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INTERMEDIALITY IN ALASDAIR GRAY'S *LANARK* FILM STORYBOARD

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This article analyses Alasdair Gray's storyboard for a never made film adaptation of the novel *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) as a self-standing intermedial artwork. It presents an argument that the specificities of the nested graphic narrative medium, or “graphicality”, can be used not only for the reading of the storyboard's text/image/space convergence, but for a better understanding of the textual and visual elements of the source novel as well. Gray's autoreferential process, recognized in previous analyses of his literary work, is thus approached through the optics of his foregrounded media materiality. What takes centre position is the process of realising the story, and of the new artistic object made in the process. Such an object questions the reading and viewing regimes reproduced and displaced by every artwork. The analysis of the *Lanark* storyboard, which is an artwork “between” literature, graphic arts, and film, is a contribution to a rising body of scholarly work that uses a comprehensive theoretical approach to gain a better understanding of such syncretic artworks.

Key words: Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*, intermediality, storyboard, adaptation, graphic narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

Scottish author, illustrator, pamphletist, and muralist Alasdair Gray (1934–2019) made a unique impact on the contemporary Scottish literary and artistic arena. His was a figure of “the artist as a culture mender” (Manfredi 2014: 2), who continuously directed his highly politically engaged works towards constructive dialogue about art, culture, and politics. Having defined himself as a “small nation socialist” (Manfredi 2014: x), Gray was straightforward in advocating Scotland's independence in both his fictional and non-fictional work, and was equally vocal in rejecting the label of postmodernity, deeming it overly solipsistic and aesthetic, unrevealing of the political

and cultural engagement that he was so concerned with. His first novel *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981) is a non-chronologically ordered narrative that switches between a realist and a phantasmagoric half, taking part in the mirror cities of Glasgow and Unthank, homes to his *doppelgänger* protagonists Duncan Thaw and Lanark. Influenced by works such as James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, the novel almost instantly achieved canonical status, arguably becoming the most impactful and 'intellectual' novel of Scottish literature of the late twentieth century. Gray, along with authors such as James Kelman and Iain Banks, was one of the frontrunners of the so-called second Scottish literary renaissance. This literary movement aimed to invent a "new symbolical arsenal that, without succumbing to cultural amnesia, would break with the fetishising, guilt-laden aesthetics inherited from the past" (Manfredi 2014: 3) in order to play an active role in building a better civilization rooted in democratic participation.

During the 1980s, Gray created a storyboard based on *Lanark*. Even though the project of cinematic adaptation of the novel was never made, the storyboard remains as a valuable visual and verbal work on art that crosses the intermedial boundary of literature, film, and the graphic novel, simultaneously using formal elements of the three and exhibiting its own unique artistic presentation. Due to its multi-layered, transgeneric structure, the storyboard is not often included in the analyses of Gray's oeuvre; thus far, analyses focused either on Gray's visual or his textual art, rarely giving full analytic attention to the intersections of the two. And since, traditionally, hybrid works such as Gray's storyboard were not considered as a "typical" artform, this article aims to fill the lacuna by focusing on the text-image-space of the storyboard, analysing it through the lens of the theory of intermediality. The present article will additionally examine the storyboard's metafictional elements, to reveal that the storyboard is not merely a means for a future piece of art (the film that was never made) or, in other words, an "intermediary" or "preparatory" work on the threshold of literature and other media, as many such artworks are usually classified, but that it is a fully developed work of art. Made with explicit awareness of its own story-making processes, the storyboard is an example of a wider trove of Gray's interconnected and mutually complementary works, thus producing an "artworld" that is continuously being layered and at the same time laying itself bare.

By offering a close reading of the storyboard, this article aims at examining not only the ways in which intermediality can serve as an analytical tool for the examination of cross-media adaptations,⁵ but also how the intermedial rework-

⁵ In Croatia, in 1988, the so-called "Zagreb School" published a collection of articles *Inter-tekstualnost i intermedijalnost* (*Intertextuality and Intermediality*), which speaks of a long-standing

ing of similar motifs, themes and scenes, can provide fresh insight into media specificity, that is, into distinct materiality of each medium used in artistic production. Even though Alasdair Gray is not a graphic novel author per se – but also keeping in mind all the aforesaid considerations – this article will focus on selected storyboard pages, arguing that the verbo-visual conjunctions present in these forms can function as parts of a graphic narrative nested into a different genre. Such an analysis will rely on W. J. T. Mitchell's concept of “intermedial genre nesting”, which Mitchell defines as the idea that one medium can be nested in another, even as anachronism:

it is entirely possible for a later medium (TV) to appear as the content of an earlier one (movies), and it is even possible for a purely speculative, futuristic medium, some as yet unrealized technical possibility (like teleportation or matter transfer) to appear as the content of an earlier medium. (2005: 401)

However, while Mitchell restricts his definition of nesting to one medium appearing inside another *as content* only, this paper argues that the same principle can be valid *as form* as well, that is, that one medium's material specificities can be used and reworked inside another medium. To this end, the main focus will be placed on the ways in which Gray manipulates space with his textual and pictorial forms in order to create a narrative that is characterised by a medium-specific affinity with graphic narratives. Gray's distinctive use of language in the textual elements of the storyboard panels will be examined from an intermedial perspective, and, additionally, the panels themselves will be cross-referenced with examples of possible intermedial connections to visual art, concrete poetry, and conceptual art. Mindful of not limiting itself to a merely formal and structural analysis, the present paper will also consider how Gray employs the ideologically subversive potential of graphic art (a genre that was still considered low-brow art in the 1980s, during the creation of the *Lanark* storyboard) by nesting it into a high-brow artform such as literature. One of the instances of artistic creation where Gray's intermedial nesting is most recognisable is the process of adaptation.

connection between literature studies and other mediatic expressions. One of the articles, Hrvoje Turković's “Is a Film Script a Literary Work?” (“Je li scenarij književno djelo?”) analyses another in-between work of art intended for the planning of a film (the film script), like this article does with the storyboard, thus providing some interesting initial considerations for this intermedial analysis.

