



WAKE UP, DONNIE: INTERTEXTUALITY AND SOUNDTRACK IN DONNIE DARKO¹

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ABSTRACT: This work aims to analyze some of the possibilities of intertextuality perceptible when comparing texts produced in very different contexts and regarding the soundtrack of a cinematographic adaptation. It concerns identifying the synchronicities of elements composing distinct types of texts and comparing them. Therefore, the objective of this work is to analyze the intertextual aspects between the narrative, characters, and its relationship with the soundtrack, of the three objects of the study: The Bunnyman urban legend; the film *Donnie Darko* (2001); and the book/script of the same name (2003). The theoretical basis is composed mainly by the ideas of Samoyault (2001), Kristeva (1966), and Bakhtin (1963), concerning intertextuality; Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (1998) on comparative literature; Fischhoff (2005) and Lotman (1978), regarding soundtrack studies. We seek to find elements of communication between the texts (legend and book/script), through their characters and other aspects, and also, if there is the same communication between the soundtrack and scenes from the film, which derived from the texts cited previously. It is concluded that it is possible to perceive intertextuality present in the relationship among the analyzed texts, and that the soundtrack can be used as a tool for making relevant intertextual interventions, regarding the perception of the audience of an audiovisual product.

Keywords: Intertextuality. Film. Book. Legend. Soundtrack.

RESUMO: Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar algumas das possibilidades de intertextualidade perceptíveis na comparação de textos produzidos em contextos muito distintos e no que diz respeito à trilha sonora de uma adaptação cinematográfica. Trata-se de

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identificar as sincronicidades de elementos que compõem distintos tipos de textos e compará-los. Portanto, o objetivo deste trabalho é analisar os aspectos intertextuais entre a narrativa, os personagens, e sua relação com a trilha sonora, dos três objetos de estudo: a lenda urbana do Bunnyman; o filme *Donnie Darko* (2001); e o livro/roteiro de mesmo nome (2003). A base teórica é composta principalmente pelas ideias de Samoyault (2001), Kristeva (1966) e Bakhtin (1963), acerca da intertextualidade; Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (1998), sobre literatura comparada; Fischhoff (2005) e Colpi (1963), sobre estudos de trilhas sonoras. O trabalho busca encontrar elementos de comunicação entre os textos (lenda e livro/roteiro), através de seus personagens e outros aspectos e, também, se existe a mesma comunicação entre a trilha sonora e as cenas do filme, que derivou dos textos citados anteriormente. Conclui-se que é possível perceber a intertextualidade presente na relação entre os textos analisados, e que a trilha sonora pode ser utilizada como ferramenta para a realização de intervenções intertextuais relevantes, no que diz respeito à percepção do público de um produto audiovisual.

Palavras-chave: Intertextualidade. Filme. Livro. Lenda. Trilha sonora.

INTRODUCTION

Intertextuality can be perceived in a range of interactions between products of the most varied formats, origins, and finalities. It can be noticed in the unforeseen interaction between two texts which were not originally intended to have anything in common, as when an urban story somehow is linked to events depicted in the narrative of a book/script, which also relates the concept of Comparative Literature. It also can be perceived in how the soundtrack of a film can work as an extension of its scenes and everything that composes it, the dialogues, the emotions, and its overall intentions. These are exactly the themes of which this study concerns.

The theoretical basis that guides this work consists of base studies of the concepts approached to make the analysis: The manifesto *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* (1998) by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek; the book *L'intertextualité: mémoire de la littérature* (2001) by Tiphaine Samoyault; and the work *Défense et illustration de la musique*

dans le film (1963) by Henri Colpi, among others, respectively concerning comparative literature, intertextuality, and film soundtracks³.

The objects of study of this work are the Bunnyman urban legend; the Film *Donnie Darko* (2001)⁴; and the book/script also titled *Donnie Darko* (2003) of which the movie derived from. The urban legend has its first register back from 1903, in the Fairfax County Station in Clifton, Virginia. The film *Donnie Darko* was released in 2001 and was directed by Richard Kelly, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Patrick Swayze and Drew Barrymore. The book *Donnie Darko* was released in 2003, based on the original script of the film, and it contains various differences concerning scenes and lines that cannot be seen in the film.

This work has the intention of elucidating elements of possible intertextual relationship between the texts, that is, the reports that have helped build the urban legend here analyzed, and the book/script which counts with a similar main character; it also aims to discuss whether the soundtrack of the film *Donnie Darko* can be considered an effective tool to help telling the story beyond only the visual aspects of it.

The analysis presented here is divided in two parts. The first part concerns analyzing the intertextuality between the two distinct texts, which are the narrative about the Bunnyman urban legend, and the book/script, seeking how they correlate regarding the main character of both, and its narrative details in general. The second part of the analysis concerns the intertextual relationship between the soundtrack and the scenes of the film, its characters, emotions and overall meaning.

