

The Sounds of Violence: Textualized sound in Frank Miller's *Sin City* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*

In his book *Understanding Comics*, artist and historian Scott McCloud states: "Comics is a *mono-sensory* medium. It relies on only *one* of the senses to create a *world of experience*" (89). Although McCloud's seminal work addresses nearly every formal element vital to the sensorial experience of comics, he avoids any direct discussion around sound effects. This omission reflects a common assumption in academic analysis of graphic novels that "the lack of possibility in interpreting the onomatopoeic word as an actual word with specific meaning makes the sound of the word the only meaning the word has to convey in the comic" (Petersen 164). Especially in the analysis of American comics, onomatopoeias are often thought of as unfortunate necessities; the device harkens back to a goofy tradition of depicting sound on the page. This prejudice is perhaps best understood when one looks at the campy inclusion of superfluous textualized sounds during fight scenes in the "Batman with Robin the Boy Wonder" television series of the 1960s. This dismissal has led to a critical phenomenon in which the "onomatopoeia is taken for granted, its implications left unexplored" (Arnett 8).

Once the comics reader critically analyzes inclusions of textualized sound on the page, the various effects of this artistic choice become obvious. This is especially true in the work of American comics artist Frank Miller. Countering critic Luke Arnett's assertion that Miller is guilty of "overlooking the complex relationship between letterforms, words, and sound in comics" (Arnett 1), this essay will argue that Miller's visual integration of sound in his work heightens its complexity and depth. In both *Sin City* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, Miller demonstrates that textualized onomatopoeias are not simply a means of inserting sound into the silent medium of the comic book; rather, the textualization of sound can be used to reflect the works' themes and plot, evoke texture and physicality, heighten the sense of physical space, and reflect—or even function as—character.

Before discussing examples within Miller's work that demonstrate the complex implications of textualized sound, we must understand the purpose of sound effects in comics more broadly. In this essay, the terms "textualized sound" and "sound effects" will be used synonymously, both referring to any linguistic representation of sound. These onomatopoeias—in the context of the graphic novel—function as sonic icons (to borrow McCloud's [27] terminology), much like music notes on a page of sheet music. However, the sheer versatility of these sonic icons distinguishes them from mere linguistic signifiers. The shape, size, frequency, and placement of these sonic textualizations are what grant them power within a comic.

The distinction between sound effects as linguistic (in comics) or audible (in film) is particularly important, given that both *Sin City* and *The Dark Knight Returns* have been adapted to film. This adaptation was virtually inevitable; as one review of the *Dark Knight* graphic novel explains, the work is "highly cinematic and televisual, employing the full repertoire of motion picture and video rhetoric" (Mitchell 117). While nearly every academic article published about Miller discusses the intimate relationship between his graphic novels and their film adaptations, these critics neglect to acknowledge the central visual element of Miller's work that is *never* translated into film adaptations: the textualization of sound. This fact reflects a larger trend in comics scholarship: even when the relationship between film and comics is addressed—as evidenced in Robert C. Harvey's chapter "Only in the Comics: Why Cartooning is Not the Same as Filmmaking" (Harvey 173–191)—there is rarely even a mention of textualized sound.

Though some modern film adaptations of graphic novels have included the textual visualization of sound effects—perhaps most notably Edgar Wright's 2010 adaptation of the *Scott Pilgrim* series, which was produced with scripting, art direction, and endorsement from the original series creator, Bryan Lee O'Malley (O'Malley 2010)—these onomatopoeias are nearly always abandoned in the transition from cool to hot media. This abandonment feeds the common misconception that such textualization of

sound is a necessary strain on the physical comic book medium, a flawed attempt to create what comics simply cannot: the auditory experience.

However, one must recall the power a reader has when perusing a graphic novel. Just as a reader must fill in the action omitted by the gutter, they must also provide the closure of textual sound. They must recognize the letters as sonic icons, imagine the sound in the context of the scene, and reconcile it with the temporality of the panel(s). Miller is aware of the work readers invest interpreting these textualized sounds, and rewards concentrated effort by infusing each instance of onomatopoeia with meaning beyond the simple evocation of sound.