INTERMEDIALITY AND ADAPTATION

Recent studies on Alasdair Gray have been expanding their analytical focus in order to more adequately reflect the heterogeneous quality of his body of work; this type of approach combines the verbal and the visual (that often coexist in his works) as a whole. Such a tendency coincides with the development of intermedia studies, a strand of humanities that, although varied in their different approaches, all share the idea of a non-compartmentalising approach to media relations in art. Stemming from interart studies – a meeting point between comparative literature and art history that focused in major part on film adaptations – intermediality studies developed in the late 1990s in order to look into “intertextuality transgressing media boundaries” (Lehtonen), aimed at exploring general relations among media, transformations from one medium to another, and the combination or fusion of media (Helbig 1998).

Intermediality scholar Jørgen Bruhn considers every cultural text as a mixed-media phenomenon, and consequently introduces the term heteromedial studies as an umbrella term for intermediality, that would look strictly at comparisons across different media (2010: 229). Literary and cultural scholar Christina Ljungberg (2010: 82) posits that intermediality can also be the iconic enactment of one medium within another, which is an approach similar to Bruhn's concept of heteromediality, as well as to the aforementioned Mitchell's term nesting. This internal plurimediality is described by Claus Clüver as intermedia discourse or intermedia texts, that is, intersemiotic texts (2007: 25). The present article argues that Alasdair Gray's storyboard is one such cultural text that goes beyond intertextuality and paratextuality⁶ in order to achieve a highly prominent example of intermediality.

Consequently, intermediality is in this article understood as a formal, aesthetic, and cultural interrelation of different media that can be observed both at the level of different artforms, and as a single multimedial artform. Such artforms or cultural texts will thus be called narratives, and particular attention will be given to graphic narratives as expressions of intermedial conjunctions of text, space, and image. As earlier mentioned, Alasdair Gray is not considered a graphic novel

⁶ Introduced by Gérard Genette, paratext is comprised of “verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations” that “ensure the text's presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form [...] of a book” (1997: 1). In other words, paratext “constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that [...] is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it” (1997: 2).

author, but this article argues that Gray's work includes aesthetic and cultural elements characteristic of graphic narratives, including factors such as sequentiality, which is especially prominent in his storyboard. Gray's verbal and pictorial images, other intermedial forms and the in-between-spaces arguably offer to an audience of emancipated spectators⁷ the possibility to discover elements of graphicality, adding an additional layer of meaning to Gray's works.

Therefore, one of the central claims of this article is that the main working term, intermediality, through Mitchell's concept of nesting, opens the possibilities of reading a variety of media and genres that are not immediately and formally present in the generic classification of an artwork. For the sake of this article, this nesting affinity or, the “graphic capacity” of a narrative, is called *graphicality*, a concept derived from Susan Harrow's understanding of the term “visuality” (2013: 2). Susan Harrow edited *The Art of the Text*, an interdisciplinary collection of texts that studies “visual capacity of textual images” of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century works in order to understand “how the literary or literary-related text develops its own visuality, how it seeks to make visual analogues in the medium of words” (4). In the introduction to the collection, Harrow explains that visuality is understood not as a state, but as a set of processes that include adaptation, resistance, negotiation, and transformation (4), challenging established views on image-text relations such as *ekphrasis* (literary description of visual art) and *ut pictura poesis* (an analogical view of painting and poetry). The following analysis subscribes to Harrow's approach to visual-verbal relations, adding graphicality as an analogous and derived set of processes that an intermedial work of art uses to explore its interrelation of not only image and text, but also of image-text-space, in the cultural context of a world turning from the visual towards the multimedial. Graphicality is a useful term for reading all artworks with a pronounced affinity to the graphic narrative, especially the ones that do not fall into the strict “graphic novel” or “comics” category but that, nevertheless, possess a strong visual graphic quality.

Graphicality is therefore not understood only as a semiotic principle or potential for “the graphic” that can be recognised in a certain narrative, but also as a set of cultural processes at play. This is what makes an approach to Gray from the graphic narrative perspective even more fruitful: that is, it adds to the claim that Gray's aesthetic factors are complemented by his tendency to mix traditionally incompatible strands of art. For example, Gray's references to the literary and artistic giants such as William Blake, Joyce and Dante, co-exist with his insertions

⁷ As understood by Jacques Rancière 2009: 13.

of pornographic elements, while his art exits the usual institutional settings to literally permeate the streets of Glasgow in the form of murals. Gray's deliberate intermingling of such factors does not aim to self-servingly reflect his erudition, but to democratise visuality⁸ and spread his Socialist message.

The first leitmotif of Gray's work is, therefore, intermediality. The second is adaptation, a form of intertextuality that much of Gray's work revolves around. In her definition of adaptation, Hutcheon immediately points out the dilemma of the double meaning of the term itself:

Yet, however straightforward the idea of adaptation may appear on the surface, it is actually very difficult to define, in part, [...] because we use the same word for the process and the product. As a product, an adaptation can be given a formal definition, but as a process—of creation and of reception—other aspects have to be considered. (15-16)

This conflation of the process and the product, as problematic as it may be to adaptation theorists, can be essential for understanding Gray's approach to adapting his own work, especially considering that his general process of creation included reusing and reworking both his own and other artists' older visual art (e. g. Rembrandt's "Faust in His Study"), literary works (e. g. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), and even his own autobiography (*A Life in Pictures*). Thus, the process of adaptation is a crucial aspect of Gray's oeuvre.

