

# ARCHIVE OF THE FUTURE: ALAN MOORE'S *WATCHMEN* AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC NOVEL

TONY VENEZIA

The fact is that every writer *creates* his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future.

Jorge Luis Borges ('Kafka and His Precursors' 236)

Archives are everywhere in the contemporary graphic novel, although almost inevitably not the ordered collections of the academic library or a law firm's records. These are archives in the loosest, messiest sense of the word — archives of the forgotten artefacts and the ephemera of American popular culture, items that were never meant to be collected.

Jared Gardner ('Archives, Collectors, and the New Media' 787)

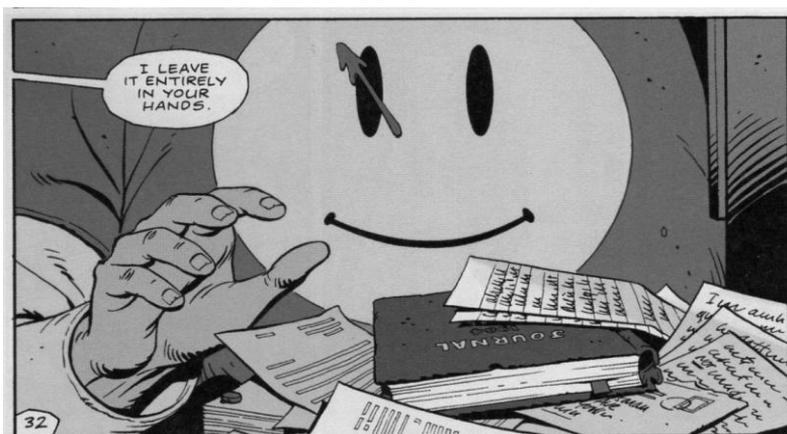


Figure 1: *Watchmen*, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, chapter XII: page 32 (excerpt). © DC Comics.<sup>1</sup>

---

An earlier version of this essay was given as a paper at the 'Work in Progress' conference, Birkbeck, in 2008.

The final panel frame from *Watchmen*, the graphic novel of faded superheroes by writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons (figure 1), shows a pile of papers, documents and envelopes with a journal prominently displayed. This suggests an appropriate visual index of an archive: scattered documents that demand to be sorted, arranged, and catalogued. Moore is perhaps the best known writer in the comics medium and, as Sean Carney has argued, questions of history and historiography permeate his work: ‘If there is a single thematic concern that ties Moore’s work together into a coherent oeuvre it is the recurring question of history’ (para. 2).<sup>2</sup> The archive as narrative is therefore an important paradigm in considering Moore’s work in general and, as I hope to show, *Watchmen* in particular, a narrative suffused with history thematically, formally and materially. Jared Gardner in a recent essay proposed that archives and archival narratives saturate contemporary comics. Gardner’s approach draws from Walter Benjamin in examining how fragments of the past intrude on to the present, and he proposes that comics are uniquely capable of composing archival narratives not just by making use of patterns of verbal–visual representations, but by inscribing the subculture of comics fans and collectors within their narrative structures:

[T]he comic form is ideally suited to carrying on the vital work Benjamin called for generations earlier: making the present aware of its own ‘archive’, the past that it is always in the process of becoming. (Gardner 803)

Gardner focuses on alternative comics, but points to Moore’s *From Hell* as example of an archival text, ‘an extended and profoundly complicated archival search for the “truth” about Jack the Ripper and his victims’ framed by an extensive appendix (804, n.1). Gardner is not alone in reading comics through the lens of Benjamin’s writings on history, historiography, and cultural production. Alvaro Alemán has examined the link between urban experience and perceptual configuration in comics, while others have been drawn to analyses of memory (see Beeck, Prager). I propose to extend this approach to read *Watchmen* as an archive of comics history, a historiographic novel, one that refutes postmodern ahistoricism. An exhaustive reading of such a densely referential text would prove difficult, if not impossible, considering the limited space. As such, this reading will resemble the fragmentary quality of the archive with a necessarily selective focus. I will start by looking at the content and form of the narrative generally, before moving

on to read selected extracts and considering their relevance to the archival structure of *Watchmen*.