Sound as Story

The first way in which Miller achieves this innovative use of sound involves incorporating sound effects into the plot of a work, an effect that often heightens the work's major themes. The ways in which sound contributes to plot is most obvious in the way that onomatopoeias can be used to guide the eye around a panel or page in a particular manner. Miller exemplifies this in *The Dark Knight Returns* when one of the so-called "mutants" fires a gun

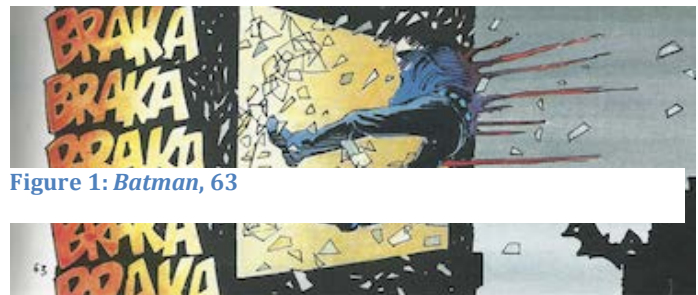


Figure 1: *Batman*, 63



repeatedly, shooting bullets through his co-conspirator, in an attempt to kill Batman (Fig. 1). The sound effects, five instances of "BRAKA," cover the left side of the panel, and their colour gradient—which progresses from bloody red on the left to lightning bolt yellow—forces the eye to follow the direction of the bullets as they pass through the body of the murdered "mutant". Not only do these onomatopoeias serve to guide the eye along with the literal action of the panel, but they also highlight a grim reality integral to Gotham existence: criminals of the

streets are merciless in their violence. The repeated size and shape of the five textualizations of gunshots not only showcase the merciless power of the gun as a device, but also highlights the complete lack of sympathy that defines the mutants. If one were to write, “the gun fired five times,” or play the sound of a gun firing repeatedly to accompany a film, this moment would not have the same symbolic force.

This idea is reflected in the first major action sequence of *Sin City*, when Marv is depicted busting out of a motel room and confronting three awaiting police officers (Fig. 2). This single panel uses sound effects to guide the eye through the temporally complex scene (“SKREKKK” following Marv braking through the door, “KOK” following his upward kick to the policeman’s face) as well as in order to demonstrate Marv’s ability to command a room through sheer violence. The theme of brute force as the only means to achieve control is implied due to the prominence of the onomatopoeias on the page: they are the largest pieces of text, highlighted through the use of block letters.

It makes sense that Marv’s is a world of sounds. Privileging action over discussion, Marv allows for little dialogue throughout his escapades in Basin City. In addition to complimenting the vengeance-driven nature of this anti-hero, the absence of speech reflects one of Miller’s aesthetic ambitions. In a 2015 interview, he stated: “I realised when I started *Sin City* that I found American and English comics be too wordy, too constipated, and Japanese comics to be too empty. So I was attempting to do a hybrid” (Miller 2015). One instance of sound effects serving the role of plot occurs when Marv shoots a hit man who has come after him (Fig. 3). The “BLAM” that accompanies Marv’s gunshot “is treated as a physical entity inside the panel” (Arnott 3), floating above Marv’s revolver. The onomatopoeia appears like a companion for Marv, a trusty



Figure 3: *Sin City*, 62



Figure 4: *Sin City*, 64

parrot on his shoulder, squawking a message of greater truth and importance than his ironically grunted “thanks”.

This panel is especially meaningful when it is compared to Marv’s gunshot two pages later (Fig. 4). This “BLAM” is the only one in *The Hard Goodbye* that is entirely inked in, as well as the first that corresponds with a purposeful, unambiguous kill. Rather than torturing this man, Marv has finally finished off, and his gruesome end (depicted in a direct portrait) is intensified due to the black block letters pronouncing the corresponding “BANG”. The German expressionist quality of Miller’s intentionally ambiguous illustrations matches the lettering of these onomatopoeias, which feature uneven letter sizes and off-kilter spacing and orientation. This textualization reflects the erratic nature of the city of Basin as a whole—especially as it is interpreted through Marv’s twisted mind.

