who intersect in various stories, using real places and facts that appeared on the pages of the city's newspapers. For example, in *Invisible People*, according to Kitchen (2009), Eisner was inspired by Carolyn Lamboly's true story, found in a *New York Times* report about her suicide in 1990 and the motivations for her desperate gesture. The book *A Contract with God* (Eisner 2000a), which popularized the term "graphic novel"⁹ and was one of the stories responsible for the recognition and consolidation of comics life narratives, based the creation of its controversial characters on real experiences, according to the author:

In this book, I have attempted to create a narrative that deals with intimate themes. In the four stories, housed in a tenement, I undertook to draw on memory culled from my own experiences and that of my contemporaries. I have tried to tell how it was in a corner of America that is still to be revisited. The people and events in these narratives, while compounded from recall, are things which I would have you accept as real. Obviously in the creation, names and faces were rearranged. (Eisner 2000a: 8)

In *Maus: The Story of a Survivor* (2003), author Art Spiegelman fuses the boundaries between autobiography, biography, and journalism by interviewing his own father, in an attempt to reveal his family's martyrdom during World War II. In reliving the horrors of the Nazi holocaust, Spiegelman eventually reconstructs fragmented identities of Jewish people destroyed by Nazi ideals, picturing each nationality in the form of an animal. Considered one of the most important comic books ever, *Maus* became a reference by winning the esteemed Pulitzer Prize in 1992.

However, it was journalist and comic artist Joe Sacco who really combined comic book narrative and features of the story as an investigative narrator, figuratively represented by the reporter's graphic image. Portraying himself as a reporter in *Palestine* (2003), Sacco enters the Israeli-Palestinian combat zone to hear the voices of war victims, usually conditioned to statistics in history books and the world press itself. With a closer look at contextual information, the author shows a subjective journalistic report, which provides a "face" to the invisible Palestinian

characters,¹⁰ until then doomed to the forced silencing of identity, always associated collectively with terrorism.

Sacco's work, which includes many graphic novels about wars around the world, is based on his journalistic investigations, withdrawing from interviews and sources of information, in which the author portrays himself and sees his function as a journalistic narrator. By contextualizing facts and journalistic and historical data, Sacco assumes a documentary style without giving up his point of view. Subjectively, the author details his actions and his creative processes: narrating his efforts as a journalist, visualizing his difficulties in obtaining testimonials, and telling his own story within a conflict that involves different and contradictory positions.

4.3 MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND TRANSMEDIATION IN JOURNALISM COMICS AND BIOGRAPHY COMICS

Some boundaries regarding the concepts of media and intermediality are important for this article, although it is quite specific in its objective: to analyze the semiotic modality of journalistic and biographical comics as a way to understand the strategies of building iconic and indexical representations through graphic images. Before moving on to the analysis, we will investigate some of these boundaries. What we understand as media and media modalities are clearly circumscribed in Lars Elleström's "The modalities of media II" in this volume (2020). However, it is essential to elucidate how our analysis appropriates these concepts.

First of all, based on the understanding that sequential art is a combination of several media—verbal and nonverbal—this chapter takes "journalism comics" and "biography comics" as qualified media types in the terms defined by Elleström; he states that "[q]ualified media types are simply categories of media products grounded not only on basic media modality modes but further qualified" (2020: 55). Although the distinction between basic media types and qualified media types is not absolute since, as Elleström points out, they are dependent on historical and cultural criteria as well as communicative purposes, it is not difficult to understand this differentiation related to the media products analyzed here. However, two points need to be outlined.

The first concerns the fact that when we compare "journalism comics" and "biography comics" with "fiction comics", similarities and differences stand out. The similarities arise from the comparison between the

material, sensorial, and spatiotemporal modalities of these media types: they are all solid, visual, two-dimensional media products produced from static images—and they all belong to the “comic book” medium type. Moreover, they are all narrative, which implies a certain sequential structure that is fundamental for comics, differentiating them from, for example, illustrated books. Apart from dissimilarities in themes and style, their differences lie in their different modes in the semiotic modality. Journalism comics and biography comics both differ from fiction comics in terms of the semiotic modality; whereas fiction comics generally emphasize the symbolic and iconic mode, journalism and biography comics largely reinforce the iconic and the indexical modes. In accordance with Elleström (2020), it must be emphasized that these are categories of analysis; when described from their different semiotic modes, media products show themselves as different types of qualified media, although their significance depends on the reader and even on the contract established with the text.

The second point that cannot be disregarded concerns precisely that contract. When published, the categorization intended by the editors and authors for their works—designated by the qualitative “journalistic”, “biographical”, or “fictional”—evokes a certain representation on the part of the readers. In journalism and biography comics, the classification in the catalog sheet causes the mediation of objects—people, things, events, and media—by both verbal and non-verbal media, to build indexical representations of the objects of reality. This means that, although semiotic modes are not absolutely distinguishable—the symbolic, the iconic, and the indexical work in collaboration—one of the semiotic functions is highlighted by the intention of the text, whether journalistic or biographical (or fictional). This is an example of what Elleström, in “The modalities of media II” (2020), points out as the communicative function of semiotic modes: although the semiotic modes are based on presemiotic modes, it is only in semiosis—representation of meaning—that meaning is constructed.