The main objectives of this work are to analyze intertextual aspects between the narrative and main character of the two texts mentioned previously, and between the soundtrack and the aspects of scenes and characters of the film. The specific objective is to point out key concepts of comparative literature, intertextuality and soundtrack.

This study is divided in the following stages: Introduction, which presents a brief summary of the entire work; Theoretical basis (Comparative literature, intertextuality, and studies of soundtrack), contextualizing and emphasizing relevant studies of the mentioned fields; Presenting of the three objects of analysis; Methodology, indicating how did the analysis was done; The analysis made in two parts, as explained previously; and the Final considerations, concluding the work.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND INTERTEXTUALITY

³ Titles stayed in French in the translation, but texts were read in English.

⁴ The version analyzed of the film is the "Director's cut" released in 2004, available in DVD and Blu-ray.

Comparative literature is a very complex term to make a definition of, mostly because it deals with the involvement of two or more literary works or works in a relationship of simultaneous comparison (Meiliana, 2018, p. 3). Another aspect that makes its definition even more laborious is the fact that, in most cases, whoever is making the comparison task has to consider some multi-dimensional aspects of a certain society involved in the process like social, economic, cultural, religious, among others (Ibid, p. 3).

Given the right contextualization in which the practice of comparative literature is being approached, it gets progressively more comprehensible, since it encloses the extensiveness of the human experiences and relationships through a critical and comparative approach to literatures from all kinds of places and contexts (Ibid, p. 4).

If it were to analyze the human life experiences and behavior in a deeply manner, from very different parts of the world, or even different eras, it would, undoubtedly, present patterns of certain behaviors, which is why the human expression through literary works are most likely to present a solid amount of similarities. On the other hand, to aim for the affinities between the subjects of a comparative study does not mean to neglect the dissimilarities that also exist in it. For this purpose, the approach must be free of any kind of prejudice and biased opinions, in order to conclude with the most sincere results possible (Meiliana, pg. 4).

In correlation, Bijay Kumar Dass (2000, p. 1) defines comparative literature as

The simple way to define comparative literature is to say that it is a comparison between the two literatures. Comparative literature analyzes the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures. It further studies themes, modes, conventions and use of folk tales and myths in two different literatures or even more.

Historically speaking, comparative literature as an academic discipline originates from the 19th century along with other similar disciplines like comparative philology and comparative law, which aimed to analyze whatever was found similar between different objects of study, whether it was literatures, languages or legal systems (Meiliana, 2008, p. 5). A considerable number of sources state that comparative literature emerges as a direct reaction to the growing narrow nationalism of the literature of the 19th century. Its origin is very often linked with what was a movement of French, German and English historians revolting against their isolation, given that those were people who had attachments and

relationships with other cultures, for example, via double nationality, whether of themselves or their parents (Wellek, 2009, p. 165).

Comparative literature naturally possesses features that seem to make it easier to approach literature in an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural manner. In consonance with this statement, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek in his Manifesto titled *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* (1998), states that because of the insistence of comparative literature on its interdisciplinary, flexibility and capacity of translating one culture into another, through an exercise of dialogue between those cultures, it will continue to gather supporters and disciples, that is, maintaining its relevance in its research field.

However, the same characteristics mentioned before can be seen as an obstacle to the understanding of comparative literature in its full form. In that regard, Zepetnek (1998, p.16) affirms:

The obstacle [...] is that the attention to other fields of expression and other disciplines of study results in the lack of a clearly definable, recognizable, single-focussed, and major theoretical and methodological framework of Comparative Literature. There is a problem of naming and designation exactly because of the multiple approach and parallelism.

One of the many strands and possibilities of making a comparative analysis of a literary text is by studying literature relating it with a wide range of other forms of expression of art, such as music, film, the visual arts, among others. As well as with other disciplines of the social and humanities sciences field, of the likes of sociology, psychology, history, among others (Zepetnek, 1998, p. 16).

One of the ten general principles of comparative literature suggested by Zepetnek (1998), specifically the fourth, stands exactly by this possibility, even though the author had stated that, because of its interdisciplinary and inclusionary principles, comparative literature keeps facing issues when it comes to reaffirm its institutional power and intellectual recognition, which makes it lose space to other fields like national language and literature, within the environment of university departments. Nevertheless, comparative literature keeps on tracing a route of contributing successfully to the development of studies in the field of literature and its relationship with other areas and with the culture in general.

The interchangeability between different texts have been something quite usual when it comes to producing literary text, and because of that, the term intertextuality has been used in the most varied ways, and with a considerable amount of different meanings attached to it. Very often, the presence of a text in another text, because of this ambiguousness, is defined as

something else, for example: incorporation, tessiture, dialogue, etc. Intertextuality can be perceived as an exercise of literature looking at itself, internally, analyzing its production history and the extensive quality of its own origins. Even though literature certainly develops by leaning towards its relationship with the world, with the external, it is by its own existent production that it takes shape, so that it can build its own originality.

