MARGINS OF THE IMAGE: FRAMING AND DEFRAMING

IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL AND THE FILM

V FOR VENDETTA

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ABSTRACT

MARGINS OF THE IMAGE:
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V FOR VENDETTA

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This thesis is an analysis of the graphic novel and its film adaptation *V for Vendetta* in terms of the concepts of *framing* and *deframing*. The theoretical framework is mainly derived from the reflections of Pascal Bonitzer, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida. It is contended in this study that both the graphic novel and the film *V for Vendetta* are culturally deframing texts in different ways, and that they trigger the audiences' already present reactions towards certain political frames and framings. As a result, it is argued and exemplified that both of the texts have become one single text, perceived as a "symbol of resistance" throughout the world.

Keywords: Framing, deframing, off-screen, politics, aesthetics, graphic novel, film

ÖZET

İMGENİN SINIRLARI:
GRAFİK ROMAN VE FİLM *V FOR VENDETTA*'DA
ÇERÇEVELEME VE ÇERÇEVEDEN-ÇIKARMA

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Bu tez, grafik roman ve film uyarlaması *V for Vendetta*'yı *çerçeveleme* ve *çerçeveden- çıkarma* kavramları açısından incelemektedir. Kuramsal çerçeve temel olarak Pascal Bonitzer, Gilles Deleuze ve Jacques Derrida'nın düşüncelerine dayanmaktadır. Hem grafik roman, hem de film *V for Vendetta*'nın kültürel olarak çerçeveden-çıkarıcı metinler olduğu, ve hedef kitlelerinin belirli siyasi çerçeveler ve çerçevelemelere karşı zaten duymakta olduğu tepkiyi daha da tetiklemekte olduğu savunulmaktadır. Bunun sonucunda ise, iki metnin dünya çapında bir "direniş sembolu" olarak algılanan tek bir metine dönüştüğü öne sürülmekte ve örneklemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerçeveleme, çerçeveden-çıkarma, alan-dışı, politika, estetik, grafik roman, film

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BPS Behind the Painted Smile.

MI The Movement Image

TI The Time Image

VfV V for Vendetta.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sequential Arts in Negotiations with Cinema

As a general category of fictional form combining words and images interdependently, "sequential arts" (Witek, 1989) contributed to the development of visual narratives, and even foresaw the ideal mechanics of film long before the invention of cinema (Spiegelman, 1988). However, in the course of its evolution (the appearance of caricatures, comic strips, comic books and then graphic novels), the production of sequential visual narratives confronted with the emergence of cinema. In this context, "comic book" and later "graphic novel" -as post-cinematic genres- appropriated some formal qualities inherent in cinema, into a two dimensional picture plain. Conversely, a number of traditions of comic book and later graphic novel crossed over cinema (Lee, 1984).

The foundations of the mainstream comic strips in a modern sense were laid in the first half of the 19th century, and they were basically recognized with linear sequences that depicted actions through identical panels, with the pursuit of a desire to animate still pictures (Harvey, 1996). In fact, representing movement -through consecutive panels in which characters change their position one by one while the scene is fixed- was not an appropriation, but anticipation of cinema. However, whereas cinema creates "movement-images," comic strips could only represent movement due to its panels' simultaneous and successive existence on the same

plane. Actually, "we experience panels in comics at once and in any order, but as narrative elements they presuppose a left-to-right and top-to-bottom (that is, a reading) order" (Witek, 1989, 34). Therefore, the initial demand of this form from the audience was a certain reading convention, by which the effect of motion and narrative continuity could be achieved.

Because of these constraints, comic strip creators began to adopt the narrative techniques of cinema - such as perspective, close-up, medium/long shot, bird's eye view etc. - in order to achieve movement in different ways. In accordance, the method of disturbing the linear flow with cuts, and supplying the coherence via thematic levels was derived from cinema (Lee, 1984). Obviously, cinema also contributed to the "education" of the graphic novel viewers in terms of adapting them to the reading conventions for such non-linear depictions.

In the meantime, i.e. in the 1930s, comic strips were begun to be reprinted in a magazine or book format. When the exhaustion of the material to be reprinted coincided with the efforts of adopting cinematic techniques, the outcome was the occurrence of the comic book (Harvey, 1996). Before continuing with the innovations of this format, it must be stated at the outset that although cinema surpassed comic strips in terms of representing/reproducing movement, it still utilizes them in the form of storyboards. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson in *Film Art* define film storyboards as "comic-strip like drawings of individual shots or phases of shots with descriptions written below each drawing" (Bordwell & Thompson, 1993, 497).

One of the innovations of the mainstream comic book type was the form of narrative with a "single theme." Moreover, the ideal "superhero" began to take shape within these early comic books, with the well-known initiative examples of Superman and Batman. In order to depict the hero as "super" and "insurmountable," and his accomplishing feats, the dramatization of the dynamic action as much as possible became a requirement (Sabin, 1993).

The comic book form also inaugurated the emergence of the "anti-hero" tradition with Spiderman, where the anti-hero is a vulnerable, self-doubting, and confused character, rather than a virtuous and decisive one. Evidently, the introduction of the "costumed character" was also a part of the super/anti-hero traditions (O'Sullivan, 1990). In both cases, although the mainstream depiction was a realistic one, there were other formal realizations and experiments within the field of comic books, which jointly developed into the graphic novel.