While adaptation is considered as an artwork in its own right, this has not been the case with Gray's storyboard, which has been passed over as a means to a (filmic) end. In contrast to this view, the *Lanark* storyboard is here analysed not only as preparatory material for a future adaptation in the film medium, but as a graphic adaptation, that is, a work of art to be regarded alongside the rest of Gray's opus. A conscious decision is thus made not to view the adaptation only in the context of the relationship to the "original" novelistic text, because such an approach would only lead to conclusions on how the storyboard is a graphically rephrased *Lanark*. If the intermedial approach is used, then the analysis can move bidirectionally, which means that the storyboard can indeed be interpreted in

⁸ Visual culture theorists like Nicholas Mirzoeff focus on visuality as a term that denotes "the visualization of history" (2). Mirzoeff considers visuality to be primarily an authority claim of being able to look, tied to the concept of power structures from the nineteenth century onwards. Alasdair Gray's work, such as the storyboard analysed in this article, demonstrates an awareness of the subversive potential of the visual as the result of the choice of what will be perceived by the act of looking on the one hand, and what to make visible on the other. Gray's visual and literary work is permeated with the attitude of questioning the authority of the author, a figure that is dissolved into a community of makers, which includes both his predecessors and the empowered receiving audience.

the context of the novel, but also vice versa, that the novel can be read using the new optics presented by the storyboard. Hutcheon supports this bidirectionality in her seminal book *A Theory of Adaptation*, where she diagnoses a tendency in the previous studies of adaptations for the “axiomatic primacy and authority” (2006: 16) of the source text. Into this trap of source and derived text, the primacy and authority of an earlier text, she includes the case of translations. Namely, Hutcheon points out that the frame of thought that considers the source text as dominant to the derived text has already been contested by scholars such as Walter Benjamin, but that recent translation theorists such as Susan Bassnett view translation as an intertextual and interlinguistic transaction between cultures and times (Hutcheon 2006: 16),⁹ which is in its essence bidirectional. This cultural, temporal, historical interaction and contextualization is present in adaptations as well, and is furthermore true of Gray’s work, too.

When Hutcheon enumerates the elements that can be transmitted in an adaptation, she focuses on the plot, the theme, the style, the characters, the narrator, the setting, etc. Still, it can be argued that Gray’s adaptation process is not so much intended to transmit certain content, as it is to emphasise the medium specificity by shifting the medium, and hence drawing attention to it. Although Gray’s artworld is permeated by certain narrative commonplaces, the author does not shy away from anchoring his works in plot- and character-driven narratives such as the ones of Duncan Thaw and *Lanark*. If one steps away to consider the concept of adaptation in the abovementioned sense, then the storyboard can be read as a work of art not organised around the plot, but around the materiality of the adaptation processes, and consequently of itself as a deliberate product.¹⁰ The choices that Gray makes when structuring his adaptations bring media specificities to the fore, often making the story itself of secondary importance. What takes centre position is the art of realising the story and of the new artistic object made in the process. This makes every adaptation valid as a new original because every original becomes an arbitrarily selected “fixed” point in the long chain of reworking and remediating. The notion of “work” is here crucial, as it relates to the artwork as a product, but also to the process of developing art, of creating, and of making. And since Gray’s way of building his artworld does not revolve primarily around the narrative, but around the material that builds it, the doubleness of the term adaptation makes a good fit into the analysis of Gray’s artworld.

⁹ See also Bassnett 2002 and Bassnett 2007: 13–23.

¹⁰ For self-conscious autoreferentiality and metatextuality in Gray’s work, see White 2000: 55–70, Juan Hatchard 2003: 285–298 and Rhind 2008: 20.

THE *LANARK* STORYBOARD

The storyboard, made by the author himself in preparation for the adaptation of *Lanark* into a feature film, is an especially important work for the analysis of Gray's intermedia practices.¹¹ According to Alasdair Gray's biographer Rodge Glass, the storyboard was drawn in the mid-1980s after Gray was approached by the director Sandy Johnson and producer Iain Brown (Glass 2008: 187–188), but for financial reasons the film never entered the pre-production phase. The storyboard that remains, however, presents a unique access into Gray's vision in terms of the attention he pays to temporality, sequentiality, and movement, that have certainly pre-existed in his still images as well, but that here come into play more elaborately for the purposes of the cinematic medium. Owing to the radial nature of *Lanark* and its intertexts, as well as to the formal and thematic interconnectedness within Gray's work (which spans beyond adaptations), the storyboard analysis will also include a broader reading of the source text, the novel *Lanark*, as a visually minded text, exposing the potential of reinterpreting its illustrations and other paratextual elements. Hence, the storyboard will be read both independently from the novelistic text and parallel with it, but generally in the direction from the storyboard towards the novel, and not vice-versa.

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Another reason for choosing the storyboard as the focal text of this analysis (as the form closest to the graphic novel) is to demonstrate graphicality as the affinity between the graphic novel genre and non-graphic genres and, as such, as evidence of the existing metaphorical transfer of seemingly media-specific concepts (for example, graphic sequentiality of images) into different media (novelistic and filmic texts). According to graphic novel theorist Thierry Groensteen and film professor John Hart, the film storyboard shares a number of similarities with the graphic narrative genre, to the point that its origins can be traced to the Sunday comics (Hart 2008: 1). Even though the storyboard is generally not recognised as a separate artistic genre but rather as a pre-production and pre-visualization tool that sets the ground for motion picture and animation, its form is “similar to the visual language used in comics” (Cohn 2013: 88). The fact that the storyboard shares the narrative grammar of comics is one of the reasons why the storyboard can be analysed as an independent work of art. The methodology for this type of analysis can be found in, but not exhausted by, the graphic novel theory, narratology, literary studies, image studies, and film theory.

¹¹ The storyboard in its integral form is accessible from the Alasdair Gray Archive where it is stored, with parts of the storyboard published in *A Gray Play Book* (2009).

A close reading of the *Lanark* storyboard results in numerous examples of Gray's intermedial practices. One of them is “The Thaw livingroom [*sic*]” scene, where Duncan Thaw, the young protagonist of the realist half of the novel, is introduced to the reader¹² through a nuclear family scene. This scene follows the phantasmagoric scene of Lanark's fall from Unthank and his waking up in the underground Institute. With this sudden shift from one protagonist (and setting) to another, the syuzhet¹³ of the storyboard corresponds to the subdivision of *Lanark* the novel into four books, the two dystopian ones framing the two realist ones.