In his essay “The Acoustics of Manga”, Robert Petersen argues that “comics... collapse the word/image dichotomy: visible language has the potential to be quite elaborate in appearance, forcing recognition of pictorial and material qualities that can be freighted with meaning (as in, for example, concrete poetry)” (133). This concept of imbuing textual sound with meaning is made



Figure 5: *Sin City*, 80

obvious in several ways later on in *The Hard Goodbye* when Goldie’s twin sister confronts Marv (Fig. 5). Here, we see onomatopoeias taking the foreground, beginning with the car’s “SKREEEE” sound, which creates an effect of three-dimensionality (as each “E” is placed on top of the last). In the second panel—which is significantly the largest—Marv is soaring through the air after being hit by

the car, but he is still trapped underneath a sound effect: this time, “WHUMPP”. This is the first moment in the narrative that Marv has lost control of a violent exchange, and rather than being the aggressor, he is simply attempting to survive. Instead of delivering the pain, he is taking it unexpectedly. The textual sound is therefore printed overtop of him to reflect this lack of control, as well as the dominance Goldie’s twin sister has over the scene. Marv’s loss of control is further emphasized through Miller’s decision to place the gunshot sound effects in between panels. Rather than Marv’s precise, controlled acts of violence—the manner of communicating in which he is most comfortable—Goldie’s shots are reckless and emotionally driven, both in their placement in the gutter and their overlapping over one another.



Figure 6: *Sin City*, 100

One scene that occurs later on in the work employs textual sound in order to express plot in such a way that prose or traditional images could not. As Lucille screams in Marv’s arms upon revealing that she was forced to watch the serial killer cannibalize someone, the textualization of her scream (“HE MADE ME WAAA...”) guides the reader through the next three panels in the sequence (Fig. 6). The scream carries out of the cell’s gated window until it reaches the serial killer, at which point it begins to diminish in volume and aims itself downwards. The trajectory of this textualized sound subtly depicts the awful truth that this serial killer is only able to “get off” when he hears the agonized screams of a woman. By guiding the reader’s eye past this man’s whisper of a smile, down towards his chest, Miller suggest that this man is masturbating to the sound without having to

depict this action in a lewd visual or blatant description. The reader is forced to perform closure instead, following the onomatopoeia and imagining its consequences.

This onomatopoeia also begs the question of where to draw the line between dialogue (as one would often find in a speech bubble) and sound effects (which must exist outside of said bubble). Miller muddies this division in *Sin City* and *The Dark Knight Returns*. Both Lucille's scream (Fig. 6) and Batman's assertive "NO" used during the



Figure 7:
Batman, 132

riots in Gotham (Fig. 7) represent speech of such a loud volume that it cannot be contained within a bubble. However, each incidence also carries its own thematic weight. Lucille's cry turns into a nonsensical slur of "AAA," reflecting the lack of control existing in Basin City as a whole, while Batman's proclamation "NO" reflects his ultimate authority over the people of Gotham and the salvation he ultimately brings during an apocalyptic time.

Sound as Space

When textualized sound is employed in a comic, its visual landscape on the page is inevitably affected. In Miller's work, the physical presence of onomatopoeias is acknowledged as an integral part of the environment, serving not only to alert the reader of the sounds taking place, but also to highlight how one's sonic surroundings influence one's perceptions of their physical surroundings (and vice versa). Just as Japanese manga artist Osamu Tezuka often employs sound in order "to slow the reader down and create greater visual depth and texture to the scene" (Petersen 166), Miller's onomatopoeias force the reader to acknowledge the profound impact that noise can have over the physical landscape in both Basin City and Gotham.

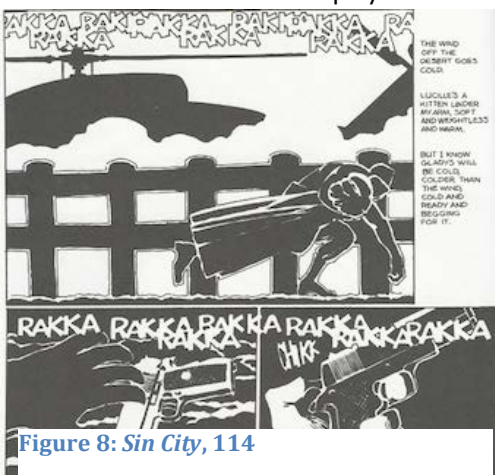


Figure 8: *Sin City*, 114

When a police helicopter descends upon Marv and Lucille, its presence is accompanied by the repeated sound effect "RAKKA". However, this noise is superimposed on top of itself, canvassing the upper portion of the series of

panels in which the helicopter lands (Fig. 8). In pasting the sound effect overtop of itself, Miller creates a messy collage of noise that reflects the effect of the helicopter's loudness in a manner that simply increasing the font size cannot. Having the textualization of "RAKKA" spill over itself reflects the literal ubiquity of the unanticipated sound, as well as physically manifesting Marv's psychological response to the sound of a police helicopter (likely a familiar sound, due to the corrupt nature of the city). This psychological manifestation is especially highlighted in the lower tier of Fig. 8. The helicopter's sound physically hovers over Marv's hand as he reaches for and loads his gun, visually demonstrating the fact that this iconic sound – with all its psychological weight for Marv – visually guides him in the physical action of preparing his weapon in order to fight the police.