The term "graphic novel," which was put forward in the 1990s, differentiated from the comic book by several aspects, such as its longer form, more complex storyline, and the intended mature audiences. This shift was actually a deliberate manifestation of the fact that the artists were freed from the constraints of continuity and realism, and therefore found a space for personal expression and style (Smitten, 1981).

In this respect, crossing the boundaries of predetermined figuration, staging action and panel arrangement resulted not only in colored illustrations (in which shapes and figures were defined not only by lines but also by hues and tones) and a variety of other visual strategies, but also with ambiguous heroes that rejected strict

categorizations. (Mila, 2000) However, the shift to the term graphic novel is also considered by some critics as mere lexical quirk or a marketing strategy, by means of attempting to place comics into a "serious" and "high art" format (Goldkind, 2005).

To sum up, although it is only given necessary particulars here, the mechanics of cinema apparently had a great influence on the development of sequential arts. Nonetheless, it should be added that comic book characters (especially superheroes), as well as storylines were immediately adapted into films, as soon as they emerged.

However, due to the "serial" format of comic books and graphic novels by means of lasting for several decades, there occurred in them several variations in the characterization of the heroes in time. Hence, the film adaptations of the series tried to capture the main theme and "aura" of the character, instead of adapting the story line in its entirety. Moreover, the aspects of the characters were usually modernized in accordance with the adaptation date. (Pearson, 1991)

1.2 Framework of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to examine the graphic novel *V for Vendetta* (written by Alan Moore, illustrated by David Lloyd) and its film adaptation (directed by James McTeigue, screenplay by Wachowski Brothers), in terms of their uses and illustrations of "framing" and "deframing."

The theoretical background will mainly be derived from Pascal Bonitzer, who introduced the term "deframing" in film studies; Gilles Deleuze, who provided new insights on framing and deframing in cinema; and Jacques Derrida, who is the

leading figure of "deconstruction," which has an elevated relevance with the notions of framing and deframing in a much more wide-ranging context.

In this thesis, it will be contended that both the graphic novel and the film *VfV* are culturally deframing texts in different ways, and they trigger the audiences' already present reactions towards political frames and framings. As a result, they become one single text, perceived as a "symbol of resistance" by many people. A number of political activities throughout the world, which appeared out of the influence of *VfV*, as well as the Turkish anarchist organization called *%52* will be put forward as examples in this thesis.

The second chapter, which provides the theoretical background of this thesis, will begin by pointing out the concepts of frame and framing, in terms of their divergent meanings, aspects and usages at different levels, since it is by no means obvious that framing is the essential principle and consecutive effect of both sequential arts and cinema, which employ single frames in order to construct a coherent whole.

In resistance to the ways in which frame and framing operate via "limitation" and "centering," the chapter will later draw on an alternative mode of framing attributed to cinema, namely "deframing," which forces, expands and transgresses the very limits of the frame, framing, and their insistence on centering. In relation to this resistive approach, the final part of the chapter will establish connections between deframing and "deconstruction," since the latter is also a similar method of delimitizing and decentering the common existence of certain frames and framings.

The third chapter of this thesis will examine the graphic novel *VfV* by means of its frames, framings and deframings. Here, while the frame and framing will be considered in relation to "political frames and framing" as depicted in the graphic novel, deframing will be considered under the issues of "rewriting history," "anarchy," "intertextuality," and "theatricality." Thus, this chapter will essentially consider the frame, framing and deframing in relation with the content of the graphic novel.

At this point, it should be stated that the graphic novel *VfV*'s "cinematic" quality goes beyond the above mentioned formal similarities between sequential arts and cinema, in terms of employing to a great extent cinematic storytelling strategies, rather than conventional comic storytelling.

For instance, the story is generally told through silent panels and dialogues, instead of providing them with captions. Moreover, it is not possible to find any thought balloons or sound effects, which mirror a character's feelings. As in cinema, the emotional aspects of the characters are mostly "shown" to the readers via dialogues and illustrations of nuances, rather than being "told" to them.

However, in spite of these qualities of the graphic novel, it will not be examined in a formal level in this thesis unlike its film counterpart. Accordingly, a comparative analysis of the formal mechanics of the graphic novel and the film will not be taken under consideration. For such analysis would require a deeper penetration into the graphic novel genre itself, which is not convenient for the purposes of this thesis.

Moreover, while the graphic novel *VfV* takes further the similarity of approach between sequential arts and cinema, there might happen to be an expectation for its film adaptation to maintain maximum similarity with the graphic novel. However, as is stated, since the graphic novel *VfV* is originally a long series, rather than adapting its story line in its entirety, it is more achievable to capture its main themes and the main qualities of its characters.

At any rate, "adaptation" should be considered as a process that inevitably involves change, since it always implies "adjusting," "fitting," "conforming," "rewriting," "transferring," "accommodating" etc. Besides, the process of film adaptation is mandated by the constraints of the medium – that of time limitation in the first place. Thus, there are at least technical factors commanding and restricting the adaptation of the film *VfV*.