### **Plot and Masterplot**

*Watchmen* is sometimes referred to as a ‘deconstruction’ of superhero comics, signalling the text’s simultaneous closeness to and distance from the mass cultural processes that produced it (Reynolds 30, Thomson 111). It is a superhero narrative that appears to critically parody and undermine prior superhero narratives, in particular the implicit ideological contradictions of the genre, commonly allegorised as a dialectic of the authoritarian and the utopian, a duality figured in the doubled identities of superheroes as crime-fighting vigilantes and everyday observers. As Reynolds has noted, superhero comics are ‘a popular art-form traditionally known for its apparently hegemonic and sometimes overtly authoritarian texts’ (7). *Watchmen* is a historiographic narrative, archiving its own historical imaginary in an attempt to master and re-write the past that has produced it.

A brief explication is necessary and appropriate. The narrative begins with the murder of Edward Blake, an aging masked crime-fighter known as The Comedian, evidently thrown from the window of his New York high rise apartment. The setting is a recognisably different contemporary world, one in which crime-fighting superheroes exist and their presence has altered history resulting in a fourth term for Nixon following America’s victory in Vietnam. Blake’s murder is investigated by Rorschach, real name Walter Kovacs, who concludes that the murder is part of a vendetta against ‘masks’. Rorschach brings his suspicions to his old acquaintances: Dan Dreiberg (Nite Owl), a wealthy ornithologist; Adrian Veidt (Ozymandias), a billionaire industrialist; Laurie Juspezyk (Silk Spectre), who is the girlfriend of Jon Osterman (Dr. Manhattan) the only ‘real’ superhero, a nuclear physicist who gained extrahuman capabilities following an accident at an atomic plant. The Comedian had belonged to an older generation of vigilantes dating back to World War II, the Minutemen, a group who included Laurie’s mother — the original Silk Spectre, who forced her unwilling daughter to take on her role — and Hollis Mason, who preceded Dreiberg as Nite Owl. Public pressure led to legislation proscribing the activities of vigilantes, forcing them to retire (Dreiberg), go underground (Rorschach), or work directly for the government (Blake and Manhattan — in the latter’s case as a literal nuclear deterrent). No-one takes Rorschach seriously, considering him paranoid, but events occur that give credence to his claims. Dr.

Manhattan is accused of unwittingly causing close colleagues to develop cancer and is forced into exile, leading to an escalation of the Cold War; Veidt is targeted by an assassination attempt; Rorschach is framed for the murder of an old antagonist and imprisoned. Dan and Laurie break him out prison, and discover that the apparent plot against ‘masks’ itself obscures a masterplot involving the staging of a large-scale atrocity that will result in the mass murder of innocents, in order to frighten the nations of the world into unity and peace. Veidt is unmasked as the grand conspirator, the attempt on his life an act of misdirection to conceal his masterplot to save the world from what he sees as inevitable nuclear conflict: ‘I saved earth from hell. Next I’ll help her towards utopia’ (XII:20). The other characters agree to keep silent for the sake of the new world order, except for Rorschach who is killed by Manhattan to prevent the revelation of the conspiracy. Unbeknown to the other characters, Rorschach has mailed his journal, in which he has detailed Veidt’s subterfuge, to a libertarian newspaper. The narrative ends with his journal about to be picked up and opened.

Such a compressed explication does not do justice to the sheer density of the narrative, which is constructed and complicated by a variety of means. *Watchmen* is composed of numerous textual elements that foreground the archive, most notably the use of prose insertions that complete each chapter. These supplements from autobiographies, diaries, interviews, news reports, psychiatric reviews, marketing statements and scrapbooks are themselves metonyms for the archive. *Watchmen* resists the depthless postmodern play of signifiers by incorporating historical referents into the archival narrative: Richard Nixon, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan all feature in the text. The shadow of the Cold War hangs over the text, that period of permanent confrontation between the USA and the USSR when the imminent threat of nuclear conflagration was a real possibility. As historian Eric Hobsbawm has commented, ‘it did not happen, but for some forty years it looked like a daily possibility’ (226).

In *Watchmen* the publication of the first Superman comic in 1938 inspires masked vigilantes to take to the streets to fight crime thereby revealing the ideology of superheroes to be, in Althusserian terms, imaginary solutions to real contradictions. The representation of history is achieved via the reflexive referencing of prior histories of representation in the spirit of what Benjamin called ‘materialist historiography’, of seizing on the fragment of the past as ‘an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognised’ (‘Theses’ 247–48). These constellated historical fragments constitute the archive as an epistemological model, one that resembles Fredric Jameson’s hypothesis

of the cognitive map, ‘the mental map of city space...extrapolated to that mental map of the social and global totality’ (‘Cognitive Mapping’ 282).<sup>3</sup> Comics’ spatialization of time make them an ideal form to attempt to realise this mapping. Historically seen as disposable objects, Alemán argues that a side-effect of the image-text dialectic in mass-produced comics is a ‘mapping of social reality’ (para. 6). The archival comic provides us with a potential model of cognitive mapping and its degraded corollary, the conspiracy, cartographically realised across the grid of the comics page as a kind of spatial abstraction of an unrealisable totality.