Thus, our analyses in this article focus on the semiotic modes of media products, whose symbolic and iconic representations of graphic images *simulate* the indexicality of journalism and biography. Hence, we offer a semiotic interpretation of media products such as journalism comics and biography comics. Nevertheless, one pertinent detail places this analysis on the axis of intermediality studies: the fact that, to tell a journalistic

story, comics appropriate journalistic strategies. In other words, they represent and transmediate the qualities of the media type journalism to simulate its characteristic indexicality. This strategy is also typical of biography comics, but in a different way. Biography comics are more related to historical narratives, rendering the representation of documents and photographs concerning people and their actions within a recognizably historical context the most important aspect. In this sense, the representation of media in biography comics acquires another meaning.

The concept of representation here gains a second connotation: specifically, the representations in which the object represented is another media type or another media product—an intermedial phenomenon. Elleström calls this “media representation”, which is one of the two forms of media transformation, or intermedial transmediality (the other one is transmediation):

My first step toward the goal of forming a conceptual framework that facilitates a detailed analysis of transfers of media characteristics among media is to establish a distinction between *transmediation* (repeated representation of media traits, such as a children’s book that tells the same story as a computer game) and *media representation* (representation of another medium, such as a review that describes the performance of a piece of music). (Elleström 2014: 12)

As we intend to show in this analysis, media representation is a fundamental trait of journalism comics, since it is used to refer or allude to journalistic media through the presence of newspapers, television, computers, and cell phones being handled by characters (simple media representations) and to create more elaborate representations of specific media products or qualified media types (complex media representations). Based on Charles Sanders Peirce, Elleström distinguishes three types of representation: deiction (iconic), deiction (indexical), and description (symbolic) (2020: 51). However, it is quite difficult to categorize a complex media representation in these terms, especially when one medium imitates another.

In complex media representations, the content of the *quoted* and sometimes imitated medium is crucial to the representation of that medium. The strategy of representing and imitating other media is generally intended to point to the extradiegetic factual reality—producing indexicality. In the case of simple media representations, there is a certain

invocation of the very type of qualified medium—journalism. As for biography comics, the indexicality is shown more by the indexical representation of people and events, signs that often appear “inside” other media, as we will demonstrate below.

One of the characteristics of media representation is that the “frame” of the represented medium can be perceived; that is, we can view the represented medium as a medium inside another, in some of its modalities. The graphic image of a printed newspaper on the table is easily recognized as the “printed newspaper” media type (which is not the case in transmediation, when the frames become indistinct or disappear). A cell phone in the hand of a character in a movie can mean simply that he is a person living a common routine these days; however, it can also mean that he is sending someone a message. That message, if perceived, like any other media product, may be more or less relevant for understanding the story of the film.

In complex media representations, however, represented media characteristics dissolve in the representing media product and thus insert details that are generally more important for meaning representation. The detailed description of a particular section of a newspaper, for example *The Times*, is not just meant to represent *any* newspaper as a qualified media type, but a specific media product, invoking idiosyncratic characteristics typical of that product, such as the ideology of its editorial line. Such a representation is probably simultaneously iconic, indexical, and symbolic. Another example: in Emmerich’s 2011 movie *Anonymus*, there are several simple representations of audiovisual media types. Theater, for example, is iconically represented by images of theater buildings and stages. Some representations are more indexical, as when the Globe Theatre is represented through what the reader perceives as real connections, and symbolic, as when there is a character in costume, ready to act, or when a character says “theatre”. There are also simple media representations in references to Shakespeare’s play titles. Furthermore, there are complex representations of Shakespeare plays in film, setting in motion the iconic, indexical, and symbolic modes simultaneously—in words, in costumes, in dialogues, in the interpretation of the characters, and in theater settings. In this way, the film appropriates features of Shakespeare’s plays in various ways.

The boundaries between complex media representation and transmediation are sometimes subtle. A scene from a Shakespeare play being played in a movie also needs to adapt the play’s dramatic text (which

becomes part of the script) to that scene (the scenic text that begins to integrate the movie). If it is completely “staged in” the movie, on a “filmed stage”, we can say that there is an iconic simple representation of both a qualified media type (Elizabethan theater) and a media product (Shakespeare’s play)—as well as a transmediation of Shakespeare’s play.

Transmediation, according to Elleström (2013), happens when content is re-mediated. A play can be adapted for the cinema; a dramatic text may be performed on the stage; or it may be read aloud to an audience. In transmediation, it is not the previous media that appear, but their content, which is transmediated—adapted to the new media and their modes of mediation and representation of cognitive import. Given the limitations of comic book affordances, which can only adapt media types that somehow fit their characteristics—solid, visual, two-dimensional, made up of static images—media representations are more common than transmediations in comic books, especially considering the need to show the frame, that is, to make a reference also to the qualified media type “journalism” to simulate its indexicality. In this sense, it is not enough to represent again the content of a particular television report; it must also be shown that the content was mediated by a television report and can be said to be journalistic content.