Therefore, while the fourth chapter of this thesis will in part deal with the differences between the graphic novel and the film, it will not acknowledge the rewriting of the former as a negative aspect of the latter. In other words, the necessity or needlessness of "faithfulness" in the process of adaptation is neither going to be defended nor criticized in this thesis.

On the contrary, it will be admitted that the reframing of the graphic novel for the film implies more than technical necessities that are bounded to be in case of adaptation. That is to say, it will be considered that the film *VfV* reframes the graphic novel through unlikely interpretations of it. For instance, the original chronology of the events has been changed, some of them have been excluded and some have been

made up; the themes have apparently been tailored; and the characters of the graphic novel are either missing or again modified in the film.

Nonetheless, it will be argued in the fourth chapter that the preliminary intention of rewriting the graphic novel for the film *VfV* is to modernize the story for a 2006 film audience and make it available for wider political issues.

Moreover, the fourth chapter will also try to express that although it explicitly has a mainstream narrative structure, the film not only draws upon several deframings, but its modes of reframing also turn into deframings. Therefore, even though deframing is hitherto mentioned in relation to certain avant-garde films, this thesis argues that, as well as challenging the borders of the frame by cinematic devices of deframing, the themes, the narrative structure, and certain literary and dramatic elements that the film borrows from the graphic novel turn out to be intriguing deframings as well.

In the fourth chapter, it will also be argued that, the film *VfV* not only opens up an "absolute" off-screen, but also inserts the audience within this very off-screen as a result of the combination of the deframings in it. In this way, perhaps, the film presents a more participative experience for the audience than the graphic novel.

The fourth chapter finally argues in light of these identifications that although the film adaptation manipulates and subtracts from the original graphic novel and it is highly criticized for that, it nonetheless supports and even strengthens the graphic novel's critical position especially towards governments and media. With the help of the insight that the graphic novel provides for the film, as well as cinema's heavier

power in visualizing the narrative, the film emphasizes the revolutionary discourse of the graphic novel and carries it to a further level.

The conclusion of this thesis will draw upon Walter Benjamin's analyses on film as the most powerful agent of mechanical reproduction, and his discussions on the "aesthetization of politics" and "politicizing of aesthetics." In regard to Benjamin's perspective, it will be emphasized that *VfV* responds the aestheticized politics of capitalism by politicizing art.

2. FRAMING AND DEFRAMING IN CINEMA

A frame is essentially constructed and therefore fragile: such would be the essence or truth of the frame.

Jacques Derrida

2.1 The Frame

In some of its standard meanings, the noun form of the word "frame" signifies a border or supporting structure that surrounds a picture, a window, a mirror, etc.; or the underlying material or conceptual structure of a system, concept, text, building, body, and so forth. What the verb form of frame signifies, further, is to form, devise, compose, arrange, plan, shape etc. Hence, even these basic definitions reveal that frame is a comprehensive word. Reasonably, the extensive scope it arises creates certain problems.

For instance, when the word frame designates an external material structure, such as the frame of a painting, what the frame frames is already a frame. For the size, shape and mass of a canvas already constitute a frame before supporting and enclosing it with an additional material structure. Perhaps, this case can be simplified by inferring that "[a]ll images have a material base. They are all objects. The frame is first and foremost the *edge* of this object, its material, tangible boundary" (Aumont, 1997, 105, original emphasis).

Nonetheless, the theme, composition and style of a painting are all other frames. In this respect, both the material and the abstract edges can said to be constituting the limits of a painting and thus providing it with a space of expression. Yet, there appear certain problems once more. Initially, the form and content of the painting cannot simply be dissociated from each other. It is required to acknowledge the frame essentially as an "indissociable" entity, a combination of form and content. Secondly, there might be several substantial and conceptual frames within the very painting itself.

Most important of all, the concept of the frame is not exclusive to painting. In fact, anything, even thinking bears on certain frames. Thus, the dissemination of different forms of frames across different fields and their interpenetration continuously multiply its senses.

This thesis will focus on the sequential art of graphic novel and cinema, both of which require the use of frames. In a sequential art like graphic novel, the frame names "the bordered panels, which serve to break down the action into readily understandable segments" (Sabin, 1993, 5). Unlike cinema, these panels can be enlarged or narrowed in accordance with the content. The speech balloons, the narrative boxes, sound effects and the section headings are also smaller frames located within the main panels. Beyond the common terminology, the "page" and the book itself can also be regarded as frames.

The status of the frame gets even more curious and difficult in the case of cinema, as Peter Brunette and David Wills elaborate in *Screen/Play – Derrida and Film Theory*. "For what usually refers to the outside border, as in painting, here also names the inside, or some undefined combination of inside and outside" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 103).

Brunette and Wills identify three different meanings for the term frame in the context of cinema: First, it names "a section of celluloid whose successive repetitions (and slight variations) pass in front of the lens in order to project a motion picture" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 104). Second, "[it] refers to the moving image as it appears projected on the screen (The term may also be used more generally as a noun or verb to refer to the edges of the image as seen in a camera viewfinder or projected on a screen)" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 104). Last, "[it] is that which we imagine and construct as the 'real world' against what we see on the screen" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 105). The last meaning is explained by Brunette and Wills by pointing out the fact that unlike the frame of a painting that provides a space of negotiation between figure and ground, "the film […] exists thanks to its creation of a 'not itself', a virtual frame, an other" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 105).