Intertextuality, given its etymology, is not only related to literature, or any kind of written text, but also to all sorts of visual work production. It is possible to notice its presence whenever there is a noticeable relationship between texts, like when a text is, somehow, referenced in another text, which is a very interesting way of establishing a correlation between very different types of text, that are displayed in very distinct kinds of media, and of sharing references that might be an appealing factor for gathering a larger audience of consumers of the final text or product.

Regarding how texts rely on other texts, Charles Bazerman (2004, p. 83) affirms that

Almost every word and phrase we use we have heard or seen before. Our originality and craft as writers come from how we put those words together in new ways to fit our specific situation, needs, and purposes, but we always need to rely on the common stock of language we share with others.

The term intertextuality was used the first time by Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian-French literary critic, semiotician, philosopher, among other occupations, who was, notably, a voracious reader of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (Arán, 2009, p. 26). She introduces it in two articles published in the periodic *Te Quel*, the first, from 1966, titled *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, presents the first appearance of the term; the second, from 1967, titled *The Closed Text*, offers a more precise definition of the term. She defines it as the "Crossing statements in a text taken from other texts", and "transposition [...] of previous or synchronic utterances" (Kristeva, 1969, p. 133)

Kristeva retakes the term intertextuality in her work from 1969, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. As stated earlier, the influence for Kristeva to produce the notion of intertextuality and its definition, was her contact with Mikhail Bakhtin's work, throughout her Bulgarian training. At that time, Bakhtin's work had started being heavily diffused in France and, consequently, in other parts of Europe, outside of Russia.

An idea that had been presented by Bakhtin throughout much of his work is that, in every text the word introduces a dialogue with other texts, and that is an idea borrowed from him by Julia Kristeva, the theoretical mentioned earlier as the first to use the term

intertextuality. Even though Bakhtin had never used the term, in his studies about romance, dating back to the late years of the 1920's decade, he introduces the idea of a multiplicity of speeches brought by the words (Samoyault, 2001, p. 18). Therefore, the text appears as the place in which happens an exchange of fractions of utterances that are redistributed or borrowed, and by that, a new text is entirely built taking from the previous texts. Bakhtin states that the language of romance is a system of languages that illuminates themselves mutually, by dialoguing.

As an example of that in the work of Bakhtin, in his analysis of the poetic in the works of Dostoevsky, titled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963, p.33), he states:

We see, in his works, heroes whose voice is, in its structure, identical to that which we normally find in authors. The hero's word about himself and the world is as valid and entirely significant as the author's word generally is [...]. He has an exceptional independence in the structure of the work, resonating in some way alongside the author's words, combining with him, as well as with the equally independent and significant voices of the other characters, in a completely original way.

There are quite a few theorists that have taken the very complex task of mapping these types of textual interactions called intertextuality. That is the case of Robert S. Miola, who in his essay titled *Seven types of intertextuality* (2004), accounts, as the title indicates, seven distinct ways in which intertextuality manifests. According to the author, these seven types are divided in three categories, and the aim is to separate and make distinction of the texts' interactions, examining beyond resources like different voices in a same text or linguistic expressions.

The first category concerns the influence of specific books or texts brought directly by the author through their authorial reading and remembering. This category includes the first four types of intertextuality, the first is *Revision*, wherein occurs by the posterior text taking identity from the anterior. The second type is *Translation*, which is basically the transferring of a text into a different language. The third is *Quotation*, a literal reproduction of the anterior text, whether whole or just a part. The fourth are *Sources*, to provide plot, idea, characters, and to shape in various ways the later text.

The second category concerns traditions and includes two types. The fifth type are *Conventions and configurations*, an appropriation of conventions from classical and medieval literatures, as well as configurations of classical characters and situations. The sixth type are *Genres*, concerning blending genres one into another. The third category is about what an

audience can bring to a text instead of what the author put in. The seventh type are *Paralogues*, texts that emphasize the political, intellectual, or social meanings in other texts.

SOUNDTRACK AND INTERTEXTUALITY

Given the fact that music is considered a fundamental part in most of the fictional films, its potential to convey meaning should not be overseen, as its presence should not be relegated purely to the visual. According to Juslin; Kepplinger; and Tagg & Clarida (apud HERGET, 2021, p. 21), music can influence the perception and interpretation of film plot and protagonists and can, therefore, be classified as an instrument of non-verbal communication. Historically speaking, regarding the first attempts of including music during film exhibitions, Marks (1997) states that the training of the musicians who used to play in these exhibitions was not defined, as they could be amateur or professional musicians, varying from small sets of musical instruments to a single pianist.

The author also affirms that the music played in the film exhibitions used to be a combination of compilations, improvisation and original songs, and it worked in this manner until the late 1920's. As far as cinema started to become a very profitable business, the music played during the exhibitions also started to gain more attention, as the information given to the musicians were beyond repertoire suggestions, now concerning the setting of a convincing atmosphere of time and place.