### Fragment and Flux

Reading comics is an inferential process of construing a narrative flux out of the fragmented panels that constitute the comics page. Scott McCloud defines this phenomenological process of completion as ‘closure’: ‘observing the parts but perceiving the whole’ (63). The reader plays a collaborative part in bridging the gap between panels by interpreting the separate moments as continuous and unified. By way of illustration let us turn to the famous opening page of *Watchmen* (figure 2). The page has a kind of cinematic grace, starting with a close-up and pulling further out panel-by-panel to widen the perspective. This gradual momentum utilises what McCloud calls a moment-to-moment transition (71), moving from the close-up of blood in the gutter, gradually tracking back to reveal the street from an increasingly panoptic perspective, the vertiginous scale emphasised by the widescreen panel at the bottom of the page.<sup>4</sup> Closure also occurs on a semantic level in the association of word and image; the verbal narration paralleling the visual sequence, operating as a dialectical montage of image and text. Rorschach’s journal is a recursive intradiegetic text, its yellowed, torn pages indicating a fragmentary textual materiality that is part of the larger totality of the narrative.

Gardner contends that the verbal/visual dialectic of comics make them the ideal form to represent the interpenetration of past and present, the culmination of Benjamin’s call, in his essay ‘The Author as Producer’, for writers to develop a new language to record this process. Benjamin called on writers to pick up the camera to break the barrier between image and text: ‘without knowing its name, the writing Benjamin was calling for in the 1930s is clearly the comic’ (Gardner 789).



Figure 2: Rorschach's journal, I: 11. © DC Comics.

Returning to the opening page, the verbal and visual elements appear to be running on different tracks, thus frustrating closure. Image and text occupy the same figurative space, but it is unclear as to whether they are occurring in the same diegetic time. Closure in McCloud's sense of the term is actually deferred: for instance it is only later (and on re-reading) that the reader learns that the man carrying the placard announcing 'THE END IS NIGH' (itself a proleptic sign) is actually Rorschach.

This temporal and spatial dis-juxtaposition is developed further

over the next few pages, in which two police detectives' piece together what happened to Blake as they wander round his apartment. The past and present collide as we read the detectives' verbal reconstruction of Blake's murder spliced over a visual enactment (I: 2–3: 'Somebody really had it in for this guy'). Alemán notes that comics process what Benjamin called the 'shock of the urban experience', operating as 'textual instructions for the recomposition of public space' (para. 4).<sup>5</sup> This reconstitution also has a temporal element. The best example of chronotopic recombination is Manhattan's unique temporal perception whereby he experiences time as a constant, able to step in and out of the past, present or future. Holding a photograph of himself, he also experiences the moment of its taking years before (IV:1), perfectly encapsulating the spatio-temporal capability of comics to configure simultaneity and totality.<sup>6</sup>

Blake's murder initiates the narrative of *Watchmen*, his body providing an absent presence, a gap that requires closure. Rorschach commits himself to solving the murder, his clothing signifying his status; the fedora and raincoat of the hardboiled private detective, supplemented by his mask, an ever-changing emblem that both disguises him and gives him his name (see figure 3). His journal is a parody of the gruff monologue of the private eye, and reveals him to be a morally uncompromising, disturbed individual: in other words, just the kind of person who would disguise himself to fight criminals. There is a dual motion to crime narratives, as the detective moves backward to uncover past events even as they move forward to a conclusion. Typically this strategy of double-movement is ideological as disruption is followed by recovery leading to reinstatement of order (Scaggs 46–7). The detective resembles the archivist recovering fragments of the past to constitute a coherent narrative, to bring closure on the level of content. Rorschach pieces together the plot that leads to and beyond Blake's murder, and his investigation opens up the generic archive inscribed within the narrative. The superhero genre is a hybrid of crime fiction with its emphasis on recovery, and science fiction with its accent on projection. Superheroes were thrust onto the world in the 1930s, effectively by a remediation of two main sources: comic strips from newspaper supplements that had been popular since the end of the nineteenth century, and the spectacular if formulaic narratives of pulp magazines (see Sabin 144–49).<sup>7</sup> As Franco Moretti argues, genres are 'temporary structures...arrangements that *last* in time... Janus-like creatures, with one face turned toward history and the other to form' (14). In other words, genres are not fixed or unchanging categories, but historically contingent formations that process and are processed by history. *Watchmen* presents an alternative