As it can be seen, the multifaceted nature of frame makes it very difficult to identify and talk about. Yet, it is an essential element in all visual arts. Jean Claude Lebensztejn begins his essay "Starting Out From the Frame," with similar perplexities in mind: "[W]hat does it mean to be interested in the frame? Where does this interest stop? That is to say, where does the frame stop" (Lebensztejn, 1996, 118)? Reasonably, he responds that the power of frame is due to our inability of

answering these questions, "as well as to its invisibility and the continuous transition from the physical to the metaphoric or symbolic that renders the frame limitless" (Lebensztejn, 1996, 118).

For the time being, perhaps, what is important for an understanding of frame is that, different from a border line that merely signals separation, disconnection, detachment, a frame signals an enclosed "space."

Moreover, although there are different standards for any artistic medium, which somehow pre-determines the material scope (frame) of the work of art, the ways in which those scopes will be utilized is a result of the artist's frame of reference and selective application of it. The "frame of reference" is obviously framed by and perceived through the "institutional frame, the perceptual frame, the semiotic frame, the gendered frame" etc (Duro, 1996, 1).

Further, frame has certain functions which can be categorized as visual, economic, symbolic, representational, narrative and rhetorical. These functions are mainly related with social conventions and spectatorship. However, above all, a frame functions to control, filter, compress, collect, reject etc. What Lebensztejn means by "invisibility," in the above quote, is that a frame only functions well when the viewer does not realize any of these acts. Again, frame is always plural, and its invisibility does not only refer to the material borders, but also to the nonphysical ones. Thus, any frame that is too visible disturbs the framing by destructing its borders, and thus by opening up the closed space that it meant to produce and control. "What has

produced and manipulated the frame puts everything to work in order to efface the frame effect, most often by naturalizing it to infinity" (Derrida, 1987, 73).

In consequence, however substantial, tangible, visible; or insubstantial, intangible, invisible the frame is, on the one hand it formulates, encloses, confines, and composes that which it surrounds, and yet, on the other hand, the frame as an entity and notion arises several questions on the stability and validity of itself.

In this regard, the cinematic frame becomes the most challenging question on the existence of a frame. Although cinema adopted a line of conduct which aims to protect the invisibility and full control of the frame, it must nonetheless continuously exceed the limits of the frame in order to be itself. As it is going to be explained in the rest of this chapter, framing in cinema is first and foremost deframing. Deframing, then, is the exposition of this fact, its statement, and its approval.

2.2 Framing and Deframing

In accordance with the above elaborations on the frame, it can be said that framing is deciding on what to include and what to exclude in the formation of a space, via the arrangement of certain borders, margins, edges, boundaries etc. Yet, while the structure would loose its integrity without its "limits," they are after all limits, which can somehow be challenged or revealed, if not completely broken down. Very basically, the space that a frame reserves for itself nonetheless communicates with other spaces in its environment. Hence, another frame can possibly enhance it, or it can connect with other frames that result in the formation of a larger frame.

Obviously, the best example and exposition of the challenging of the limits is cinema. Due to the movement inherent in it, cinema has significantly changed the vocabulary for the frame and framing and the relation between them. At any rate, the term "framing" appeared in 1923, when different experiments of editing and moving shots in cinema, as well as snapshot photography were rapidly becoming widespread (Bonitzer, 2006, 163).

The reason for the term to be found convenient for both photography and cinema can be understood when we look at the etymology of the word. As Pascal Bonitzer mentions, the verb form of framing (cadrage), *cadrer*, in French, is a term actually used in bullfighting. It means to immobilize the bull just before the finishing blow (Bonitzer, 163). As it is well known, what photography similarly does is to catch and immobilize a moment from life, in which everything continuously moves and changes, before it passes away. Likewise, cinema is a means of cutting off a piece from reality.

However, further, cinema reproduces, re-moves movement of life. For this reason, the term framing always entails the potential mobility of the frame. "Because the film image exists in time, its framing is eminently suited to be regarded as the visible embodiment of the virtual or actual mobility of the frame in general" (Aumont, 1997, 113). Therefore, in the case of photography, the mobility of the frame suggests that there is always something mobile out of it, which is made to remember by the very immobility of the shot. And in the case of cinema, although the frame looks as if it maintains the mobility of life, it is one way or another only a section, or analogy of it.

In addition, Jacques Aumont writes that:

> *Framin*g (cadrage), and 'centering' within the frame are terms often used
> interchangeably in film to designate the mental and material process which
> guides subject-spectators to a particular field of vision, seen from a certain angle
> within specific limits (Aumont, 1997, 111, original emphasis).

As he explains, the synonymous usage of framing and centering relates back to the
conception that one of the main functions of a frame is to center. This means that
although there may be a geometric centre, visual or other kind of centers in a
composition, they are after all ordered in relation to the "'absolute' centre of the
subject-spectator" (Aumont, 1997, 109). Therefore, a frame is predominantly
organized according to the frame of the supposed spectator. Obviously, this is merely
an assumption that equates the point of view of the spectator with that of the image-
maker.