Regarding this procedure, Fischhoff (2005, p. 10) states:

[...] The music tells the audience the period in which the action is set. But for the most part, we identify, for example, as French music, Chinese music, or North American Indian music, which is originally arbitrary. Over time and with repeated imitations of composers inspired by those who follow and work in the same genre, time or place, the public has been conditioned to associate certain songs or musical styles with certain origins and people, regardless of whether the music is authentic in terms of time, place, ethnicity, etc.

In his work titled *The Structure of The Artistic Text* (1978), Lotman affirms that the work of art is some kind of media, that is, there is a sender and a receiver, and in the case of films, it is sending not only one message but a considerable amount of them, through every aspect that helps constructing the work (film) such as image frameworks, characters' lines, sets and last but not least, the soundtracks. That way, it is possible to affirm that the sound in

cinema has the purpose to reinforce or even cause emotional reaction to the events depicted on the screen.

The composer Henri Colpi (apud GIORGETTI, 2008, p. 3) in his work *Défense et illustration de la musique dans le film* affirms that:

The music of a film should be functional or not exist at all. It is needed to assign a role to it. It is only in this precise function that it will lend the image its own power of suggestion [...] The essential role of music is to accentuate the emotion of the images, it is a sound impression that reinforces the visual impression.

As mentioned earlier, by the time cinema became a proper industry, a very profitable one, it was inevitable that an alliance between the film and the music industries was not going to happen. In fact, to include a song in a film was a great opportunity to sell it to a much wider audience, of course, it would depend on how popular the film was going to become, but a single song could make a film's popularity to boost, as in the example of the Stevie Wonder song *I Just Called to Say I Love You* (1984) that, by becoming a commercial success, increased the audience of the film *The Woman in Red* (1984) as well. It became recurrent that household names from the music industry were selling songs from their catalogs or making original songs for the film studios to use in their productions. In this type of agreement, in most cases, both sides end up getting profits, as the arrangement between music and cinema became, through times, a commercial agreement, even though music is not in the movies for this only reason.

Since music became a fundamental part of making films, it was a natural move to include a category specifically to reward songs written for films in the most prestigious award of the film industry, the award of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (The Oscars). The Best Original Song category was included in the seventh edition of the Oscars in 1935 and, after a few changes throughout the decades, nowadays it only rewards songs written specifically for a movie. It has rewarded names such as Phil Collins, Elton John, Annie Lennox and Adele, the latter won with a song written for the *James Bond* (007) franchise, which has probably the most winnings when compared to other franchises.

When it comes to works that analyze the intertextuality in adaptations, it is quite the norm to focus mainly on the relationship between the product result of an adaptation and its source text, undermining other aspects of intertextuality within the film, such as the soundtrack. According to Jellenick (apud VANDENBERG, 2021, s/p), the soundtrack can be read as an adaptation in its own right, but when merged with the visual in a film, music forms "a parallel text -- one that performs independently, in that it has the capacity not simply to

highlight or underscore meanings constructed by the visual and verbal narrative, but to generate an intertextual discourse in ways that image and dialogue cannot".

The choices made about songs that are going to be in a film, even if not written specifically for it, are all very much conscious and on purpose. They are made with the intention of influencing the way the audience is receiving the visual, either the speech or the scene counting only on its visual elements, or both at the same time. In the words of Bakhtin (1981, p. 262) "heterogeneous stylistic unities [...] combine to form a structured artistic system, and are subordinated to the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole". Even though Bakhtin is referring to novels, the process described by him can be perfectly fitted to the case of the role of soundtrack in the intertextual approach of an analysis.

PRESENTATION OF WORKS

Next section we will present brief summaries about each one of the three works that are objects of analysis in this research. They are the Bunnyman urban legend, the film *Donnie Darko* (2001) and the book/script *Donnie Darko* (2003), based on the original script for the movie.

The Bunnyman Legend

Urban legends are stories that, in most cases, are passed through generations and that usually revolve around the relationship between a character and a specific place or area. It is, often, a story that is characterized by gory and supernatural elements and details, with the very clear intention of leaving the "it could've happened to you" feeling to whoever listens or reads about it. Another interesting fact about these kinds of stories is that, whenever they are retold, they seem to gain new details, characters, dates, among others, which can make the veracity about them very improbable of being confirmed or even just checked.

This is exactly the case of the Bunny man legend. A story that mainly tells about a creature (or man) that seems to be dressed with a bunny costume and that can act very violently, almost always in the area of the railroad overpass of Fairfax County Station in Clifton, Virginia. One of the many versions of this story is that in 1903, there was an accident with the transportation of convicts from an insane asylum in which they ran out to the woods and two of them were not found. When chasing the two men, the police kept finding skinned,

half-eaten rabbits on the ground, and after a while, they found the body of one the men hanging from the railroad bridge in Fairfax, with a note signed “The Bunny Man” (Forbes, 1999).