history, retroactively enacting projection, constructing an archive of the future. Alternative histories, a sub-genre of science fiction, narrativise moments of divergence from recorded history and the consequences of that divergence (Duncan 209).

Manhattan's existence is crucial to the diegetic world as he represents a point of divergence. The only 'real' superhuman, he is capable of manipulating matter at an atomic level and his appearance renders the superpowerless masked vigilantes superfluous. He is an embodiment of the science fiction trope Darko Suvin identifies as the *novum*, the new thing, a fictional component that dramatically alters its environment (63). Manhattan's presence ensures that America wins the Vietnam conflict, that the US has the edge over the Soviet Union in the Cold War and that Nixon is able to change the Constitution and stay on for a fourth term. As a symbolic form, alternative histories articulate Benjamin's vision of seizing 'hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger' ('Theses' 243). In doing so, such narratives problematise teleological readings of history that would confer inevitability and linearity, embodying Benjamin's concept of materialist historiography as they 'wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it' ('Theses' 243).



Figure 3: 'Who watches the watchmen?' I: 9. © DC Comics.

### Under the Hood

Rorschach is eventually shuffled into the text, subjected to textual reframing in the form of a psychiatric report. This is one of many prose inserts that fill out the narrative and act as material supplements, what Reynolds refers to as the 'multi-textual' apparatus of the story (109). These effectively act to provide the text with its own context,

contributing to the archive of this alternative history, performing a double role in acting as commentary on both the fictionalised alternative history as well as the actual historical background of the material text. They function as annotations to comics as history, materially embodying the archival qualities of the narrative. One prominent supplement is the autobiography of Hollis Mason, who recounts how the publication of the first *Superman* comic in 1938 sparked a craze for masked vigilantes around America (see figure 4). Pulp fiction and superhero comics provide simplistic imaginary models for dealing with complex social conditions. Mason initially becomes a policeman to confront as he puts it, ‘the pimps, the prostitutes, the protection artists’. Inspired by reports

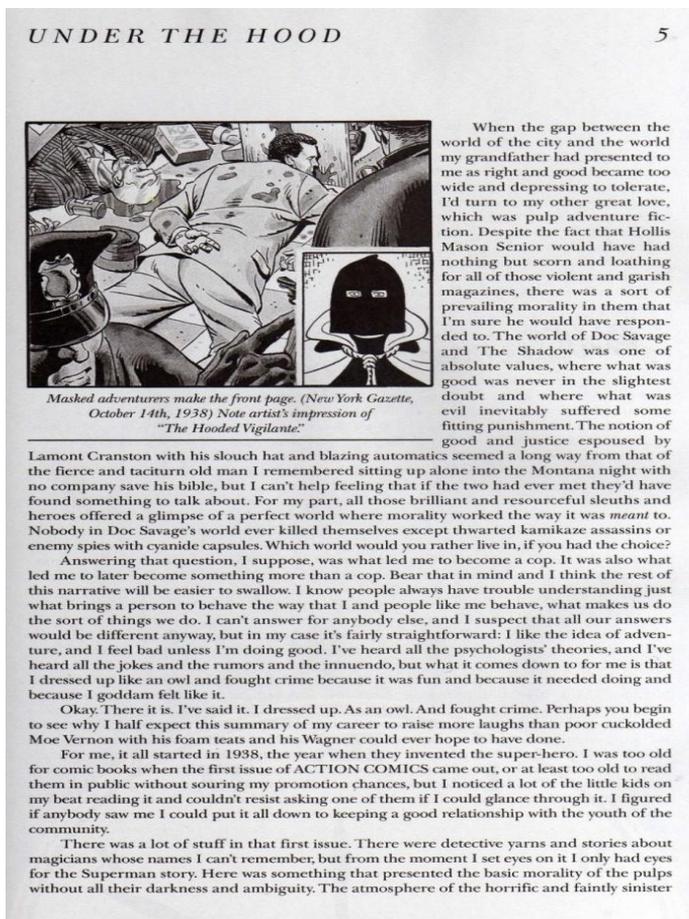


Figure 4: Hollis Mason's autobiography, *Under the Hood*, I: n.pag. © DC Comics.