The living room scene is therefore the opening scene of the second part of the intended film, the realistic part. It consists of fifteen panels accompanied by storyboard notes, divided across two full pages and a panel on a third page, on which another scene begins. In *The Lanark Storyboard*, the scene is found on pages 28 and 29, Part C, and in *A Gray Play Book* they are reproduced on pages 203–205 (“*Lanark: A Film. Storyboard Extract*”). The living room scene introduces Duncan Thaw as the protagonist. However, the introduction seems to shift focus away from the scene and foreground the process of making, of the storyboard drawing itself into existence. In other words, this storyboard scene simultaneously engages in various formal and thematic areas of interest, that are present from the very first panel, an apparently empty panel next to which is written the word “WHITENESS”. As such, this image-text of the first panel serves two purposes. The first purpose is that of an unmarked element allowing the viewer to take a brief break (an intermission) after the first part. In other words, it is a signal that a new part of the storyboard and the film is about to begin, thus also calling the viewer to attention and building suspense for what is to come. The other purpose of the white panel is the role it plays as an integral part of the narrative: from this initially nondescript or, undefined blankness emerges a hand, providing context and revealing that the whiteness is in fact a piece of paper about to be used by a child artist. The hand is interrupting the whiteness by drawing a line, which is an instant act of creation, a work of art within a work of art. While the film, once realised, would consist only of the visual elements represented by the panels until the first dialogue in the scene, the storyboard uses the textual notes to contextualise whiteness as “WHITENESS” and to give the empty frame a designation. In turn, this scene in the film would start with a drawing (and the

¹² The reader in this case is a general term that includes both the reader of a verbal text and the “reader” or “observer” of a visual text who deciphers the meanings of visual symbols on canvas (in the case of a painting), or on a page (in the case of a storyboard or a drawing).

¹³ The order of events as presented in a narrative, as opposed to fabula.

process of its creation), which is one medium within another one, both of which are visual. The film would thus be using the fluid potential of intermediality to draw itself into existence, as does the storyboard.

The concept of making, introduced by this scene, is a very prominent 'Gray theme'. Gray used to call himself a "maker of imagined objects" (Manfredi, "Introduction": 2), which reflects his views on the meaning of "making" as working and producing. In Scotland, the noun *makar* is a title given to the national poet laureate, and it stems from the Middle English meaning of "poet" as "maker", closely tying creative artistic production with the concept of making. In his oeuvre, Gray usually signals this autoreferential making by drawings of the human body, particularly the hand which is one of the visual emblems he repeatedly uses (another one is the brain baby, as seen in the paratext of the novel *Poor Things*). In the storyboard, the hand makes its self-announcing appearance in the living room scene (the second panel thereof). To draw a biblical analogy here – which is not as far removed from the current topic as it may seem, since in his oeuvre Gray employed religious motifs in a secular way¹⁴ – the Gospel of St. John opens with the line, "In the beginning was the Word" (King James Version: John 1.1). If, in postmodern fashion, the first Word in the living room scene is taken to be the word WHITENESS, then the very first 'element' that comes into it is the hand, signifying the process of making. The text next to the third panel – "EXIT HAND RIGHT, LEAVING LINE" – is a mark of an artist that corrupts and intervenes into the medium of primeval whiteness. Therefore, by having the initial whiteness transformed from an unmarked into a marked element, and by closely connecting this transformation to a making hand, Gray once again emphasises the act of creation, but also of adaptation as new artwork, both as a process and as a product. The following sections will investigate how this artwork builds its own verbo-visual intermediality by manipulating space.

¹⁴ Gray's relationship with religion is analysed in Gavin Miller's *Alasdair Gray: Fiction of Communion* (2005). Although the main concern of the book is to re-ground Alasdair Gray in Scottish literature and culture through the notion of communion as togetherness, the second, denotative meaning of the term (the religious one) is explored as well. But Gray uses religious motifs in a secular way, turning them into "a non-sectarian secular 'church' that anybody could enter" in order to "browse through [a] warm quiet treasury of alternative worlds" (Gray 1997: 96). Miller concludes that "[s]ince the nation too may provide a kind of spiritual, transcendent communion, Gray's work also undoes myths of national destiny and the election of an exclusive 'chosen people'. This opposition to essentialist views of the nation arises from the particular logic of his writings, however, rather than from his immersion in any supposed universal 'postmodern predicament'" (2005: 132).

MANIPULATIONS OF SPACE: PERSPECTIVE AND VISUAL ARTS

Another important theme in the scene is the relationship that graphic narratives have with perspective, and which Gray employs in his own visual-verbal text. Dietmar Böhnke notes that Gray frequently uses the multiple perspectives technique¹⁵ both in his paintings and drawings, pointing out that this technique “is also a central concern of his writing” (2004: 83). Böhnke then goes on to connect the multiple perspective with Gray’s focus on the work-in-progress aspect of his art: “What is important is Gray’s use of various perspectives on the same object, his constant re-interpreting and re-working, the impossibility of conceptualising and categorising the products, and the evasion of a single, authoritative meaning” (83). While Böhnke employs perspective in order to build his argument on Gray’s postmodernism (he even dubs it the most postmodern quality of Gray’s work), the analysis of Gray’s use of multiple perspectives is here taken in a slightly different direction. Perspective is analysed as a technical term employed in both art and literature in order to expose the element of vision, which is, according to Alan Riach, one of the key preoccupations of Gray’s verbal and visual practice (2014: 167). As such, perspective can be seen as one of the tools that Gray employs in order to combine vision with movement in the space of a static page. This function of perspective, central to the dialectical nature of the word/image convergence in the building and the reading process of Gray’s intermedial world, is something that Gray’s work shares with the graphic narrative genre.

Useful for such a reading of perspective as movement in space is Neil Cohn’s argument that graphic narratives employ “manipulations of a spatial structure” (10) which distort habitual perspectives of the world. In the storyboard, Gray explores the possibilities of manipulations of perspective in his conceptualizations of the living room scene, namely, by diegetically presenting a child who is discovering dimensionality through the process of drawing. Gray reveals this process of shifting the perspective by starting out with whiteness (which can be considered zero dimension). He gradually morphs said whiteness by introducing the making hand. The hand first draws a straight line (which introduces one dimension), then a stick figure (thereby transforming one into two dimensions), following this by a panning out of the drawing to include the space of the living room. In this way Gray employs rules of perspective to bring about the illusion of the third dimension, revealing simultaneously the whole process of the “making” of dimensions,

¹⁵ Böhnke draws upon critics such as Ian Spring (1993), Robert Crawford and Tom Nairn (1991) and Phil Moores (2002), all of whom wrote on Gray’s peculiar relationship with pluriperspectivism as a narrative and artistic tool.

which he achieves by a gradual layering of perspectives. The metatextual element of Gray's work is here foregrounded on all levels: textual, visual, and spatial. This process of making is further strengthened by the conversation between Duncan Thaw and his father about the sky, and the way the father deems it should be drawn, with Duncan, on the other hand defending his drawing, claiming the sky is a one-dimensional line when looked at sideways. The layering of perspectives from zero to three dimensions, as well as the father-son dialogue, also represent an instruction on how to read the storyboard, and perhaps an artwork in general (how to lift it off the page, so to speak).