Since any point of view designates subjectivity, framing then signifies a "look"
inherent in a frame: A look of the character, a look of the image-maker, a look of the
apparatus, and a look of the ideology etc. In other words, what the frame represents
is a possibility, a relative visibility in accordance with a particular look. Framing and
centering are in a way equal to each other, because the frame is a focusing of vision,
"impl[ying] a judgment about what is being represented, valuing or devaluing it,
drawing attention to a detail in the foreground, and so on" (Aumont, 1997, 115).

However, as it was mentioned earlier, cinema cannot keep the same centre forever by
its nature, but it has to re-center it again and again. Yet, the altering or redefining of

the centre does not mean that the frame is freed from the constraints of a particular viewpoint. On the contrary, the classical narrative cinema aims to strengthen the desired look in each and every shot. In this respect, even reframing serves the "absolute" framing.

What Pascal Bonitzer named "deframing" (décadrage) is an attempt to disturb this equation between framing and centering. Here, it must be maintained -and is going to be illustrated- that so as reframing, deframing is actually always inherent in cinema, but it is tried to be removed in search for, or to protect the supposed "integrity" of the image and the point of view. As it is going to explained below, it can be argued that, whereas framing is the way in which the plane of composition is formed, deframing is its mode of undoing and transformation. It reveals that the look we realize via the camera is only a possibility, only relatively visible, but absolutely invisible.

2.2.1 Pascal Bonitzer

In his book *Deframings (Décadrages)*, Pascal Bonitzer examines the usages and functions of the "frame" and "framing" in both painting and cinema, in terms of a number of implicit relations between these two fields. In this respect, in his essay of the same title, he compares and contrasts painting and cinema by giving examples of "deframing"[1] from each art, as an example of one implicit relation.

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[1] In French, *décadrage* designates the noun form of the verb *décadrer*. Yet, *deframing* refers in English both to the act of deframing and the consequently appearing *deframed frame*, or the frame that has been doing the act of deframing.

Bonitzer defines deframing as "deviant framing" (Bonitzer, 2006, 185) [2] or "the framing of a reality, a reality sublime of any solid meaning, with an arbitrary and nomadic conception" (Bonitzer, 2006, 169). However, in order to elucidate what these presently obscure statements mean, it is initially necessary to understand the concept of "off-screen"[3]; and then trace the existence of deframing in relation to its background causes or motivations, the ways in which it is exercised or unintentionally comes into being, and the effects it engenders. Because, as it is going to be specified, the concept of deframing not only has a positive relation with what is called the off-screen, which is defined by Gilles Deleuze as "what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present" *(MI*, 1989, 15), but it also reinterprets and extends the meaning of it as well.

In *Photography and Fetish*, Christian Metz touches on Bonitzer's article "Le Hors-champ Subtil"[4], in which he analyzes the differences between the photographic and cinematic off-screen spaces. As Metz cites, the filmic off-screen space is acknowledged by Bonitzer as *étoffe* (substantial), whereas the photographic off-screen space is *subtil* (subtle) (Metz, 1985, 86, original emphasis). Metz explains this classification as follows:

> In film there is a plurality of successive frames, of camera movements, and
>
> character movements, so that a person or an object which is off-frame in a given
>
> moment may appear inside the frame the moment after, then disappear again,

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[2] All the citations from Pascal Bonitzer in this thesis are my translations, since they are taken from *Kör Alan ve Dekadrajlar*, which is a Turkish translation/compilation of his two separate books, *Le Champ Aveugle* and *Décadrages.*

[3] *Off –screen, out-of-field, off-frame* or *hors-champ* are all tantamount to each other. In this thesis, the term *off-screen* will be used unless there is a quotation that includes other synonyms, since it is more convenient for film studies.

[4] This article, which has appeared in the 311 numbered edition of *Cahiers du Cinema* in May 1980 has neither English nor Turkish translations. Therefore, Bonitzer's arguments on the off-screen will be provided on the basis of Metz's "Photography and Fetish."

and so on […] The off-frame is taken into the evolutions and scansions of the temporal flow: it is off-frame, but not off-film. (Metz, 1985, 87)

As Metz demonstrates, the reason for Bonitzer to identify the filmic off-screen as substantial is due to the succession of frames in cinema, which make the audience sure that what does not appear in the frame still belongs to space of the film. In other words, the designation of an off-screen within a film is a means of creating and extending its diegetic space, since the turning of off-screen into on-screen, and the continuous cycling of this operation means that the narrative is constructed via these inside/outside relations. However, when an off-screen is designated in photography, there is no chance for the frame to reframe what it had excluded.

André Bazin similarly notifies in *What is Cinema*? that "the screen is not a frame like that of a picture, but a masque which allows only a part of the action to be seen" (Bazin, 1967, 105). Pascal Bonitzer explains Bazin's statement as follows:

The structure of the frame, the screen and the image, necessitate from the very beginning –even if it is unconscious- a selection, a differentiation between what is revealed and what is concealed; they stipulate the organization –even it is roughly sketched out- of the revealed, and the dismissal of the concealed. There is no escape from this organization, this differentiation, this selection. This is what the masqueing function of the screen means. (Bonitzer, 2006, 122-23)

Although Bonitzer does not literally mention the concept of off-screen in the essay *Deframings*, it is actually a main interest throughout the book as well; and his consideration of some paintings in the essay must be elaborated in relation to this concept. In this respect, it should be noted that painting belongs to the category of the

"subtle" as well, since as in the case of photography, its off-screen can only be imagined by the spectator, but it has no material existence within the very text.