of people emulating those comics' heroes, he develops the masked persona of Nite Owl. The period from the 1930s to the 1950s is commonly referred to as the Golden Age of comics (Klock 2), and in the context of Mason's memoir this seems ironic, as the world of primary coloured morality is also the world of pimps, prostitutes and protection artists. Mason says he preferred the superhero comics to the pulps because comics dispensed with 'darkness and ambiguity'. *Watchmen* reinstates that darkness and ambiguity by materially incorporating these pulp elements into the narrative structure, returning superheroes 'to their pulp roots' (Klock 76).

In the world of *Watchmen*, masked vigilantes have their own fans, and Mason passes on his secret identity to a younger admirer, Dan Dreiberg. Both men are plainly fanboys, their fetish for collection transferred from comics to vintage cars and ornithology. The transition of Nite Owl from Mason to Dreiberg works as a symbolic transition from Golden Age to Silver Age in comics history, the latter period associated with Marvel characters in the sixties such as Spiderman who tended to adopt an ironic tone in the midst of existential crises: 'this second wave of superheroes was as different from the first as the first wave was from the pulps' (Klock 2). This transfer breaks with the typical comics practice of static historicity, or of what Umberto Eco writing on *Superman* called an 'immobile present', the cyclic temporal continuity of superhero stories in which characters never seem to age (116). *Watchmen's* continuity fractures the static time of superheroes allowing historical time to enter the narrative. Paradoxically, by being published as a contained rather than continuous serial the text is opened out rather than constricted. Superhero narratives are predicated on serialisation, which often results in what Jason Dittmer defines as 'the tyranny of the serial', the narrative stasis that ensues as a comic remains bound by continuity ensuring a fundamental conservatism across most superhero narratives:

The tyranny of the serial becomes useful as an explanatory tool when one considers why the Superman of the comic books did not become Nietzsche's Superman. In other words, why would a super-powered human, emotionally tied to humanity yet with liberating potential concealed within, *not* attempt to revolutionize society? In the Nietzschean perspective, the *Übermenschen* are supposed to return to humanity and bring their knowledge and skills to bear on humanity's condition. Instead, in the comic world superheroes are

more like super-powered policemen than anything else — their support for the status quo is what defines them, and any attempt to fundamentally alter the social system is what marks the character as a villain. It is in the absence of the super-man that the tyranny of the serial can be perceived. (Dittmer 253)

Dittmer proposes that Moore and Gibbon's *Watchmen* resists this, first by characterising Vedit as 'a perfect representation of the Nietzschean Übermensch' (254), then by-passing the tyranny of the serial that 'privileges plots that re-constitute the status quo' (256). Initially, Moore and Gibbons were to have worked on a revival of characters of Charlton comics from the sixties for DC, who bought the copyright (Khoury et al 9–10). When DC decided on other plans for the characters, Moore created new ones inspired by Charlton's superheroes. But the Charlton heroes were anyway adaptations of more established characters, Blue Beetle for instance is a fairly obvious version of Batman (transmuted in *Watchmen* into Nite Owl). The characters in *Watchmen* are therefore copies of copies, but it is this reified archetypal status that allows for a critical revision otherwise restricted by the demands of continuity.

*Watchmen* was serialised without pages given over to letters, adverts or editorials, as is customary, further allowing Moore and Gibbons to exploit textual materiality by the inclusion of the narrative supplements used to comment on the diegesis. This is made evident in another of the supplements, one of Veidt's company memos in which he discusses the marketing of action figures of himself and his former colleagues. Veidt suggests marketing terrorist figures for a children's cartoon, a blunt comment on crass merchandising that illustrates the contradictory anxiety felt about mass culture by a product of mass culture itself (X: n.pag.). The ideological ramifications are further illustrated in another insert which advertises 'the Veidt method', which resembles the Charles Atlas self-improvement adverts prominently displayed in comics of the Golden and Silver Ages: 'If you're reading this, it's because you sent away for my course, and if you did THAT, it's because you think you need a change in your life.... The Vedit method is designed to produce bright and capable young men and women who will be fit to inherit the challenging, promising, and often difficult world that awaits our future' (X: n. pag.). Given the consequences of Veidt's plan, the sinister irony is unmissable: consumerism is deeply implicated with the authoritarian.