Based on our interpretation of Elleström’s (2014) concepts of media representation and transmediation, we will now analyze three narratives of journalism comics: *Footnotes in Gaza* (Sacco 2009), *Il mondo di Aisha* (Bertotti 2008), and *Le photographe* (Guibert et al. 2003, 2004, 2006)—and three narratives of biography comics: *Dotter of Her Father’s Eyes* (Talbot and Talbot 2012), *Persepolis* (Satrapi 2004, 2005), and *To the Heart of the Storm* (Eisner 2000b).

4.3.1 Simple Media Representations

The comics analyzed range from simple representations of technical media to simple representations of specific media products. Interestingly, in view of this need to construct indexical representations, generally the media products shown are not fictitious but “real”, often recognizable by the reader as literary books. *Dotter of Her Father’s Eyes* brings several examples of this, presenting different and varied simple media representations already in the paratexts, where there are graphic images of photographs that show some documents that, later in the narrative, will be represented again, this time by

illustration. An indication of this is that these photographic images state the initial tone of the qualified media type that is built there—in this case, a comics autobiography—signaling that the characters exist outside the narrative, that is, outside the images, through the copy of the photograph. Photographs are important documents in themselves, representing reality, and, despite the contemporary possibilities of manipulation, they are still the best way to build this contract with the reader. Documents, to the same extent, when presented through photographic images, reinforce this “real existence” of the subjects portrayed—falsifying a document is quite different from falsifying a photograph—and thus the narrative acquires “biographical” quality. In this sense, we can understand that even the illustration, which can be perceived as an iconic representation, becomes an indication—an indexical media representation. Perhaps we may also think that it is an iconic representation—the illustration of the photographic image—of an indexical representation—the photographic image (a graphic copy of the photograph).

Still, in *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, technical media such as television and radio, newspapers, magazines, and even comics serve to contextualize the historical moment and also create the atmosphere in which the characters of the story live, people who have an intense relationship with the culture and the arts. However, in addition to representing the media as means and tools of communication, they are also used to indicate real situations involving the factual context of the story. In the illustrated scene of the protagonist Mary's conversation with her mother (Fig. 4.1), for example, we see a television set in the background, showing an image that stigmatized the Vietnam War: Eddie Adams's “The Execution” photograph, winner of the Pulitzer Prize of 1969, which shows a summary execution—a soldier shooting a prisoner's head—in front of an NBC TV camera. The facts—the explosion, the war—are not crucial for the story (the narrated fable), but rather indicate truthfulness. Thus, the media product representation is not very important to the meaning of the work apart from referring to the extradiegetic reality, reinforcing the biographical tone. The same can be said about the books and comics that characters in *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes* have at hand. Most of them are simple representations of media, although they show titles and details of specific and real media products that aim to indicate the “real” readings of the biographed characters. There is even an addition that, according to the narrator, does not correspond to the truth, since the illustrator added a book

Fig. 4.1 A television showing an image that stigmatized the Vietnam War (Talbot and Talbot, *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, 2012: 56). Copyright Mary M. Talbot and Bryan Talbot. All rights reserved

that is not one of the narrator's favorites, but the illustrator's. Thus, the representations of books cease to be mere illustrations of books in general (technical media) and become indications of works that help to define the characters as real people.

In *Persepolis*, which is also an autobiography comic book, simple media representations pursue these same goals. When Satrapi's mother, the protagonist-narrator, is photographed by a journalist, there is a painting showing the moment of the click, which is only evident as a photograph when shown "inside" the newspaper (Fig. 4.2). The fact that it is in a newspaper, and then in a magazine, demonstrates the problem of exposing the mother's image in a protest, but the content of the media product matters as much as the representation of the media type newspaper and

Fig. 4.2 The moment the photograph is taken, shown “inside” the newspaper later (Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story a Childhood*, 2004: 5). Copyright Marjane Satrapi. All rights reserved

magazine. It is through the publication of this photograph that Satrapi finds out that she is the great-granddaughter of an ancient Persian king, an important fact for the history of the country. Delivering the reality of the outside world also occurs with representations of television, which often comes up to show specific TV programs and their content, reference that are also made verbally. The representation of media types as vehicles of information is important to signify the sphere of the Iranian government discourse delivery, when verbal media are required to refer to the content of that discourse. Literature representations are also important in *Persepolis*, as it is through literature that Satrapi tries to understand the world and her

role in social and political transformations. There are simple representations of books—on the bookshelf, on the bed, on the nightstand, in Satrapi's hands—whose titles and content are not noticeable, which highlights both the technical book medium and the literature media type. There are also representations of specific media products, when the titles of the books are shown or when the character mentions them. These representations are often complex, as we will explain in the following section. The presence of pop culture and market consumerism, characteristic of Western culture, is often represented by images of posters and album covers. Marjane Satrapi, the author, is a graphic illustrator and her relationship with drawing and painting is brought about by simple representations of the practice of drawing by the protagonist.