Similarly, throughout *The Dark Knight Returns*, the "SKREE" sound effect

produced by bats takes on spatial significance. When Clark Kent recalls his experience falling into a cave of bats as a youth, the textualization of the bats' cries features prominently. Just as the "RAKKA" sounds of the helicopter in the previous sequence physicalize the overwhelming nature of the sonic environment, so too do the "SKREE" sound effects for young Clark. In the first panel of Fig. 9, the sound effects are not only layered in order to create this sense of sonic chaos, but are also depicted as becoming larger in font and more vibrantly vermilion the lower they appear in the panel. This use of colour physically depicts the danger Clark feels in relation to the bats in a way that these black-furred animals cannot within the pitch-black cave.

The effect of this "SKREE" collage takes on thematic significance as it continues to appear throughout the strip, as when these sounds hover above the mutants (Fig. 10).



Figure 9: *Batman*, 18



Batman as a hero lives as both a voyeur, both literally (watching the city from above, symbolized in the sky–sent “bat signal”) and metaphorically (hiding out in his mansion as an isolated billionaire mastermind), whilst also existing as a pedestrian, descending frequently into the streets to enforce justice directly. This panel uses the bat sound effects in order to mirror the omnipresence of Batman watching Gotham from above whilst also affecting the ground–level criminals directly, scaring this “mutant” so much that his exclamation, “AAAAA,” escapes from his speech bubble.

In some of Miller’s work, textualized sound can illustrate setting more accurately than a traditional background image could. During a car chase in *The Dark Knight Returns*, police cars frantically racing after a criminal are depicted in isolation from the cityscape, with no buildings, other vehicles, or people depicted in the panel.

Figure 11: *Batman*, 33

Although we can assume that all these metropolitan elements concurrently exist



Figure 12: *Batman*, 35

around them, all the reader sees are the erratic orange and yellow curves of the onomatopoeic police car alarms: “SKREEEEE...” (Fig. 11).

Although the same sense of chaos could be depicted through building in the background, this method emphasizes the sheer auditory chaos overwhelming the scene. The colours of this onomatopoeia, a hellish, fiery gradient, as

well as the different angles and trajectories of these overlapping onomatopoeia, adds to the

sheer pandemonium of the space. The scenes of the car being chased, depicted two pages later (Fig. 12), emphasize the sheer speed of this getaway vehicle by superimposing the “SKREEE” and “SSKREECH” onomatopoeias ovetop of the car throughout the entire sequence. As the sheer urgency and volume of these sounds continues to take precedence of the actual physical environment, the sounds continue to be textually depicted as the physical environment.

The decision to allow textualized sound to either bleed beyond panel borders or stay within panel confines impacts the way we interpret physical space in Miller's work. When Batman is crossing a tightrope while attempting to avoid gunshots from a nearby helicopter, there is no physical depiction of the many bullets being fired (Fig. 13). Instead, Miller bleeds



Figure 13: *Batman*, 51

overlapping, brightly-coloured sonic textualizations—“BLAMMM,” “KBLAMM,” “BLAM”—across panel borders in order to physically represent the importance of these flying, visibly indiscernible bullets in the physical landscape. Though the size of the actual bullets is minute, their importance is represented through the textual depiction of their sonic loudness (even larger in font than the parallel “WHUP” sounds of the nearby helicopter). The bleed here also follows batman’s loss of control, as he is struck by a bullet and literally follows the impact of the shot (shown through the final curved “BLAMMM”) down into the darkness of the city.