## Seduction of the Innocent

This contradictory anxiety felt in the text about the manipulative ideological functions of comics as products of mass culture is complicated by the inclusion of a substantive allusion to a notorious episode in comics history that emerges re-written within the narrative. *Watchmen*'s archive acts as host to what Klock refers to as 'broken' traditions (68). These counter-traditions signify moments of possible divergence, the past flashing up as an instant. One such tradition is the horror comic, directly referenced in the *Watchmen*. *Tales of the Black Freighter* is the title of a comic that a minor character reads throughout, scenes from which are spliced into the main narrative. Once again, verbal and visual elements are dis-juxtaposed, as images and text from diegetic and intradiegetic text overlap and become misaligned (see figure 5). The content features a man shipwrecked by pirates who races to save his family from destruction, but who in his obsession becomes the very instrument for that destruction. Word and image are disassembled and recast, illuminating a wider network of connections, associations and allusions. The supplement for chapter V documents a counter-history of comics in a fictional cultural history, *Treasure Island Treasury of Comics* (V: n.pag.). This rewrites actual cultural history as horror comics inspired a moral panic in the 1950s, exemplified by psychiatrist Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent*, which led directly to industry self-censorship (Sabin 157–62, Nyberg). This comic-within-a-comic closely resembles the E.C. comics that inspired much of the backlash. In a world with superheroes there is no need for superhero comics, and much as horror comics shadowed the superhero genre, the story in *Tales of the Black Freighter* shadows Veidt's masterplot.



Figure 5: Reading *Tales of the Black Freighter* III: 2. © DC Comics.

Historically, pornographic comics, commonly called ‘Tijuana Bibles’, represent another ‘broken’ tradition. These illegal, under-the-counter comics used images of copyrighted comic characters or celebrities, and were popular from the 1930s to the 1950s. They were a counter-tradition that ran alongside the Golden Age superheroes and by recontextualising copyrighted characters they anticipated pop art and the underground comix of the 60s, as well *Watchmen*’s own narrative tactics (Sabin 142–43). Sally Juspeczyk keeps a copy of one that uses her image as a souvenir, and the half-concealed image is woven collage-like into the main text. Klock writes: ‘*Watchmen* invokes its own history as a superhero narrative, but also makes reference to a host of apocryphal comic literature’ (68–69).

### **Conclusion: Fearful Symmetry**

*Watchmen* is a text about other texts, composed of other texts that constitute the plot, a comic about other comics and the cultural history that they carry. This archival narrative foregrounds its textual materiality, and as the last panel shows gestures toward its own processes of construction in the constellations of fragments that constitute the narrative flux. *Watchmen* embodies and emplots an attempt to negotiate some kind of cognitive mapping in its intricate form, even as it lapses into the debased content of the conspiracy. Carney argues that Moore’s writing critiques postmodernism from within: ‘Moore is emblematic of the artistic strategies which Jameson envisions for postmodern art, which can respond to the cultural logic of late capitalism *not* by rejecting its symptoms, but by embracing them and using them against that cultural logic’ (para. 21). At times *Watchmen*’s critique of the hegemony of superhero comics resembles Wertham’s diatribe against the medium and its deleterious effects. Yet the text also clearly embraces the sensual and bracing experience of the comics form. Such a dialectical understanding of Moore’s writing undoubtedly enhances our reading of *Watchmen*. *Watchmen* re-assembles the superhero story as a site of bibliophilic loss for the supposed innocent glories of the Golden and Silver Ages, coupled with an acknowledgement that as a textual object it has itself profoundly altered the comics archive. The critical transformation effected by *Watchmen* was ultimately part of a re-evaluation of cultural values that saw comics renamed and remarketed as graphic novels in the 1980s (Sabin 87). The serial collection was itself transformed into a material unified whole

thereby transforming archive into archival object. But in the final analysis, closure, and the complete unification of textual integrity and teleological framing the term implies, is in some sense resisted. The final chapter dispenses with a prose supplement, ending instead with the shot of Rorschach's journal waiting to be picked up in the news office, and to be opened leading the reader straight back to the opening page. This circularity is an attempt to circumvent teleological closure by encouraging active re-reading. As Thomson suggests: '*Watchmen* was written to be reread; indeed it can only be read by being reread' (103). In this spirit of anti-teleological circularity, it is worth returning to the epigraph by Borges that prefaced this reading, which might have been written with Moore and *Watchmen* in mind.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All references show chapter then page number as reprinted in the graphic novel edition. Supplemental inserts contain no consecutive pagination.