In *To the Heart of the Storm*, as in the two previous autobiographies, the profession of the biographer is important. Although it is an autobiography, the purpose of the representation of the printed media here is similar to that of journalistic comics, since the biographer is the cartoonist Will Eisner who worked for newspapers—which explains the many representations of the printed media type in the story. Being read or handled by the characters, for sale at newsstands, or thrown on the streets, the newspaper is more important as a qualified media type (as a vehicle of “truthfulness”) than as a simple technical medium. However, for the biography, the newspaper also fulfills a chronological and informative function. It associates the protagonist's life to his relationship with illustration, and his family's life to the historical context—especially the economic factors surrounding his father's business (specifically the crises occurring before and after World War I). The arts of illustration and painting are also part of the narrative, revealing many of their processes and techniques to illustrate this biographical datum. The idea of the representing reality in comics is also treated symbolically by painting: an artist destroys his painting when trying to scare off a fly that had landed on the canvas. However, the fly was just a drawing, intentionally created to engender confusion.

The author's autobiographical reflections start with the representation of photography by illustration. This reinforces the above-mentioned idea that biography comics build indexicality from a relationship between the graphic image of photography and real-life subjects and events. The atypical frames of a photo album are used to reinforce the frame of the photograph itself as a media type that represents reality and thus triggers the memories of the character.

The simple representations of technical media have partly different meaning in *Footnotes in Gaza*, *Il mondo de Aisha*, and *Le photographe*. In these cases, in journalism comics, the iconic depictions of printed newspapers and television sets through illustrations serve as indices of activities to produce history and reinforce the importance of journalistic media types. In other words, while in biography comics the graphic representations of photographs of documents and people are vital for producing indexicality, in journalism comics, this indexicality is given by the representations of the technical media themselves.

In *Le photographe*, a narrative about an expedition by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) by photographer Didier Lefèvre, the act of photographing, shown by the photographic equipment, is often highlighted to represent that it is a photographic report, even though it is constructed by illustration. In this case, the indication is given by the parallelism between the two graphic images, the illustration and the photographic image of that moment, or of the same people who were portrayed. Therefore, it is not a transmediation of a photographic image to illustration, but an iconic representation of other possible angles of that situation, as if the photographer took photographs through the illustration. This idea is corroborated by the fact that the photographer is often represented with a pen and a notepad in his hands, suggesting he was drawing the scene. When this is opposed to photographic images that show the same places and people in other perspectives, representation acquires indexical value.

In *Footnotes in Gaza*, the journalist also appears photographing and writing on a notepad, and, in the same way, this reinforces the agency of journalism, inserting indexicality. This agency is also marked by the representation of the media type interview, performed through various strategies with the graphic image. From the beginning of the narrative, the protagonist, journalist Joe Sacco, stresses the importance of finding the people who have experienced the events he wants to report. Once he finds these people, he begins to interview them: the illustration shows this meeting, while the protagonist holds a tape recorder, notepad, and pen. Rather than illustrating a journalistic practice, the representation of the media interview is primordial to the narrative construction of the historical memory of the war, as the details and contradictions they bring show the uncertainty of information on either side. The simultaneous graphic image of different opinions (sources) about the same event is an indexical representation of journalism, showing this characteristic of the journalist's search for different versions; thus, the likelihood that journalism does not

bring up one single truth. Sacco, the narrator character, is present in each of these interviews in the illustration, usually recording the audio or taking notes in his notepad.

The details of the graphical representation of the interviewees simulate the indexical representation of photography, making each one of them quite idiosyncratic, not to mention human, real, in their subjective characteristics. On the other hand, the graphic representation of the protagonist-narrator, journalist Joe Sacco, is quite iconic, almost caricatured, compared to his photographic representation, present in the digital version of the work and on the internet. This seems to be an attempt to highlight precisely “the journalist” among the other characters, thus distinguishing him visually.

In *Il mondo de Aisha*, photography acquires considerable importance as a legal resource as it receives, in the introductory pages, a subtitle: “A work inspired by Agnes Montanari’s travel reports”. Agnes Montanari is a photographic reporter who conducted interviews and photographs of Aisha and other women oppressed by Yemeni customs. Comics artist Hugo Bertotti adapts this story to comics¹¹ by illustrating Agnes meeting Aisha during her job of shooting photos and interviewing people. In the comics paratext, there is a text by Agnes Montanari describing her meeting with Aisha and the other interviewees. The comics are divided into several stories and, in each of them, a photo of the character and the name introduce the narrative, showing their relationship with the extradiegetic reality—based on the photographic representation. At the end of *Il mondo de Aisha*, the photos of all interviewees are shown. Both the camera and the act of photographing are very often represented. There are also representations of video footage and interviews for television programs by one of the characters.