This scene is meant to contrast the action sequence three pages later, in which Batman has miraculously harpooned himself from a seemingly inevitable death and tackled Harvey Dent through the window of a nearby skyscraper (Fig. 14). Suddenly, all



Figure 14: *Batman*, 54

onomatopoeias are limited to the confines of increasingly condensed panel borders. As Batman gains control over his physical environment, the textually represented sounds around him are controlled within established borders. Onomatopoeias are still superimposed upon each panel, as Batman punches the gun out of Dent’s hand and hits his face, but now they are limited within the space of the panel borders. Batman is in charge of the physical space and the sounds he makes, which Miller ultimately represents through the textualized sounds “THWOK” and “CHAK,” which are

controlled, i.e. within the panel borders.

The most notable occurrence of textualized sound taking over physical space is the “BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!” confessional sequence in *The Hard Goodbye* (Fig. 15). This sequence presents Miller’s most experimental implementation of sound effects in his work, as the sounds of Marv’s gun shots *become* the space in which the scene occurs. Using the gunshot onomatopoeias as the panel borders has a number of effects on the reader. First of all, this technique demonstrates the sheer volume of the gunshots, emphasizing the

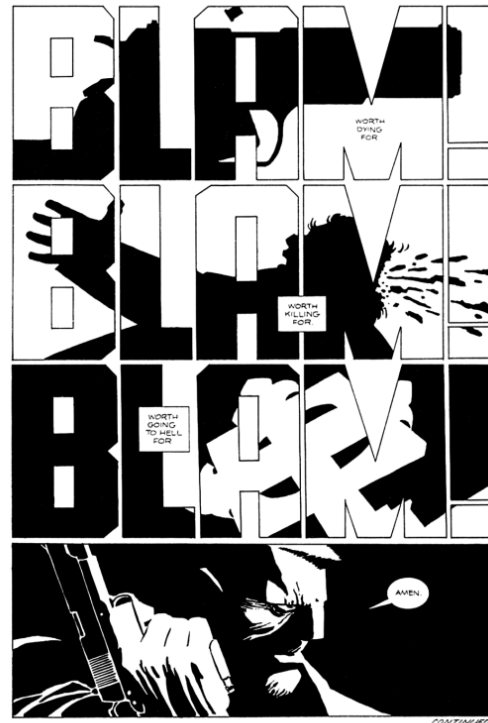


Figure 15: *Sin City*, 74

loudness within the isolated, reverberant church.

This page also presents Marv as entirely self-assured, even more so than he has been in any prior scene. The priest has just called Goldie—the only girl who Marv claims he is fighting for—a slut. Marv’s sheer contempt for the priest allows him to feel completely confident in his decision to kill, a confidence that stands on top of the fact that Marv feels most sure of himself when he is enacting violence. The sounds of gunshots acting as panel borders reflect the world of violence in which Marv resides, and could be said to represent the violent environment of Basin City as a whole.



When the same technique is used in *The Dark Knight Returns*, it has more complicated implications. On one hand, Miller's decision to shape a panel after the onomatopoeic "KRAKK" of thunder provides a sort of

Figure 16: *Batman*, 30

pathetic fallacy: just as lightning bolts pelt down from the sky and thunder startles pedestrians, Batman returns to deliver justice upon the criminals of Gotham (Fig.16). This texturized sound simultaneously enhances the setting, amplifying the volume of the torrential downpour and reflecting the sheer disorder that Gotham has fallen into. This view is encouraged by

the textualization of thunder sounds on a previous page that bleeds beyond the action of any one panel

(Fig. 17). Perhaps Miller's onomatopoeic panel borders are used here to simultaneously symbolize Batman's return to crime fighting and the chaos that violently permeates Gotham.



Figure 17: *Batman*, 28

Sound as Feeling

The concept of onomatopoeias reflecting visceral sensations is by no means a new concept in comics. In his choice to employ "handwriting instead of typeface," comics forefather Rodolphe Töpffler used "trembling, quirky" lines in order to establish "continuity between image and word" (Kunzle 22), and create a sense of natural immediacy in his work. Following in this tradition, artist Gray Panter's "mark-making emphasize[d] texture as a means of immediate, visceral expression" (Hatfield 145). The expressiveness of the line is particularly pertinent to textualized sound, in which the shape of the text guides the reader's interpretation to the character, volume, and timbre—in essence, the *effect*—of the sound.