Other versions narrate about groups of teenagers that went to the same location on the occasion of Halloween and that ended up murdered or seeing their friends corpses hanging in the said bridge. It is fair to say that these stories do not rely on any proof or facts that can be accessed through documents or any kind of record. However, more recent episodes of sighting of the bunny man in 1970, in which it appeared attacking people on cars, hitting its windows with a hatchet and accusing the people in the parked cars of trespassing, just to immediately disappear leaving no traces (Conley, 2002).

These incidents were covered by *The Washington Post* with articles titled *Man in Bunny Suit Sought in Fairfax*, and *The ‘Rabbit’ Reappears* (Ibid, 2002), marking the first time that the events related to the sighting of the bunny man are officially documented. This might have contributed to the spread of the story reaching other forms of storytelling and media like television or cinema, which in the following years, presented a lot of material that were visibly linked or inspired by the urban legend of the bunny man.

The Donnie Darko film

Donnie Darko is an American science fiction and thriller film released in 2001, written and directed by Richard Kelly. It was produced by Pandora Cinema, A Flower Films Production, Adam Fields Productions and Gaylord Films; and distributed by Newmarket Films in the United States, and Flashstar Filmes in Brazil. In the film, the leading character is Donnie (Jake Gyllenhaal), a very intelligent and eccentric young man that is still in school, but has a difficult relationship with his classmates. As soon as Donnie starts to deal with strange visions he is having, especially of a creepy bunny, his life starts to take strange and unusual turns.

The bunny he sees asks for him to make destructive and humiliating pranks with other people, until one night it attracts Donnie outside of his house and tells him that the world is going to end within a year. Donnie gets confused and doubtful with the prophecy, but a few moments after, an airplane falls right into his roof, almost killing him, and at that moment he starts to wonder whether the prophecy is true or not.

The film features a cast of well-known actors such as Jake Gyllenhaal, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Drew Barrymore, Seth Rogen, Jena Malone, Ashley Tisdale and Patrick Swayze.

Despite its low budget and overall difficulties for the release, throughout the decades following its release, it had conquered the status of cult icon of cinema, displaying mostly positive reviews from both the specialized critics and the general audiences.

Donnie Darko had a sequence released in 2009 and titled *S. Darko* that was not as well received as the first one. Because of its fantasy and even surrealism elements, the film is considered possible to be interpreted in many different ways. Its ending is, to this day, considered one the most enigmatic endings of the contemporary cinema, given that the director and also writer of the script, Richard Kelly, have never really expressed how the events in the film can be explained in a rational way, or what is the real meaning of the film.

The Donnie Darko book

The book *Donnie Darko* was published in 2003, two years after the release of the movie of the same name. Richard Kelly, who directed the film, is the author. The interesting fact about this work and its publication, is that it is presented in the form of a cinema screenplay, that is, it presents the same story and characters that were depicted in the film, but with additional elements, detailing and scenes. Despite the timeline in which both works were released, the film, even though it was released first, was entirely based on the content present in the book, which was the original script.

Given the fact that, at the time of its release, the film was not praised or well received by specialized critics and public in general, but in the following years, it started to gain attention and appreciation, nowadays it even has the cult film status, the decision of releasing its original script as a book, might have been a commercial decision, but it surely helped to enlarge the world of *Donnie Darko* and by that, keep the audience interested in the story.

One the versions of the book, released by the Brazilian publishing company DarkSide Books in 2016, brings very interesting additions for the reader, alongside the screenplay. It starts with an intro written by the translator of the version, Antônio Tibau. Afterwards, there is a preface written by Jake Gyllenhaal, the actor who played Donnie in the film, followed by an interview with Richard Kelly, writer and director of the book and the film, respectively. After the screenplay, there are a few samples of *The Philosophy of Time Travel* by Roberta Sparrow, and both the book and the writer are fictional and very important in the narrative of *Donnie Darko*. There are also a few pictures taken from the film and song lyrics from the soundtrack. This is a version of the book that seems very complete and that makes the perfect blending of the book with the film, tying both the works harmonically.

METHODOLOGY

This is qualitative research, that is, a type of research focused on understanding more subjective aspects, such as behaviors, ideas, points of view, among others. According to Godoy (1995), qualitative research occupies a recognized place among the various possibilities to study the phenomena that involve human beings and their intricate social relationships, established in diverse environments.

As stated previously, the following analysis is divided into two parts. The first part concerns analyzing the intertextuality between the two distinct texts, which are the texts about the Bunnyman urban legend, and the book/script, seeking how they correlate regarding the main character of both, and its narrative details. The second part of the analysis concerns the intertextual relationship between the soundtrack and the scenes of the film, its characters, emotions and overall meaning.

INTERTEXTUAL NARRATIVE AND CHARACTERS

The origin of some of the stories that end up influencing and inspiring narratives in literary texts or screenplays, that later turn into an audiovisual product like a film, is quite unpredictable. However, there are many of those stories that start as a rumor, a story that is spread around small towns and suburbs, usually involving violent and/or supernatural elements to it, named as urban legends. The Bunnyman urban legend presents some significantly similar elements to both the film *Donnie Darko* (2001) and the book/script that served as a source to the cinematographic adaptation.