4.3.2 *Complex Media Representations*

Some media representations become more complex as they *enter* the structure of the represented media product, producing meaning from the qualities of other media. Focusing on the work of the photographic reporter in *Il mondo de Aisha*, for example, through the representation of the journalism agent, as well as in *Footnotes in Gaza* and *Le photographe*, we can see that indexicality is built by presenting the act of capturing reality, “as if” the reader were watching the news report through the “screen” of comics. This “as if”, treated by Irina Rajewsky (2005, 2010) as

“intermedial reference”, can be understood, according to Elleström (2013), as a complex representation of media. Another type of *simulation* can be seen when Agnes Montanari sends Aisha her own photos: this *sending* of photos is symbolized in the verbal media by the word “send”, and illustrated in the construction of a photo trajectory that simulates a journey through “internet waves” (Fig. 4.3).¹² The photographs, when received, are represented by the photographic images framed on Aisha’s computer screen. Another complex representation of media in *Aisha’s world* lies in the interweaving of the characters photographic images with the comics pictures, creating sequences in which both media types complement each other in a combination of media that makes it difficult to distinguish which represents the other.

Although the literary work is authored by Didier Lefèvre as a whole, *Le photographe* has the artistic participation of Emmanuel Guibert (script and drawings) and Frederic Lemerrier (colors and montage/diagramming), which then produce a narrative from different techniques of photographic and cartoonistic composition that comes from different views and ways of expressing the world. Thus, we can imagine that the protagonist-narrator—the photographer—brings together a little of each of these *arts*, so much so that when he introduces himself to the reader at the beginning of the story, he does this with his iconic, illustrated image. It is only at the end of the story that his photographic image will appear addressing the reader. Prior to that, the only photographic image in which he appears prominently is in a symbolic representation, where he is photographed in the mirror without showing his face. Sometimes the act of photographing is illustrated to show the angle in which the photograph was taken, from which a photographic image is shown in the sequence (Fig. 4.4). Thus, formally, the whole story is a complex media representation, combining and blurring the limits between the arts. In this and other cases of complex media representation, it is possible to perceive the “work” that gives rise to the “image”, allowing a glimpse of metalanguage.

In *Footnotes in Gaza*, Sacco portrays the daily work of journalism in the dangerous informational coverage of the war, illustrating several communication professionals performing a vast array of practices. Conversely, he does not avoid criticizing his profession based on the choices made: journalists seem not to care about people, but only about the sensationalism that the event can provoke, as in the representation of photographers who only focus on people in moments of pain and despair for more impacting images. Sacco’s harsh criticism also applies to moments of rest: journalists

Fig. 4.3 The *sending* of photos is symbolized by the word “send” and illustrated by a photo trajectory (Bertotti, *Il mondo di Aisha*, 2008: 134). Copyright Ugo Bertotti. All rights reserved

Fig. 4.4 The angle in which the photograph shown later was taken (Guibert et al., *Le photographe. Tome I*, 2003: 47). Copyright Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemerrier. All rights reserved

talk and exchange ideas about work and the nature of the information. The news seems to bring nothing new, because the war always seems to be the same and no one is impressed any longer. Since the “agenda had died” (Sacco 2009: 124), the “hope” is that a new war will break out to stimulate journalists. Here, the complex representation of journalism media, at times when it represents journalists gathering in different situations, makes sense in its own story and even in its own essence, since it emerges from a footnote, that is, the event referred to in a footnote that did not become news because it was not covered by journalists.

Another complex representation of media in *Footnotes in Gaza* is in the illustration of Moshe Dayan’s book *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*. Not only does the cover show it in minute details, but there are depictions of excerpts from the book. For example, there is a page with a map that not only shows a detail of Gaza’s historical geographical division, but also reveals the need for geographic knowledge for such a story. Graphic elements widely used in *Footnotes in Gaza*, such as maps and other spatial geographical representations, are important since history is precisely about a war over a territory. The incident reported in *Footnotes in Gaza* is not in current history books and is only recalled by a brief citation in a footnote in a UN report,¹³ which states that Israeli soldiers had panicked and opened fire against the rushing crowd. However, the report issued by Israel is quite different, according to Sacco, who uses this document as a starting point for his investigation.

The illustrated representation of documents (official and unofficial, according to the narrator), for example, the illustration of a detail in the previously mentioned UN report, also shows the intention of making it seem that the strategies for producing a report are really journalistic. Although we can understand some of the above-mentioned media representations separately as simple, they also represent the production of journalistic reports in complex ways, simulating a sort of “making of a documentary” rather than just narrating the story of the note about Gaza which is, as it were, within this documentary. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish when the characters are in the present narrative and when they are in the past. Thus, there is a strategy of illustrating them with present and past traces side by side so that the reader can distinguish this. In this sense, there is a frame for the very narrative of that Gaza episode *within* the “documentary” *Footnotes in Gaza*.