In the essay, Bonitzer basically considers deframing in painting in relation to invisible, hidden spaces generated with "bizarre angles, arms and legs that are cut off in the foreground, scrappy reflections that haunts blurry mirrors" (Bonitzer, 2006, 181-2). He acknowledges Giovanni Battista Cremonini, Francis Bacon, Valerio Adami, Ralph Goings and Cristoforo Monary, whose deframings "transform the canvas into a mystery, into a narrative that is ceased and left in the air, and into a place of questions that will remain unanswered ad infinitum" (Bonitzer, 2006, 181).

Additionally, he describes a painting by Dino Buzatti, in which the bust of a yelling woman is depicted. The woman looks at an unknown object placed somewhere at the level of her knees. Moreover, on the canvas, -as it would be in a comic book- there is a text that says something like (as far as Bonitzer remembers) "what makes her yell like this?" As Bonitzer emphasizes, the question of the unknown object, as well as the expression that the woman's face provides are intentionally produced to be suspended; since "the image has no diachronic development [in painting]" (Bonitzer, 2006, 182).

All these cases emphasize the borders of the frame in seemingly different ways that somehow amount to the same thing. This is the fact that there is an off-screen to those borders. Thus, the above examples either directly utilize the physical margins of the frame by means of including a part of something, and placing the rest of it at the off-screen; or they form the angle of framing in such a way that the

representation accentuates something that is not presented, or only partially presented within the frame.

The main purpose of deviant framing is destroying the regular act of equating framing and point of view. As it was mentioned earlier, the traditional composition gives emphasis to what is at the centre of an image. When the central signifying objects are removed from the composition, the spectator habitually tries to fill the empty centre. As in Bonitzer's examples, if the centre is made not to be filled, the spectator directs its attention to the edges of the image. This operation points out that there is something beyond the frame that is cut off by the edges. Therefore, the frame becomes a mark of the discursive value of the image. It signifies that centering can take place at some other place outside the maker's point of view.

Moreover, what Bonitzer actually identifies as the inventor of "empty spaces, bizarre angles, and body parts which are seen in the foreground" is not painting, but cinema. However, he adds at once that unlike the examples from painting he mentions, all of these "emptiness effects" are tried to be removed in cinema. In other words, although "to break the figures into pieces" or "the uncanny state of close-ups" are especially cinematic effects; whenever there happens to be such framings that call forth an off-screen, a reframing follows in order to close the emergent gap (Bonitzer, 2006, 182).

> Yet, in cinema (and in comic books that imitate its principle), there is a reframing, a reverse shot, a pan etc. supplying the reason of this terror, removing the curiosity that the pruned scene aroused, and even an opportunity of responding the challenge of the gap opened up by the mystery –and, if the creator does not wish to be accused of intentionally nourishing the

disappointment of the spectator, there is indeed a compulsion-: by closing the

gap, i.e. producing a satisfactory reason, which will truly allow the spectator to

feel the terror. *Suspense* is to postpone this satisfaction, in order to nurture it

later. (Bonitzer, 2006, 182-83)

Obviously, in this passage Bonitzer mainly refers to mainstream modes of representation for the present, i.e. those which compose the narrative via the systems of suturing. But there are also other cases in which the gaps are not closed, or reframing is not made with narrative purposes. This point is what actually interests Bonitzer, and in this context, he refers Robert Bresson, Jean-Marie Straub, Marguerite Duras and Michelangelo Antonioni, who provide cinema with a "non-narrative suspense" (Bonitzer, 2006, 183). According to Bonitzer, similar to their painter counterparts, the expression of these directors does not aim to close the gaps with the rules of continuity; but they prefer to reveal the gaps and to suspend the tension forever. Therefore, it can be said that these directors form somewhat *subtle* off-screens.

At this point, it should be stressed that Bonitzer does not simply concedes the act of designating an off-screen in painting as deframing; but he talks about bizarre angles, or empty spaces within the frame as well, which insistently imply some kind of mystery, invisibility, absence etc. Similarly, for cinema, what he considers as deframing is a kind of framing which is not reframed and therefore not deprived of its off-screen, or which is something that resists the consecutive reframing. This might appear as an ambiguity at the first sight. However, it should not be forgotten that any framing –whether in painting, cinema, photography, architecture or whatsoever- simultaneously determines an outside field to its borders. In cinema, this

is much stronger since it depends on movement. Any frame, shot, and scene already deframes the previous in order for the movement to take place. Because of this, the way in which the off-screen is designated must escape reframing, and similarly, the off-screen must be a resisting one.