The most evident similarity is the relationship that the character, that appears dressed as a bunny in all the three formats analyzed here, holds with the idea of bringing death wherever he is at, to whomever he crosses path with. In the case of the legend, the bunnyman threatens and, allegedly, kills passersby who dare to invade its space. Similarly, in the movie and in its script, the bunnyman comes into sight to give a warning, or what could be seen as a threat, that the world is coming to an end, which ultimately means that the character who sees the bunnyman, is about to die.

Regarding the scenes that did not make it to the film in its totality and were cut into smaller versions of how they were originally written in the screenplay, Richard Kelly, the

writer and director⁵ of the film has stated that due to commercial standards that dictate, among other aspects, the length that a movie has to have, he did had to remove some lines of important scenes, which leads the movie that can be read in the screenplay/book to look slightly different from the version that was released as a full length film.

Despite the releasing of a director's cut version of the film in 2004, adding around 20 minutes into the original runtime, it still could not contemplate all the scenes written in their totality. The fact is that the changes made are directly responsible for any intervention in the audience's perception of the narrative. In one of the most important scenes, when Donnie is woken up by Frank, the character dressed in a bunny suit, in the screenplay/book, Frank says: "I've been watching you"; "do you believe in God, Donnie?"; "God loves his children, Donnie"; "God loves you"; "I'm here to save you"; "the world is coming to an end, Donnie".

Almost none of these lines can be seen in the movie, specially the religious-toned ones that, combined with an already very present prophetic intonation of the film, could bring a whole different meaning to the scene, after all, by luring Donnie out of his bedroom, Frank saves his life, but was it God who did it through Frank? A couple of events further in the film, and it is suggested that an action of Donnie is responsible for the visit of Frank, not God. Even though the narrative plays with these rather dichotomous notions, like when it connects fate and supernatural elements with scientific phenomena like wormholes and parallel realities, it does not rely on religious arguments to justify its events, which can explain the changes and why they have possibly been made.

A rather interesting choice made by the creator of both the script/book and film, is how he had decided to change the chronological order of some of the events in the narrative, by alternating and making a complete distinct order of the events in both the formats. Regardless of the choice that was made, there is no evidence of important impacts on the audience's perception of the story, because of that.

The same could be said about how the perception of the characters, specially the main ones, do not seem harmed, even if, as was mentioned earlier, most of the characters end up losing a considerable amount of lines, when speaking of the adaptation of the text to the cinema. What is presented of them, in whichever versions of the film that exist, is enough to represent precisely the essence to which they are presented to us in the source material.

The single character who connects the elements analyzed here (urban legend, screenplay/book and film), the time traveler who came all the way from Fairfax County,

⁵ Interview with Richard Kelly, writer and director of Donnie Darko
https://web.archive.org/web/20040806162303/http://www.indiewire.com/movies/movies_040722darko.html

Virginia, to grace the big screen in Hollywood, is one rather interesting and complex figure. As mentioned previously, the bunnyman character is directly linked to the idea of death, no matter where he is at. In the context of the urban legend, bunnyman concerns and terrorizes exactly because of his alleged murders.

However, this sort of changes when, in the context of the source text and the film, he becomes a victim, shot dead in the eye by Donnie. Bunnyman (Frank) after being killed, enters the parallel realities and, after being made a victim, approaches the guilty, warning him that the world (Donnie's world, or his life) is going to end. Since this happens, and Donnie really dies in one of the parallel realities, bunnyman can be perceived as both, the one who brings death to others, but also to himself. The hunter, but also the prey.

INTERTEXTUAL SOUNDTRACK AND ITS EFFECTS

One of the most important parts of a movie is the soundtrack, whether the original score, that is, music written specifically for a film, or the music chosen with the purpose of fitting the overall theme displayed in the film's events and characters. When it comes to choosing songs to be played in a movie, that is not always the criteria used to justify the choices made by the producers and directors. In some cases, the commercial success of certain songs is what is going to prevail, in others, simply a matter of personal preference.

Nonetheless, when an alignment happens between random songs, written and released under its own circumstances, and a cinematographic production, an interesting phenomenon can be observed. The lyrics of the chosen song can work as an extension of the speech of a certain character; can add to the emotion that a scene is trying to cause in the audience, with the right words at the right time; or even present a hint of what might happen in the upcoming events within the narrative. The songs, whether its lyrics and/or instrumental, can be perceived as a key part of some narratives, where a conversation between distinct medias, that were originally not meant to have anything in common, is happening successfully, one complimenting another.

That is applied exactly to the case of the soundtrack of the film *Donnie Darko* (2001). Most of the songs' lyrics seem to correlate with the narrative and, at times, specifically to the lines that are being delivered by the characters, resulting in a kind of a simultaneous delivery of the same speech, occurring in different formats at the same time. In the first scene of the film, the character Donnie is seen waking up from one of his recurrent sleepwalking attacks,

in the middle of nowhere. He turns back home riding his bike and the song *Never Tear Us Apart* (1987) by INXS starts playing.