Gray here engages in the discussion of the aforementioned formal aspects of perspective by introducing a verbal distortion of the habitual perspective (the "reading" of two-dimensional space as three-dimensional), the perception of the diegetic world, and hand-drawn panels of a storyboard. This play with perspective necessarily engages with the concept of space and ties in with Gray's presentation of dimensionality, which is rounded off with dialogue (that is, with the verbal medium) that points towards the visual parts of the artistically appropriated space. In other words, at the same time that the scene develops an illusion of three-dimensionality, Duncan refuses to accept his father's explanation of the three-dimensionality of the world and the rounded sky, and of the consequent need for a three-dimensional perspective. As such, this intermedial practice widens the potential of the written word as a seemingly medium-specific tool (that belongs to literature), by including it in an analogical visual play with perspective. Multiperspectivity is thus achieved on at least two levels: the level of Duncan's drawing (which is both the act of drawing and the drawing as the result) is meta-artistically framed within Gray's hand-drawn panel; and, by extension, the level of blurring the line between the perspective in the narrative sense and in the visual sense. Gray's perspective, therefore, bridges the divide of the intradiegetic and the extradiegetic by highlighting the materiality of the employed media.

The spatial dimension is present on several levels as well: as space-time movement from one panel to the text beside it, then to the next panel and back and across, depending on the reader's preferences; as gutter between the panel and its accompanying text; as an intericonic gutter between the panels and gutter between the texts respectively; and whiteness as a nondescript or unmarked space with which the whole scene begins. Then there is the space of the paper as an object on which to draw, delimited by its size in a similar way to the demarcation of the square that borders the space of an individual panel (as well as the edges of the never realised camera-shot). Moreover, whiteness is bordered by a black square in order to become a marked term (as will be demonstrated below), and the paper is

bordered by the gradual panning out of perspective to include the hand and later the whole living room. On the story-level, the perception of space is also layered: boy Duncan presents his unique artistic perspective on space, claiming that the sky is a straight line if observed sideways, which the father ‘corrects’ by teaching him about the basic physical properties of the universe and the customary way of representing three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional medium. The Thaw living room scene, in other words, revolves around a layering of perspectives that calls upon its readers to reconsider the role of space in their reading practices.

The spatial dimension is visible in the narrative framing as well. In this respect, the storyboard achieves a similar effect to the one that Gray textually explores in his novels. The main difference is that in the storyboard Gray uses the media specificity of the graphic medium. The graphic tools that are at his disposal in the medium of the novel are not the same as the tools offered by the storyboard medium (one of the ways in which the storyboard differs from the novel in its media-specific concept of framing is the fact that the storyboard images are framed by hand-drawn boxes, which results in the panels becoming a borderline case between the panels of the graphic novel and the paintings). However, the effect of the framed story remains similar if not the same: it creates space for the reader to employ disbelief and recognise the non-immersive, subversive function of the narrative.

Going back to the opening of the scene, Gray’s “WHITENESS” panel can be read as an insertion of another medium into the storyboard: that of the pictorial arts, or, more precisely, Suprematism and conceptual art. Whether it is an intentional nod to Kazimir Malevich’s “Suprematist Composition: White on White” and “Black Square” or not, Gray’s pairing of the word “WHITENESS” with the “empty” framed panel operates on the same principles as Suprematism does, even though it lacks a concrete manifesto that a Suprematist would theorise it with.

However, in lieu of such a theoretical exposition, Gray chooses to express his possible adherence to Suprematist or conceptual art ideas in a show-not-tell manner, by following the “WHITENESS” panel with a succession of panels that contextualize it. These same panels (analysed above in the context of Duncan’s growing dimensionality) can also be interpreted as Gray’s implicit and self-reflexive ‘theory’ of pictorial art. If not a sign of a wider theoretical consideration, the “WHITENESS” panel is, at the very least, an intertextual reference to Malevich embedded in the storyboard. Gray thus evokes Ian Hamilton Finlay, another Scottish artist who explored the borders of literature (poetry) and the arts in his concrete poetry, landscape poetry, and conceptual literature. Finlay’s ekphrastic “Homage to Malevich” (1963) is both a piece of visual art and a concrete poem,

built out of the repeated words "black block", arranged in a way to also reveal the words "lack lock". The visual image of the poem is that of a square grid made of black letters on a white background, with the square sitting (squarely) in the centre of the page.

Malevich, the pioneer of geometric abstraction, exerted significant influence in the development of what Finlay calls his "non-secular thought".¹⁶ According to Calum Rodger, the work of painters such as Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian is one of "a secularised mythology which connects material and spirit through visual form" (2015: 114), and is instrumental to Finlay's idea of ontology determined by form. However, what Rodger sees as Finlay's "homely" and "non-secular" corrective to those painters of "absolutist aspirations" is an "inherent uncertainty of language" (2015: 114) in his early work. In Finlay's garden poetry this is developed even further, contrasting the garden's poetic places to formal city spaces and positing that the city's unsuccessful attempt to "reconcile art with life" can be "resolved at the garden through the embrace of ambiguity and metaphor" (2015: 114-115). According to Rodger, Finlay responds to the earlier idea of the claim that "form determines ontology" with the attitude that "making determines orientation." (Rodger 2015: 115). By orienting his work around the concept of making, and by developing garden poetry which enters the lived spaces, Finlay's practice in this respect comes closer to Gray's than to that of their Russian forerunner.