In *Footnotes in Gaza*, other simple representations of media can become complex as the reader seeks to deepen the understanding not only of the narrated historical event, but also of the reasons why it has become a footnote. Many television show illustrations, for example, add sense to the story, such as news about the war at the time when the comic story was produced, and an interview with US President George W. Bush (Fig. 4.5). In choosing to illustrate violent scenes that were aired on television, or that specific interview, there is an intention to produce significance related to the meaning of the story, as the narrator warns us: “Palestinian cameras do not hesitate to show the open wounds on the victims’ chest” (Sacco

Fig. 4.5 The television shows an interview with US President George W. Bush (Sacco, *Footnotes in Gaza*, 2009: 136). Copyright Joe Sacco. All rights reserved

2009:126). The reader needs to observe the illustrated scenes—not just the illustration of the television set. There is an iconic image of the zoom-in on the President that carries indexicality due to the easy recognition of him, while the television frame disappears, transforming a simple representation into a complex one, and finally a transmediation of the television show onto the comics page. The names of newspapers and television channels and programs as specific media products are also important, as they have different editorials and ideologies. Thus, they are no longer just representations of technical media; they make sense in the setting of *Footnotes in Gaza* itself.

Biography comics also feature complex media representations, although they may not always be perceived if not supported by the perceiver's repertoire. *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes* includes several, held by the core intention of the work, which is to weave relationships with James Joyce's style and to make direct references to his work. However, there are many allusions that the perceiver must notice and understand.

The popular Irish folk song "Finnegan's wake", whose narrative inspired Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, tells the story of a drunkard named Tim Finnegan who falls off a ladder, breaks his head, and is resurrected at his funeral when friends pour whisky over his dead body. Composed in 1850 by an unknown author, the story of the popular song is present in the first chapter of Joyce's book and also in *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*. In the photographic montage that ends the comics, the chorus of the song—"Wasn't it the truth, they told ye lots of fun at Finnegan's wake?"¹⁴—is subtly placed on the last page of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, which reads "My cold mad feary father" (Joyce 1992 [1939]: 628), the same sentence that triggers the story of *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes* (Talbot and Talbot 2012: 3). The representation of the *Finnegans Wake* media product, therefore, is significant not only in the simple direct quotation of the passage but also in the significance of a circularity, interweaving in the sequential structure of the comics the stories of Lucia, Joyce's daughter, and Mary, the protagonist of the comics—and also the present and the past, in the connection between the end of Lucia's story and the beginning of Mary's.

In the introductory and final pages of *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, we find photographs of the drafts by Atherton, the protagonist's father, during the creation of his book about Joyce, *Books at the Wake* (1959). The photos show changes in Atherton's book summary and pen-written notes showing the creative process. Apparently, the notes are made on a printed copy of *Finnegans Wake*. Representing this process of creating the book,

Mary weaves it into her relationship with her own father, who lives apart from the family, inside his office, reading and paraphrasing Joyce. In this sense, this complex representation of the media product *The Books at the Wake* does not draw an intermedial reference related to Joyce's work itself, but primarily to the protagonist's own "structure" or "process of creation".

In *To the Heart of the Storm*, the sequential structure of the narrative simulates the flashback of cinema by illustrating the protagonist looking through a train window (Fig. 4.6). As he observes the landscape, memories of the moments lived in those city locations are triggered: the scenes of the past are now "projected" through the graphic images of the illustration. The train trip refers to the spatiotemporal mode of the story, in which the train window is the frame of this story canvas, as if a movie were played before the protagonist's eyes.

In *Persepolis*, the veil worn by women is an important graphic element to show the loss of identity, because it is very difficult to identify the women when wearing it. To stand out, Satrapi presents herself illustrated in one of the panels; while, in the other, her image is cut out, alluding to a strategy of photography in which a cut can be made at the time of photographic recording or later in the process of development or in digital manipulation (Fig. 4.7). Thus, it seems that the "photographer" left her out of the picture with her friends. Another complex representation of media in *Persepolis* is in the illustration of the comics media product *Dialectical Materialism*, the protagonist's favorite story. In depicting excerpts of Iran's history, Satrapi reinvents it from her interpretation, weaving connections with her religious beliefs and thus creating her own dialectical materialism.

4.3.3 Transmediations

Transmediations are much less frequent in the comics analyzed. As we have already commented, this might be explained by the very characteristics of this kind of media transformation. First, transmediations depend on the possibilities of adapting the characteristics of one media to another. When the source and target media modality modes are the same, transmediation involves less adaptation, while the opposite may even make transmediation impossible. Secondly, we understand that transmediations of parts of media products can often function as complex representations of media, as the producer seems to be willing to make that "piece" dilute "within" the media product. As for representations of traits—or

Fig. 4.6 The flashback of cinema by illustrating the protagonist looking through the train window (Eisner, *To the Heart of the Storm*, 2000b: 7). Copyright Will Eisner. All rights reserved

Fig. 4.7 Satrapi presents herself, and her image is cut in the other illustration (Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story a Childhood*, 2004: 3). Copyright Marjane Satrapi. All rights reserved

characteristics—of qualified media types, these are (simple or complex) representations of media, as we have already shown here. As we have also commented, the boundaries between complex media representations and transmediations can be subtle. This is indicated by the fact that, in order to analyze the complex media representations and transmediations, it is necessary to interpret the media product in a more attentive and thorough way than merely perceiving the presence of other media. Triggering intertextual repertoires and knowledge about how media work is also important for understanding complex media representations and transmediations, and for recognizing media types and media products being cited, alluded to, or transformed.