Moreover, in cinema, deframing inevitably gains meanings different from painting. While deframing results in a single deframed frame in painting, cinema by its nature cannot offer a single deframed frame unless there is a long shot. In this case, cinema can said to be obliged to reinterpret the function of deframing in painting, by allowing it to survive in the requirements of movement. In other words, while the spectator has no chance to reframe the deframed frame in painting, their desire to do so can be fulfilled in sequential arts and cinema due to their sequentiality. A constant reframing takes places in both of these fields. As a result, the effect of deframing becomes stronger in sequential art and cinema, since it is very difficult to reach this effect in them. Therefore, deframing is always an intentional stylistic or ideological method of escaping the conventional representational regimes.

At any rate, at the end of his article, Bonitzer extends his argument by counting any "subversion of viewpoint and position" (Bonitzer, 2006, 187) -which he considers as the power of cinema- as deframing. For instance, he illustrates Godard's video traces that he adds to the surface of the screen; his lines and movements that corrupt the sovereignty of the gaze; and his frames that bring about a certain sense of duration. In this case, Bonitzer mentions deframing not only as being "disruptive and divisive," but also as "duplicating and fabricating new arrangements" (Bonitzer, 2006, 187).

2.2.2 Gilles Deleuze

Gilles Deleuze mentions the concepts of framing and deframing in both of the volumes of his well-known work on cinema. In the second chapter of C*inema I: The Movement Image*, he analyzes the two aspects of off-screen, only one of which he associates with deframing. Since his arguments extend the context of framing and deframing, it will hence be meaningful to continue with Deleuze.

First of all, although he reserves the right to correct his definition later, he basically defines "framing" as "*the determination of a closed system, a relatively closed system which includes everything which is present in the image*—sets, characters and props" (*MI*, 1989, 12, original emphasis). In this respect, he ascertains four postulations on the characteristics of the frame. In the last one, he talks about Bonitzer's concept of deframing*,* and then establishes the relationship between deframing and off-screen.

1. The frame is a "set" that contains various "elements," which also make up "sub-sets." These elements are "data [données]," whose quantity leads the set "towards saturation or towards rarefaction." However rare are the things in an image, what the frame teaches us is the fact that the image is not linguistic, but it is informative. It is not "just given to be seen" but to be read appropriately. The data within the set does not necessarily form sub-sets. Yet, when it does form sub-sets, these can either be "independent," meaning identifiable, or totally be absorbed within the main set, interfering with each other sub-set. Therefore, although the main set is a "closed

system," the sub-sets it accommodates are not necessarily as closed as it is (*MI*, 1989, 12-13).

2. The "closed system" that the frame generates is either "geometrical" or "physical." In the former, the frame is constituted "in relation to chosen coordinates," meaning that the elements of a set are located within it according to a pre-determined "spatial composition of parallels and diagonals," in such a manner that the movement of the elements will not disturb this pre-determined order. In the latter, the frame is constituted "in relation to selected variables," meaning that the frame becomes a dynamic entity, that adjusts itself according to the elements –the scene, the image, the characters, the objects, the theme etc.- that fill it. "In any case, framing is limitation. But, depending on the concept itself the limits can be conceived in two ways, mathematically or dynamically: they fix, or going as far as the power of existing bodies goes" (*MI*, 1989, 13).

3. The frame is geometrical or physical in a different way. This time, the former indicates the "geometrical distinctions" that the elements themselves produce -such as walls, ramparts, gates, bodies; light and shadow; sky and earth; black and white etc. Therefore, the sub-sets within the main set are constantly divided and joined at the same time. The latter is related to "physical gradations" that produce "imprecise sets," rather than geometrical distinctions. In this case, the set is "'dividual' [*dividuel*]," meaning "neither divisible, nor indivisible." Therefore, "the frame ensures a deterritorialization of the image" (*MI*, 1989, 13-14). This dual functioning of the frame is not a paradoxical situation. Because, on the one hand, it is always possible to identify several independent frames within the closed system. Yet, since

the very existence of the closed system is about keeping its elements together in order to supply its own survival, it has to make them communicate at the same time.

4. The frame is related with the angle it makes use of, since a frame denotes a "point of view" under all circumstances. Yet, if the angle or point of view is "bizarre or paradoxical," it must be pragmatically justified or normalized by providing the reason of this peculiar framing with another angle or a previously invisible element. However, sometimes pragmatic justification is not valid, or not sufficient. These occasions are what Bonitzer already pointed out as the reframing of the off-screen in opposition to deframing, which either intentionally or inherently deny any narrative or scenographic justification (*MI*, 1989, 15).

Deleuze mentions Bonitzer's concept of deframing at this point as "abnormal points of view which […] refer to another dimension of the image" (*MI,* 1989, 15), and this brings him to two different aspects of the off-screen.

As it can be predicted, one aspect of the off-screen is related to framing in general, since each and every frame determines an off-screen as it was mentioned before. But deframing as a mode of framing also determines another kind of off-screen. Deleuze identifies the former situation as the "relative aspect" of the off-screen, and the latter as the "absolute aspect" of the off-screen.

The first aspect is relative because when a set is connected with another set that is previously not seen, such a justification results in the introduction of a larger set, which carries with it a new unseen set, and this process proceeds on to infinity. In

this case, the relative aspect reveals that a set is always related to other sets in space and time, meaning that, "[e]very closed system also communicates" (*MI*, 1989, 16-17). What emerges out of these communications is "the adding of space to space" (*MI*, 1989, 17), since the on/off-screen combinations create and extend the diegetic space of the film as it was shown earlier.