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Moreover, Rodger emphasizes the difference between Malevich's painting "Black Square" and Finlay's poem by maintaining that the former is "both the instance of its material presence *and* the possibility of release, whether the paint be construed as the infinite, the *tabula rasa*, or some other such idea" (123, emphasis in the original). Finlay's grid, on the other hand, is composed of language, causing a shift in this relationship because "[l]anguage is already at one remove from the material and that which is tangible in language is never enough to create meaning. A signifier is meaningless without a signified" (123). In other words, language as the building block of Finlay's square grid simultaneously constructs (concretises) and deconstructs the materiality and geometry of the square poem.

¹⁶ Calum Rodger emphasises this term as "Finlay's own invention which consolidates his opposition to, as he describes it in a 1980 interview with Stephen Bann, 'the secularisation of all areas of life' (Finlay 1980). It entails, among other things, an antagonism towards the secularised and bureaucratic discourse of civic society, a drive to reconnect with certain psychological and spiritual attitudes made possible by European traditions of art, literature, philosophy and mythology, the admission of hierarchies of value and a longing and reverence for the idea of aesthetic absolutes." (2015: 23)

When it comes to Gray, his panel stands between these two – the material and linguistic/once removed from the material – because the word “WHITENESS” is at the same time a part of the panel and outside of it. It is not a title in the same sense in which Malevich uses the titles of his paintings to complete his Suprematist message, nor is it a constituent of the visual language in the sense in which Finlay uses his words and letters. On the other hand, since the word and image/emptiness coexist on the page – and are thus observed and analysed as a unity that form(ulate)s an artwork – they also create a certain paradox. It is a paradox of a work-in-progress, constantly in dialogue with itself, thus metatextual and meta-visual/graphic.

The issue of the coexistence of word and image on the page calls for a consideration of the art/language binary. As theorist Eve Kalyva observes, the art/language binary is traditionally used to make value judgements: language is considered logical and “arguably having an arbitrary correspondence to the world”, while art presumably offers “an unmediated aesthetic experience” (2016: 37). However, when considered in parallel, Kalyva notes that they provide a “vantage point of understanding visual representation as a culturally specific mode of communication” (37). Even though neither texts nor images have any meanings *a priori*,

it can be demonstrated how these meanings are produced within certain contexts and circulate within corresponding communities. As such, the act of naming something “art” (by the philosopher, the critic, the gallery owner, Duchamp or the conceptual artist) is already set by and reproduces—or aims to displace—specific reading and viewing regimes. (37)

Kalyva rightly notes that such cultural practices of institutional naming, interpretation, and contextualization are developed historically, which means that every new work necessarily engages with the institutions at hand. The consequent impact that such authorial institutions have on the viewing and reading regimes is especially visible when one attempts to classify a highly intermedial art form. Following such cultural practices of naming something as “art”, Finlay’s concrete poem would be classified both as a work of literature when published in a book, and as a work of Modern art when exhibited at the Tate. Meanwhile, Gray’s storyboard, judged by those same (more or less arbitrary cultural practices) is currently considered a non-designated sketchbook that is located in an archive, although a highly accessible one. However, by raising awareness of its value as art and by refusing to relegate it to a mere translatory element intended for technical development of a new artform in a cinematic modality, this analysis rightfully positions Gray’s storyboard alongside Finlay and Malevich, laying bare those

“specific reading and viewing regimes” which are not primarily focused on the aesthetic values of artwork, but are, as Kalyva points out, “historically developed and supported by ideological and institutional frameworks” (37). Notably, Gray’s own participation in the displacing of those regimes is not passive. As a deliberately transgeneric work, the storyboard and its techniques invite the intended audience to read literature through the lens of film and painting and vice-versa, thus consequently, in many ways, to collapse the separation of the verbal narrative from the visual artefact on paper. The storyboard hence functions as a cultural practice that calls attention to the fact that in cases such as this one, literary studies are too narrow in their analytical scope, and that the separation of disciplines is overly limiting. On the other hand, its limitations reveal a theoretical gap that can be bridged by the intermedial approach. The following section will further verify this claim by conducting a comparative analysis of the storyboard and its corresponding part in the novel. The relevant passage from *Lanark* the novel bears quoting in full:

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Duncan Thaw drew a blue line along the top of a sheet of paper and a brown line along the bottom. He drew a giant with a captured princess running along the brown line, and since he couldn’t draw the princess lovely enough he showed the giant holding a sack. The princess was in the sack. His father looked over his shoulder and said, “What’s that you’re drawing?”

Thaw said uneasily, “A miller running to the mill with a bag of corn.”

“What’s the blue line supposed to be?”

“The sky.”

“Do you mean the horizon?”

Thaw stared dumbly at his picture.

“The horizon is the line where the sky and land seem to touch. Is it the horizon?”

“It’s the sky.”

“But the sky isn’t a straight line, Duncan!”

“It would be if you saw it sideways.”

Mr. Thaw got a golf ball and a table lamp and explained that the earth was like the ball and the sun like the lamp. Thaw was bored and puzzled. He said, “Do people fall off the sides?”

“No. They’re kept on by gravity.”

“What’s gravity?”

“Gravity is what keeps us on the earth. Without it we would fly up into the air.”

“And then we would reach the sky?”

“No. No. The sky is just the space above our heads. Without gravity we would fly up into it forever.”

“But wouldn’t we come to a ... a thing on the other side?”

“There is no other side, Duncan. None at all.”