By analyzing the photographic image of Satrapi's mother in *Persepolis* "inside" a newspaper page (Fig. 4.2), for example, we easily identify a representation of newspaper media—as a type of printed media—and also the representation of a product of photographic media "printed" in the newspaper. However, in the previous frame, the same image appears without the frame of the photograph, because the frame is constituted by the typical comics panel. This means that the photograph was first transmediated into the comics through the illustration, and then transmediated into

the newspaper that is represented in the comics. It is easier to understand this process if we accept the fact that this photograph exists outside the media product—in extradiegetic reality—and was actually published in a newspaper.

In *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, Mary, the protagonist-narrator, adapts excerpts from the biography *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake* (Shloss 2003) to her story. These adaptations are intramedial when she recounts parts of Lúcia's biography through the verbal, symbolic elements of the comics; and they are intermedial when she recounts the biography through the iconic elements of the comics (cf. the distinction between media translation and media transformation in Elleström 2020: 73–74). The case of photographic images is exemplary, as the illustrations often correspond to photographs inside or outside the book; they may be published on the internet, for instance. The scene illustrations of Lucia's dancing performances are transmediations of these photographs, but the reader must compare them, and scrutinize Lucia's biography and Mary's autobiography, to understand them as such.

For both biographical and journalistic comics, it is vital that the document or photographs represented by the photographic images (better yet, copies of the photographs) are then transmediated to the illustration, making the indexicality surpass the typical iconicity of the illustrations (since the graphic images are iconic signs of objects). This is because biography and journalism comics need to demonstrate that illustrated images are not merely imagined; they can also represent something that really exists. Thus, they show the photograph and, later, the same image illustrated. This is how, in *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, a piece of the content of a photographic image—Atherton's identity document—is transmediated for illustration (Fig. 4.8).

Transmediations can also be noticed when the content of a certain book or newspaper is *read*—shown—by one of the characters. The illustration of Mary Talbot reading Carol Schloss's book on the train reinforces the idea of a transmediation of the contents of the biography into the story being told in the comics. When Mary *listens* to the interview with American writer Sylvia Plath, broadcasted on BBC in 1962, the excerpt from the poem that Plath recites live—"Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through" (Talbot and Talbot 2012: 36; Plath 1992: 222)—is transmediated again to written verbal media in comics. The

Fig. 4.8 Atherton's identity document transmuted by the illustration (Talbot and Talbot, *Dotter of Her Father's Eyes*, 2012: 2–3). Copyright Mary M. Talbot and Bryan Talbot. All rights reserved

transmediation of this exact passage from the poem is important because, written just before Sylvia Plath committed suicide in 1963, it speaks of a girl with Electra complex and her father, who died while she still thought he was God.

In *In the Heart of the Storm*, the covers of some newspapers are quite noticeable in their details, showing—in addition to the names of the newspapers—titles, headlines, and even dates. It was not possible to research whether these covers are real or fictional, but it is not unlikely that they convey elements of newspaper covers that were indeed printed. Transmedia evaluation always requires that we carry out such comparisons between source and target media products.

In *Le photographie*, the proof is used as a narrative resource, in which the frame of the photographs is kept, but transformed in the proper sequence of the comics.¹⁵ The selection of the photos, made from the original proof by markings, indicating cuts in the photographs or the rejection of some of them, is maintained (Fig. 4.9). The inclusion of these rejected photographs maintains the dynamics of the proof media type and characterizes their integral transmediation to the comics. One can see that the proof's frame disappears as it turns into comics on some pages that are composed entirely of photographs from this proof. The proof transmediation, which ends the comics, includes pen-written annotations and organization labels,

Fig. 4.9 The selection of the photos made from the original proof by markings (Guibert et al., *Le photographe. Tome I*, 2003: 62). Copyright Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemerrier. All rights reserved

simulating the characteristic annotations of photographic evidence present in the proof. When photographs are isolated, taken from these cuts, we can still understand that they are transmediations as they become frames, when the photo frame becomes the frame of the comics.

The same happens in *Il mondo de Aisha*, when photographs of Yemeni women, whose testimonials compose the story, lose their frame as they are transmitted to the comics as photographic images, showing labels with their names on them. In another part of *Il mondo de Aisha*, transmediation happens the other way around: the illustration of a scene in one of the comics is transmediated to a camera screen, becoming digital photography (Fig. 4.10). Of course, one may also understand that by placing the image that “shoots” the illustrated scene “inside” the camera screen, the graphic image *simulates* digital photography.