<sup>2</sup> As is now convention, I follow Scott McCloud (4) in my use of the term 'comics' as singular noun to describe the medium.

<sup>3</sup> Jameson marks a distinction between form and content, finding degraded instances of the latter in postmodernism, whilst acknowledging that 'I am, myself, absolutely incapable of guessing or imagining its form' (286). Comics arguably represent a potential form. See also Jameson, *Postmodernism* 52–54.

<sup>4</sup> See McCloud 70–74 for a Barthesian model of how visual narrative transitions work. Coincidentally, McCloud's chapter on closure is titled 'Blood in the Gutter' (60–93), the gutter here referring to the gap between the panels.

<sup>5</sup> Alemán is referring to Benjamin's essay 'On some motifs in Baudelaire': '[Benjamin] argued that the new technologies of representation (particularly film) instilled in the masses new modes of filtering their sensations, of preparing their cognitive faculties for the repeated shocks of a historical period that represented a turning point in history' (Alemán para. 4). Benjamin was writing about the growth of fascism in the thirties, a philosophy that found its contemporary figurative parallel in the superhero comics being produced in the USA.

<sup>6</sup> This episode invokes, coincidentally, Benjamin's 'Little History of Photography': 'No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed the subject, the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the here and

now, with which reality has (so to speak) seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot wherein the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it' (510). Manhattan is both subject *and* beholder.

<sup>7</sup> Comic books (as opposed to strips) were first published in the USA in this period, collecting previously published strips in pamphlet form. From here, it was a short step to first adapting prose material (such as Edgar Rice Burrough's *Tarzan of the Apes*) to original material that copied the pulp trend for masked crimefighters like The Shadow.

### WORKS CITED

- Alemán, Alvaro. 'Paraliterary Immersion and the Puzzleform: An Essay in Social Restitution'. *ImageText* 2.1 (2006): n. pag. 6 Feb. 2008. <[http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v2\\_1/aleman/](http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v2_1/aleman/)>
- Beeck, Nathalie op de. 'Found Objects (Jem Cohen, Ben Katchor, Walter Benjamin)'. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 52.4 (2006): 807–31.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1969.
- . 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'. *Illuminations*. 245–55.
- . 'Little History of Photography'. *Selected Writings: 1927–1934*. Vol. 3 Ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith. Trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. 508–27.
- Borges, Jean Luis. 'Kafka and His Precursors'. *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*. Ed. Donald A Yates and James E. Irby. Trans. James E. Irby. London: Penguin, 1970. 234–36.
- Broderick, Damien. *Reading by Starlight: Postmodern Science Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Carney, Sean. 'The Tides of History: Alan Moore's Historiographic Vision'. *ImageText* 2.2 (2006): n. pag. 28 Dec. 2007. <[http://www.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v2\\_2/index.shtml](http://www.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v2_2/index.shtml)>
- Dittmer, Jason. 'The Tyranny of the Serial: Popular Geopolitics, the Nation, and the Comic Book Discourse'. *Antipode* 39 (2007): 247–68.
- Duncan, Andy. 'Alternate History'. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Ed. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003: 209–19.

- Eco, Umberto. 'The Myth of Superman'. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Trans. William Weaver. London: Hutchinson, 1979: 107–24.
- Gardner, Jared. 'Archives, Collectors, and the New Media Work of Comics'. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 52.4 (2006): 787–806.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Jameson, Fredric. 'Cognitive Mapping'. *The Jameson Reader*. Ed. Michael Hardt and Kathi Weeks. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 277–87.
- . *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
- Jennings, Michael W. *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- Khoury George et al. *The Extraordinary Works of Alan Moore*. Raleigh, North Carolina: TwoMorrows Publishing 2003.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1987.
- Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Nyberg, Amy Kiste. *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1998.
- Prager, Brad. 'Modernism in the Contemporary Graphic Novel: Chris Ware and the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. *International Journal of Comic Art* 5.1 (2003): 195–211.
- Reynolds, Richard. *Superheroes: A Modern Mythology*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1992.
- Sabin, Roger. *Adult Comics: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Thomson, Iain. 'Deconstructing the Hero'. *Comics as Philosophy*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005: 100–29.