Thaw leaned over his drawing and drew a blue crayon along the line of the sky, pressing hard. He dreamed that night of flying up through empty air till he reached a flat blue cardboard sky. He rested against it like a balloon against a ceiling until worried by the thought of what was on the other side; then he broke a hole and rose through more empty air till he grew afraid of floating forever. Then he came to another cardboard sky and rested there till worried by the thought of the other side. And so on. (Gray 1981: 121–122)

As is visible from the section that corresponds to the storyboard living room scene, the novel's dialogue is lifted verbatim into the storyboard, and the action follows closely the descriptions in the novel. More specifically, when the living room scene is compared to its novelistic counterpart, a traditional source-oriented analysis of adaptation reveals that one page in the novel correlates to roughly two pages in the storyboard. One of the reasons for this is the fact that narrative content is not directly transferred: the plots move parallel to one another, but with variations. For example, the novel lacks the storyboard's focus on whiteness as the starting point of the artistic creation scene. Although one can argue that “a whiteness” *does* precede the novelistic chapter as well (namely, a blank page situated between the frontispiece and the chapter title), this whiteness is no different than any other blank page before a chapter in *Lanark*. In other words, whiteness represents an unmarked element, just as a blank page is an unmarked page. However, after reading the storyboard, a blank page (not just the one preceding this chapter, but also others) becomes “a marked element” – a signifier that needs to be read as an active part of the novel as well. Therefore, speaking more generally, this kind of juxtaposed reading makes a case in point for the aforementioned posterior reading, where an adaptation informs the reader's perception of *Lanark* the novel, that is, the source text. This type of consideration is only made possible if the process of adaptation is approached bidirectionally and if the source text is removed from its hierarchical pedestal. Such questioning of the concept of originality is characteristic of Gray's work in general, not only when he is reworking his own adaptations.

MANIPULATIONS OF SPACE: MOVEMENT

A close analysis of an excerpt from the Thaw living room scene calls the reader's attention to another one of Gray's intermedial practices: the use of media-specific logic of graphic narratives to achieve the effect of movement on the page. The notion of movement is one of the most widely spread terms in graphic narrative theory, but one of the least theorised. What is often analysed are the ways in

which the effect of movement is achieved within the story as one of the key medium-specific characteristics of a graphic narrative (the verbal or visual sign signifying diegetic movement), or the eye-movement of the reader interacting with the page. Thierry Groensteen, for example, discusses movement as a constitutive condition of narrativity by comparing the still images of the graphic genres to the cinematic moving image (2007: 104–105), directly referring to Gilles Deleuze's terminology of cinema. According to Groensteen, while a cinematic image is at the same time a movement-image (that is classically realized through action and reaction) and a time-image (or, the post-war subordination of the cinematic movement to time), a static image relies less on the element of temporality and creates its narrativity through different expressions of movement. As fixed images on a page, comics panels occupy space relationally, and their movement-residing narrativity can be recognised both within a single image and in the sequence of a multiframe, whether it is vectorised from left to right or not. The question of non-linearity as another option of reading the panels can be explored on the tenth and eleventh panels of the living room scene, the appearance of Duncan's father.

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While the general habitual order of reading verbo-visual narratives dictates a certain movement of the gaze – which can switch from text to image at reader's will, but usually follows a left-to-right and top-to-bottom direction – the sequence of the images in these two panels is peculiar because a second glance reveals that it does not follow the order of the text (or, the text does not follow the sequence of the images, depending on what takes priority in an analysis). The text first introduces Mr Thaw's finger pointing to the horizon, which action is followed by the dialogue. Only after the dialogue is over does the text include the scene of Mrs Thaw who is knitting. The two images, however, depict the scene in reverse order: Mrs Thaw knitting is visible in the first panel. In the second panel, where the accompanying text signals that the reader should, indeed, "see Mrs Thaw knitting", Mrs Thaw is no longer visible and has to be imagined in the background, behind Mr Thaw's body. This background is exposed only if the reader looks back at the first panel, which means that the text invites a non-linear reading of the images. In other words, since the images and the text do not correspond, bottom-right text verbalizes the top-left image and thus prompts movement even in an apparently still setting of a fixed image. In this way, Gray's text-image combinations offer the possibility of reading left-right, right-left, top-bottom, and bottom-top, in all four directions. This manipulation of text, image, and space has more than one meta-narrative function: first of all, this criss-crossed positioning emphasises the intermedial nature of the storyboard, in which text and image are not separate instances (or media) that find themselves side by side on a page, but rather, that

they interact in a separate sequential art form which is neither solely textual nor visual, but rather, layered. The reader is prompted to continuously adapt from visual reading to verbal reading, and to actively and consciously combine the two into one textual-visual image. Secondly, by using intermedial apparatus, Gray mimics the non-chronological structure of *Lanark*¹⁷ with a single scene.¹⁸

To gain a better understanding of the non-chronological ordering of a verbo-visual narrative, one can once again return to the ways in which graphic novels and comics organize their media. When Groensteen analyses the relationship of speech balloons and the intericonic gutter in the comic *Blueberry: Le Bout de la piste* (1986) by Jean Giraud and Jean-Michel Charlier, he comes to a conclusion that can also be applied to Gray's storyboard:

Evidently, a thousand detours are possible on the trajectory that leads from one balloon to the next; the positions of the balloons do [...] not so much indicate a road to be followed as the stages to be respected, between which every reader is free to wander around in their own way, obeying the solicitations of other stimuli. (81)

Gray's verbo-visual conjunction, as demonstrated on the Thaw living room scene, comes close to the graphic genre by offering the reader this freedom of making detours. It is precisely this freedom of agency and arrangement of fixed images that makes the storyboard a work of art separate from the intended film. Its pivotal position between the novel and the film, as stated before, does not only allow the readers to imagine a future film adaptation, but also enables them to go back and reconsider the novel itself: although the novel is generally characterised by the structural non-linearity of plot, *Lanark*'s living room scene initially comes across as a typically presented novelistic text. In other words, the non-linearity and non-correspondence of text and image found in the analysed part of the storyboard is not found in that part of novel text itself. However, having read the storyboard, the reader can revisit the novel's text on page 121 with an enriched optics. After engaging with the storyboard, the reader can look at the space between the lines of the novel's text as a metaphorical gutter in which various detours can occur, similarly to the “thousand [possible] detours [...] on the trajectory that leads from one balloon to the next” (81), as Groensteen phrases it. This is an important example of interpretative nesting: the graphic narrative of the storyboard and its

¹⁷ The four books of *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* are ordered in this way: Book Three, One, Two, Four, with a Prologue preceding Book One and an Epilogue four chapters before the end of Book Four.

¹⁸ This non-chronological order is redacted and made chronological for the publication of the storyboard extract in *A Gray Play Book* (2009: 204).

specific internal mechanisms are revealed to be inserted into the novel text, and the specificities of one medium thus change the perception of another.