Though one could argue that every onomatopoeia used in comics inevitably evokes certain tangible characteristics due to the way it is drawn, Miller makes his textualizations of sound particularly visceral. In *Sin City*, as Marv pushes a bouncer's



Figure 18: *Sin City*, 50

face in which his thumbs, the “KRUNCH” sound is written so that the letters appear to physically crunch up against each other (Fig. 18). Similarly, in *The Dark Knight Returns*, the explosion of one of Harvey Dent's bombs prompts the sound “POOMM,” which Miller transcribes using two huge, interlaced 'O's, textually emphasizing the bass frequencies that such an explosion would cause (Fig. 19).

Some of Miller's textualizations of sound seem to directly answer McCloud's rhetorical question, “don't all lines carry with them expressive potential?” (124). When the serial Killer in *Sin City* hits Marv in the head with a blunt hammer, the sound is effectively textualized as “KUDD” (Fig. 20). The arrangement of these block letters, clearly following the swing of the hammer, makes the impact of the hit all the more tangible. The visceral impact of the hammer is further communicated through the

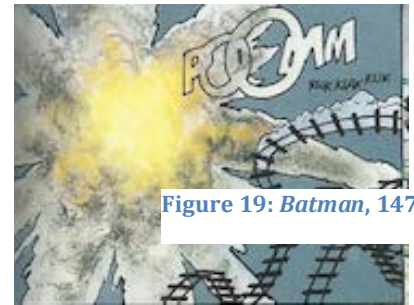


Figure 19: *Batman*, 147

large,

hit.

scene

The



Figure 20: *Sin City*, 94

clunky, layered nature of the letters, which reflects the precise force of such a direct

Miller also reflects the visceral nature of sound in a where Batman lands on a moving car full of criminals escaping the police (Fig. 21).

force of Batman's landing is represented through the

blank lines that emanate, like waves, through the word “WHUMPP” itself. The power of

this sound is communicated through this playful disturbance of the reader's expectation: even though the onomatopoeia is not supposed to tangibly exist in the world alongside the comic's characters, this particular action is so powerful that it resonates through the textualized sound itself.

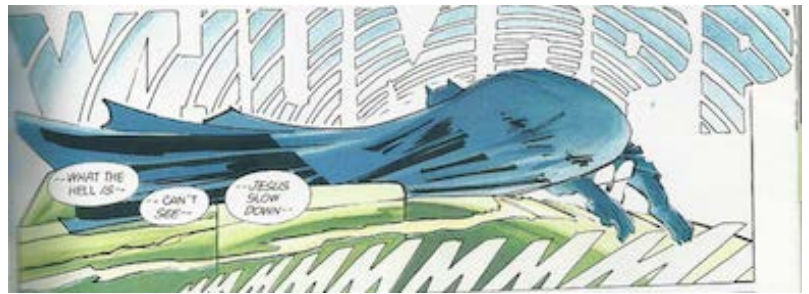


Figure 21: *Sin City*, 94

Sound as character

In one particular sequence in *Understanding Comics* (Fig. 22), McCloud demonstrates just how versatile textualized sound can be. Purely through the use of onomatopoeia (in the absence of any traditional "picture"), McCloud creates a definable character. Although we don't see any visual depiction of McCloud's strange nemesis, we can infer various qualities they likely possess because of the onomatopoeias that stand in their place. This individual is indiscreet (a pronounced "WHOOSH!" accompanies their entrance), persistent (the



Figure 22: *Understanding Comics*, 87

repetition of "Ding! Ding"), and seems to be driven by

sheer cruelty (evidenced through McCloud's protestation "OW! OW! Stop that!").

Though not to this invisible extreme, Miller also allows onomatopoeias to stand in for other characters, often by transforming an individual into the violent actions they perform.

Multiple characters undergo this transformation in *The Hard Goodbye*. When the



Figure 23: *Sin City*, 92

serial killer kicks Marv across the face, the reader is still quite unfamiliar with this psychopathic character (Fig. 23). It is due to manner in which “THUNKK” is drawn—in a precise, directional manner—that reveals to the audience that this serial killer is crafty and calculated in his violent acts.

Similarly, a transformation occurs when Marv attempts to break out of the



Figure 24: *Sin City*, 112

basement cell by throwing his bulky body against the door.

After numerous attempts, he finally overcomes the metal lock system with a powerful sound, written as “CRASH” (Fig. 24). In the final panel of this sequence, Marv’s action is so extreme that he is not actually visible in the panel; the reader must bear witness to the sound effect itself along with Lucille. So intense is the sound of Marv’s action that he as a character is physically transformed into the sound he makes for that panel.