As previously pointed out, complex representations and transmediations often merge, and when parts of media products are transmediated, these transmediations are often part of media representations. Frequently, rather than transmediating a specific content of a media product, the

Fig. 4.10 The illustration of the same scene on a camera screen (Bertotti, *Il mondo di Aisha*, 2008: 58). Copyright Ugo Bertotti. All rights reserved

objective is to represent media types or to show different media, understanding that the media, by themselves, represent the world; they are indices of reality. That is, the different mediations of the document (media representations) are highlighted, instead of its content (transmediations). In *Footnotes in Gaza*, excerpts from the UN document are sometimes transmitted to the illustration of printed pages, sometimes narrated by the journalist. At times, these graphic images of documents have titles in a different bold font that appear to be watermarks of the document but which, when transmitted to the illustration, are highlighted.

4.4 CONCLUSION

We may have been redundant in some statements throughout this chapter, but case analyses are most effective when, from theoretical propositions, repetitions and frequencies (or infrequencies) can be shown. To end the article, we here summarize what we take to be vital results of our investigations:

- Media representations are important for the construction of indexicality in the journalistic and biographical comics analyzed.
- In journalism comics, simple representations of technical media and media types are frequent and central for the representation of journalism, its agents, and its practices.
- In biography comics, simple representations of photography media are important for building biographical quality, by adding indexicality.
- In journalism and biography comics, the function of simple representations of real media types and media products is to place characters and stories in real historical contexts.
- In journalism and biography comics, complex representations of specific media products (such as TV shows, literary books, documents, and reports) often aim at bringing out elements of the extradiegetic universe that relate to fabular content; such complex representations of specific media products often make a lot of sense for the story as a whole.
- In the analyzed journalism and biography comics, complex representations of media types, which evoke qualities and strategies of qualified media types, often merge into the structure of the media product that represents them.

- In the analyzed journalism and biography comics, complex media representations make the meaning of the story multifaceted in its relationship with the media.
- The dilution of the qualities of one medium into another can be understood either as media representation or as transmediation. We believe that understanding it as transmediation requires a comparison of source and target media products and an analysis of adaptation. Representations of parts of media products can be understood as transmediation as long as they maintain the autonomy that enables them to be identified as such and understood in their significance.

NOTES

1. We understand all nonverbal images of comics as graphic images, divided into graphic images of photography—simply called photographic images, to differentiate from photography—and illustration, related to “drawing”, which comprises the technique of producing handwritten images or imitating the manuscript. It is important to point out that a graphic image of a photograph can also be a transmediation when the photo frame does not appear—as if the page were the photograph itself in an album.
2. From here on, we will treat comics as a qualified media type, according to Elleström’s assumptions (2020).
3. Free translation from Portuguese into English.
4. Free translation from Portuguese into English.
5. At most, photographers were able to portray combatants resting and empty battlefields, as they were travelers “bent under the weight of oversized equipment and forced to carry the laboratory—literally—with them” (Sousa 2000: 27). All excerpts by Sousa are translated from Portuguese into English by the authors of this article.
6. Joseph Pulitzer’s *The New York World* was the most popular American newspaper of the late nineteenth century, reaching a circulation of 600,000 daily in 1896. Its main competitor was William Randolph Hearst’s *The New York Journal*. The famous award given to writers and journalists in the USA was named after Joseph Pulitzer, while William Randolph Hearst’s biography inspired Orson Welles’s 1941 film *Citizen Kane*.
7. The character Yellow Kid was the reason for the creation of the term “yellow journalism”, which referred to sensational journalism. The popularization of comics, symbolized by the success of the yellow-nightshirt character with the general public, sparked “a reaction from conservatives who feared mass dissemination through an increasingly popular press, increasingly available to all” (Moya 1977: 36).

8. In the USA, they are called funnies.
9. The graphic novel terminology was initially used by Eisner to generically designate a way of producing stories that would enable comics to demonstrate their creative capacity aligned with literature by using concepts of literary creation. Later, graphic novel came to designate the publication of comics with a different format (usually in book form with many pages) and a graphic quality compared to the best printed books.
10. In the preface of *Palestine*, Sacco responds to accusations that he portrays only one side of the conflict. He states that “this is a correct judgment about the book, but it does not affect me. My position has been and still is that the view of the Israeli government is already well represented by the mainstream US media and is warmly defended by almost every elected politician in the United States” (Sacco 2009).
11. As we do not have access to the isolated photographic news report that was published, we have no means of analyzing this adaptation.
12. This clear visualization of the *simulation*, in which “photographs” fly through the window, was an exception among the complex representations of media types. In the rest of them, we can see a dilution of the characteristics of other media.
13. Event described by the linguist, philosopher, and political activist Noam Chomsky (1999).
14. From the original: “Isn’t it the truth I told you? Lots of fun at Finnegan’s Wake” (Talbot and Talbot 2012: 89).
15. The photographic proof has many names, but it is basically a collection of small-size printed photos for a page, newspaper, magazine, book-filling project so the best photos can be evaluated and selected. Sometimes the negative itself can be a rough cut or copy.

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