As demonstrated above, Gray's storyboard uses non-linearity as a means of exposing different levels of experiencing the narrative, but also signals towards its own structure, as well as the structure of the *Lanark* artworld as a whole – a fractured and non-chronological space of narration. The storyboard exposes its own materiality as well as the fact that still images offer greater agency to the reader, not only in the instances where chronological order is reversed. This puts the storyboard halfway between the book (that can be leafed through according to the reader's wishes) and the film (that is also manipulable by the viewer holding the remote controller). The storyboard, much like *Lanark* the novel, is a case in point for contesting the left-to-right and top-to-bottom reading as the only viable option. The opportunity granted to the reader to study certain scenes longer, or to go back to what has already been read, is important for Gray's more visual works, such as the Hillhead station mural and other panoramic, multi-image works in which there are no pointers of direction or sequence, but the viewer is, instead, free to make their own assumptions and conclusions, as well as to follow their own viewing paths. According to Silke Horstkotte, “it is often neither possible nor desirable to secure control of the reader's attention and dictate the sequence in which the reader will follow the narrative” (Eisner qtd. in Horstkotte 2013: 38), an assumption that is “based on a dated and overly strict conception of reading as linear and directed” (38). Horstkotte notes that graphic narratives give a specific contribution to this process:

Graphic narrative in particular, with its infinite possibilities of arranging frames, panels, and individual scenes within frames and panels (including, but by no means limited to, arrangement in a sequence), should provide ample illustration for the necessity to employ a more dynamic and multileveled conception of reading that takes into account the manifold schemata, assumptions, inferences, and hypotheses that readers rely on to impute narrative meanings to a sequence of images. (2013: 38–39)

Awareness of such processes, raised by the media-specificity of graphic narratives, does not stop at uncovering different multimodal and intermedial storytelling strategies. As Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon rightly posit, the status of such narratives as a “gutter form”, both formally and culturally, serves as a reminder of the importance of institutional and cultural contexts for a media-conscious narratology that necessarily questions the “viewing and reading regimes” (2014: 12-13) mentioned by Eve Kalyva.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the *Lanark* storyboard represents a fresh entry point to the analysis of Alasdair Gray's intermedial oeuvre, not only as an intermediary or preparatory work that provides a visualization for a non-realised film, but also as a self-standing intermedial artwork that engages with literary, cinematic, and graphic languages in order to expose its own media-specificities. This exposition is achieved through manipulations of space, such as the use of perspective and framing, but also through communication with pictorial arts, such as Ian Hamilton Finlay's concrete poetry, and Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist paintings. The intermedial analysis – due to its capacity to simultaneously examine text, image, and space – has proven particularly constructive for the analysis of Gray's storyboard: it provides the terminology and optics to recognize the nested graphic narrative medium within the storyboard. In this way, some technical terms borrowed from graphic narrative studies, such as “closure” and “gutter”, allow for a more in-depth analysis of Gray's typical themes and motifs than a pure literary analysis could provide.

The textual notes combined with the panels, via this analysis, reveal the visual element's potential to propel movement, both diegetic and that of the observing eye. In other words, the storyboard is a graphic narrative convergence of the verbal and the visual on the page, resulting in a dynamic vision of movement and new narrative possibilities. Of equal importance is the reverse reading that applies the results of the intermedial analysis of the storyboard onto the renewed reading of the novel. Such an intermediate analysis pays greater attention to the visual aspects of the novel itself, but also, more precisely, to the very graphic image of the text, the order of the lines, order of the text on the page, of the blank spaces between the words themselves, white spaces between lines, as well as blank pages between chapters and “books” in the novel.¹⁹ This has been demonstrated in a close reading of the Thaw living room scene, where the “WHITENESS” panel assumes and foregrounds the technical and poetic function of the gutter. With this panel and the accompanying textual note, Gray demonstrates his intermedial “process of making” by using very few means in terms of media materiality – and yet, this empty space can be imagined as a highly productive place where ‘the in-between’ happens, a space of imagination. This is made possible by approaching the storyboard as a work of art, an adaptation separate from the source novel and the intended film. This status is self-validated by the ap-

¹⁹ In *Lanark*, there are many images that perform the same function in conjunction with text, which is a topic beyond the scope of this paper. However, this intermedial analysis certainly contributes to a more integrated reading of this verbo-pictorial novel.

pearance of the “making hand”, a typical Gray-motif occurring across his visual and textual work that signals the autoreferential and metafictional process of creation in which no source text is given primacy. On the example of Gray's storyboard, the article has shown that an inclusive, intermedial reading allows for a better grasp of the verbal and visual elements in a narrative, adding an important dimension to the interpretation and understanding of such layered works.

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Sažetak

INTERMEDIJALNOST U STORYBOARDU ZA FILMSKU ADAPTACIJU ROMANA *LANARK* ALASDAIRA GRAYA

Članak analizira *storyboard* Alasdaira Graya, vizualnu pripremu za nikad ostvarenu filmsku adaptaciju romana *Lanark: Život u četiri knjige* (1981.), kao samostalno intermedijalno umjetničko djelo. Predstavljena je argumentacija da se specifičnosti “ugnježđenog” medija grafičkog narativa, ili “grafikalnost”, može upotrebljavati za čitanje sprege teksta, slike i prostora u *storyboardu*, kao i za bolje razumijevanje tekstualnih i vizualnih elemenata romana izvornika. Grayevu autoreferencijalnom procesu, prepoznatom u prethodnim analizama njegova književnog rada, pristupa se kroz očište medijalne materijalnosti stavljene u prvi plan. U središtu je proces ostvarivanja priče i tako stvorenog novog umjetničkog objekta, koji propitkuje režime čitanja i gledanja koje umjetničko djelo reproducira i izmješta. Analiza *storyboarda* za film *Lanark*, djela na razmeđu književnosti, grafičke umjetnosti i filma, doprinos je rastućem znanstvenom korpusu koji se koristi sveobuhvatnim teorijskim pristupom kako bi se postiglo bolje razumijevanje sličnih sinkretičnih umjetničkih djela.

Ključne riječi: Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*, intermedijalnost, *storyboard*, adaptacija, grafički narativ.