The song *Never Tear Us Apart* was released in 1988 by Australian rock band INXS as a single from their sixth studio album *Kick*. It was a huge commercial success in Australia and other places like the United Kingdom and United States. Less than ten years after its release, the song was present in a sad occurrence, as it was used in the moment that the reminiscing members of the band and his young brother were carrying the coffin of Michael Hutchence, the vocalist of the band who died in 1997. Even though the song was written about a romantic relationship, it seems to carry a new meaning after the death of Hutchence.

In the minute 3:06 of the film, when the following part of the song plays: “I was standing/ you were there/ two worlds colliding/ and they could never tear us apart”, exactly in the “two worlds colliding” part, Donnie passes by a red car going the opposite direction (Picture 1). That is the car of the character Frank, who is presented in the narrative as a connector between the two realities of the plot.

(Picture 1)



Frank firstly appears as a man dressed in the bunny clothes with a wound in one of his eyes, warning Donnie about the end of the world. But later, it is explained that he was a guy who ran over the character Gretchen, the romantic interest of Donnie, killing her. Because of that, Donnie shoots him in the eye, killing him. When Frank appears, in the other reality, telling Donnie that the world is going to end, he means that the world is going to end for Donnie, that is, he is going to die. That is why when they cross paths in one of the first scenes, two worlds are colliding, exactly like the song is affirming.

Speaking of the same song still, in the continuation of the opening scene mentioned earlier, when the character Donnie arrives at home, there is a shot presenting other characters

that seem to be his family, more specifically, his younger and older sisters, and his parents. Given that an airplane, or rather, a plane turbine, seems to be a recurrent theme in the narrative of the film, and is directly linked to one of the crucial events in the story, it is not by chance that in the minute 3:48 when Donnie's younger sister, Samantha, appears on the screen, jumping on a trampoline and falling again (Picture 2), right when Donnie is passing by, the same song mentioned earlier says: "I told you that we could fly/ 'cause we all have wings/ but some of us don't know why".

(Picture 2)



This scene seems to be placed as some sort of premonition because, as it happens later in the plot, in one of the realities, a plane turbine falls right into Donnie's room, but he does not die, thanks to Frank, the man in a bunny costume who called him to outside of the house minutes before. However, in the other reality, it is shown that the same turbine fell from the plane in which Samantha was, coming back from a dance competition. Even though the events do not make sense chronologically, this time, Donnie dies in his bedroom, hit by the turbine. Although the same quote from the song can have a religious meaning to it, given that, "...we all have wings/ but some of us don't know why" is also possibly related to the Christian belief that every death has a meaning, like a calling from heaven, even though it does not make sense in the case of the tragic death of a young person.

The song *Head Over Heels* was released in 1985 by British duo Tears For Fears as the fourth single of their album *Songs from the Big Chair*. It was a worldwide commercial success, hitting the top 40 in a considerable number of countries. It took approximately two years to be fully developed and, according to Roland Orzabal, one of the members of the duo, it is a song about a romance that gets a little wicked towards the end. It has been used in quite a few films and other audio-visual productions throughout the years.

In the minute 19:21 of the movie, right after the turbine incident, Donnie and his colleagues return to the school (Picture 3) and a very talked about scene starts. It is a scene with no dialogue in which the camera passes throughout spaces of the school, showing students, teachers, and other characters behaving in very particular ways, or simply doing nothing. The song that famously plays in this sequence is the song *Head Over Heels* (1985) by Tears For Fears, which chorus says: “Something happens and I’m head over heels/ I never find out ‘til I’m head over heels”, which correlates very appropriately with the particular plots of most of the characters that are in the scene.

(Picture 3)

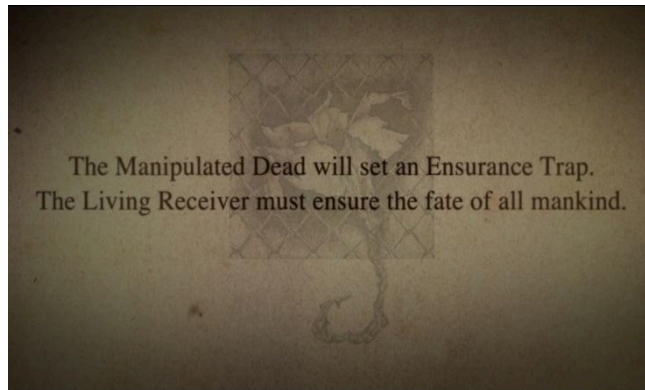


The character Gretchen Ross, for example, is about to have her life put upside down because of the presence of Donnie. The character Seth Devlin who is seen doing drugs in the hall of the school, at some point is accused of vandalizing the school, which Donnie did. Most notably, the character Jim Cunningham who is an author/local celebrity that, because of a fire started in his house by Donnie, is revealed as a pedophile, given the material found by the firemen in the place. Donnie seems to work as an agent of chaos to those around him, turning everything, quite literally, head over heels, as the chorus of the song says.