Similarly, Miller

often depicts Batman and Robin

as the sounds they induce. However, Unlike Marv in the previous sequence, these characters from *The Dark Knight Returns* usually transform into sounds that take up entire panels, always re-appearing in the following panel after the action has been completed. In order to save her friend from a “mutant” intent on slicing and dicing, Robin stabs the “mutant” four times in the arm (Fig. 25). The



Figure 25: *Batman*, 30

fact that these textualized sounds occupy a large panel of their own, that bleeds into a later panel, emphasize the importance of this action, which is Robin’s first depicted moment of commendable bravery. The use of a purely text-based panel also builds suspense, as the reader wonders whether the “THUNK” sounds are the stabbing of Robin’s friend. It is not until the next tier that the reader becomes aware of Robin’s violent act.

When Batman breaks through a window to retrieve a criminal, this technique is used once again (Fig. 26). This time, the “KRESSSHH” sound effects not only reflect



Figure 26: *Batman*, 28

the sheer violence of the action and volume of the sound, but their occupation of an entire panel each suits the surprise of the criminal being brought to justice. The parallel implementation of textualized sound serves an additional purpose within *The Dark Knight*

Returns: it aligns the characters of Batman and Robin through the power and purpose of their physical actions, further demonstrating the strength of their bond as a crime-fighting team.

Miller’s use of sound as character is perhaps most creative during Marv’s confrontation with the hit men in *The Hard Goodbye*. After a panel clearly depicting Marv pushing one hit man into a brick wall while shooting the other in the hand, the reader is presented with a more ambiguous panel, consisting of only Marv’s gritting teeth, scrawled speech bubbles, and large-print onomatopoeias (Fig. 27). This second



Figure 27: *Sin City*, 60

panel is a purely sound-driven conversation, in which Marv’s action of slamming the hit man against the wall (“CHUDD!”) lines up directly with each moan of agony uttered in response (“GUGG”). This panel not only uses texturized sound in order to reflect the sequence’s temporality (as the reader moves from left to right, following the actions), but it also reinforces the violence-based power dynamic existing between these men. The purpose for all these three men to exist in the world is to cause violence; what could communicate this more clearly than a panel dedicated entirely to the sounds of such violence?

As Frank Miller's *Sin City* and *The Hard Goodbye* demonstrate, the communication of physical violence through sound is not as straightforward as it may seem. Miller's textualization of sound proves that the sonic landscape in comics can accomplish much more than the clumsy use language symbolically representing what the medium cannot produce. Onomatopoeias add to the spatial dynamic of these works, just as they heighten characterization, provide texture, enhance the major themes, and further the plot. Miller is certainly engaged in the "ongoing struggle to capture the very essence of sound" (Petersen 134): sticking out his elbows, pushing back, and giving "POW" new power.

Works Cited

- Arnott, Luke. "BLAM! The Literal Architecture of Sin City." *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 10, no. 2, 15 Oct. 2008, pp. 380-401. Web.
- Harvey, Robert C. *The Art of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996. Print.
- Hatfield, Charles. "An Art of Tensions." *A Comics Studies Reader*. Eds. Heer, Jeet, and Kent Worcester. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. Print.
- Kunzle, David. "Rodolphe Topffer's Aesthetic Revolution." *A Comics Studies Reader*. Eds. Heer, Jeet, and Kent Worcester. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. Print.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2014. Print.
- Miller, Frank. "Frank Miller: Comics to Kill For." Interview by John Dunning. *Dazed Digital*. Dazed, 2015. Web. 3 Apr. 2017.
- Miller, Frank. *Sin City: The Hard Goodbye*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse, 2010. Print.
- Miller, Frank, Klaus Janson, and Lynn Varley. *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. Burbank, CA: DC Comics, 2015. Print.

O'Malley, Bryan Lee. "Q&A: Scott Pilgrim creator Bryan Lee O'Malley." Interview by Joshua Winning. *Games Radar*. Future Publishing Limited, 2 June 2010. Web. 2 Apr. 2017.

Petersen, Robert S. "The Acoustics of Manga." *A Comics Studies Reader*. Eds. Heer, Jeet, and Kent Worcester. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. Print.

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World. Dir. Edgar Wright. Perf. Michael Cera, Mary Elizabeth Winstead. Universal pictures, 2011. DVD.