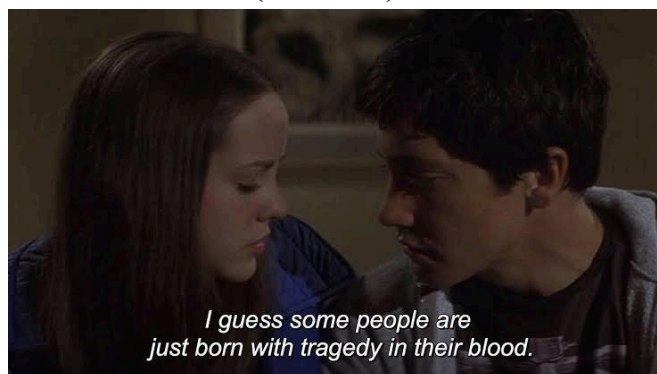
The song *Love Will Tear Us Apart* was released as a single in 1980 by British rock band Joy Division. Its lyrics were supposedly inspired by the band's vocalist Ian Curtis's personal problems with his marriage and his health. Ian was struggling with epilepsy and had to take a lot of medicines because of it, but in May 1980, he ended up overdosing and dying after spending a few days in hospital. The referred single was released in the month after Ian's death, turning out to be a commercial success. Because of its tragic background, the song is often cited in lists of the most sad or melancholic compositions ever written, having been used in a lot of audio-visual media such as films and TV shows.

In the minute 1:46:33 of the film, right before the character Gretchen arrives at a Halloween party at Donnie's house, appears on the screen the following quote taken from *The Philosophy of Time Travel*, a fictional book written by the character Roberta Sparrow: "The manipulated dead will set an Ensurance Trap. The Living Receiver must ensure the fate of all mankind" (Picture 4). The said quote was placed to be interpreted as an omen due to the chain of events that are set to be developed in the next events of the narrative. In the following scene, Gretchen knocks on Donnie's door and they climb to his bedroom upstairs, while the song *Love Will Tear Us Apart* (1980) by Joy Division can be heard in the background, playing at the party. When in Donnie's bedroom, they have a conversation about her mother's problems with domestic violence, to which Gretchen says: "I guess some people are just born with tragedy in their blood" (Picture 5), as they kiss.

(Picture 4)



(Picture 5)



The dialogue and the context of the scene are perfectly matched with the song lyrics that says at that exact moment of the scene: "And we're changing our ways/ taking different roads/ love, love will tear us apart again", given that in the next scenes, Donnie receives some kind of message that leads him to the house of the character Roberta Sparrow, accompanied by Gretchen and two of his friends.

After a few events, Gretchen ends up being run over and dies, but soon Donnie realizes that, in another reality, he is the one who dies when a turbine falls in his bedroom, leading him to never have met Gretchen, and like the lyrics of the song affirms, love tears them apart, because it is either one or another who is going to die in one of the two realities. Since Donnie seems to be on good terms with his tragic fate and, at some point, he even laughs hysterically over it (Picture 6), it implies that he prefers to die so that Gretchen does not have to die, as he turns out to be the one who was born with tragedy in his blood.

(Picture 6)



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This work dealt with how intertextuality can be perceived in a range of interactions between products of the most varied formats, origins, and finalities, given that, it can be seen as in the example of the comparison between the texts of the urban legend and the book/script analyzed in this work, as well as with how the soundtrack of the film Donnie Darko relates with the components and details of its scenes.

Since one of the objectives of this work was to analyze intertextual aspects between the narrative and main character of the two texts mentioned previously, as well as between the soundtrack and the aspects of scenes and characters of the film, it can be stated that the referred objective was achieved, given what can be observed in the analysis. Another objective was to point out key concepts of comparative literature, intertextuality and soundtrack, which was properly achieved, given the authors present within the theoretical basis.

The analysis which happened in two stages, concerned analyzing the intertextuality between two distinct texts, the legend and the book/script, seeking how they correlate

regarding the main character of both, and its narrative details, in its first part. And also concerned the intertextual relationship between the soundtrack and the scenes of the film, its characters, emotions and overall meaning, in its second part.

This is a research that has its limitations: it could have been more in-depth, analyzing other aspects of the relations between the texts that were objects of study, but also, there are many other aspects of the relationship between the cinematographic adaptation and its source text that could have been explored, for example, the imagery, symbolism of some of the scenes, social commentary, among others. There are always other paths that could have been followed in academic writing, however, some decisions regarding which one must be its focus, have to be made.

It is considered that there is a possible intertextual relationship between the texts analyzed, that are the reports that have helped build the urban legend and the book/script, given that, both contain a very similar main character, and, consequently, share similarities regarding the development of said character, and of its narrative. It can be also considered that the soundtrack of the film *Donnie Darko* does work as an effective tool to help tell the story beyond only the visual aspects of it, working as some kind of extension of what is typically expected of the cinematographic experience.

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