Furthermore, Deleuze alerts the reader that although the all encompassing set, within which all these relations take part, forms a "homogenous continuity," it should not be assumed as a "whole" (*MI*, 1989, 16).

> We know the insoluble contradictions we fall when we treat the set of all sets as a whole. It is not because the notion of the whole is devoid of sense; but it is not a set and does not have parts. It is rather that which prevents each set, however big it is, from closing in on itself, and that which forces it to extend itself into a larger set. The whole is therefore thread which traverses sets and gives each one the possibility, which is necessarily realized, of communication with another, to infinity. Thus the whole is the Open, and relates back to time or even to spirit rather than to content and space (*MI*, 1989, 16-17).

What Deleuze remarks as the Whole[5] is actually "duration" that undergoes a change after movement, which he posits as a mobile section of duration. He demonstrates this phenomenon by giving the well-known example of Bergson: A sugar placed in a cup of water, which translates "sugar plus water" into "sugared water." Here, movement has to aspects: the relation between the parts of the set (sugar, water, glass), and the qualitative change this relation causes in the Whole (sugared water, or

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[5] Deleuze shifts between an upper case W, and a lower case one for several times. Perhaps, the upper case indicates a completed text, while the lower case indicates a text that is still in the process of change.

water becoming sugared). In this case, as he argues, the Whole cannot be determined, and it is Open, since it consists of change and flux. Regarding film, it is the Whole as such, whose meaning is never closed (*MI,* 1989, 8). On the one hand, it is the combination of relative relations among its sub-sets; on the other, it is the absolute affection of the whole.

In this case, the relative aspect of the off-screen signifies the relations of the sets and sub-sets in a particular content, which consequently transform the Whole. Therefore, the closed sets and the Whole inform each other. Besides, what Deleuze identifies as the "absolute aspect" of the off-screen directly refers to the Whole, the Open. As such, it is even the "opening of the whole." Because, unlike the relative aspect of the off-screen, which designates an elsewhere that can successively be seen, the absolute aspect of the off-screen designates a "more radical Elsewhere," "which testifies to a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to 'insist' or 'subsist' […] outside homogenous space and time." (*MI,* 1989, 17) In this circumstance, rather than "adding of space to space," the off-screen introduces "the transspatial and the spiritual into the system which is never perfectly closed" (*MI,* 1989, 17). It becomes discontinuous and heterogeneous to that of the screen.

As it can be anticipated, Deleuze states that the absolute aspect of the off-screen is expressed in deframes that are not pragmatically justified. In this respect, he argues that deframing establishes a "virtual relation with the whole," and it is different from the "actualisable relation with other sets," which is the relative aspect of the off-screen. In order to illustrate how, Deleuze notifies that the more the frame is spatially closed, and even when any off-screen can hardly be imagined, the more the Whole is

felt. This effect is an ambiguous one, yet it can be illustrated with an example. For instance, if a frame allows the audience to solely focus on the in-screen with a close-up of a body part that is not pragmatically justified with reframing the rest of the body, this somehow emphasizes the fact that this in-screen must be part of another Whole, which is not merely the body as such. Because, since the frame does not give a clue that permits the audience to guess the off-screen with a narrative continuity, it strengthens the idea of a Whole, into which this frame must be integrated.

Finally, Deleuze argues that the two aspects of the off-screen interact constantly and the relative aspect of the off-screen ultimately does reach the absolute aspect as well. This happens to be so as a result of the succession of images, by which the sets continuously extend in themselves, and consequently reach the absolute aspect of the off-screen. However, this is a very indirect effect contrary to immediate deframing, which takes place directly in the image itself.

In *Cinema II: The Time Image,* Deleuze draws upon the concept of deframing this time in another context. Here, it is closely related with the shift from "movement-image" to "time-image." While the former is mainly referring to classical narrative cinema, in which the duration of the story is created indirectly through images that influence each other, the latter supplies the durational entirety directly within each image. In other words, unlike the succession of movement-images, the time-images are not connected to each other, and each shot is "deframed in relation to the framing of the following shot" (*TI*, 1989, 214).

This time, he identifies deframing as implying a deviation, or alteration of the text. Because, contrary to Eisensteinian montage that aimed to reflect the process of thought, the irrational cut, and independent images of modern cinema, each deframing the previous, produce a kind of space between images wherein thought is created and induced. "The outside or obverse of the images has replaced the whole, at the same time as the interstice or the cut has replaced association" (*TI*, 1989, 214).

As Deleuze argues, what the time-images produce is a "cinema of accumulation" as opposed to the "cinema of narration." It is the "irrational cuts" of non-linked images and sounds, which ultimately relink independent images, rather than association through metaphor or metonymy (*TI*, 1989, 214). It is in their accumulation that they create their own context as well as open readings, both as images on their own and as juxtapositions.

2.2.3 Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida offers a philosophical "deconstructive" engagement of the concept of frame in an essay titled "Parergon," which is a chapter of his book, *Truth in Painting.* Derrida borrows the term from Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment.* It literally means "outside the work." In fact, what Derrida questions via this term is not only the Kantian discourse, but also the "framing of aesthetics" as such: how it defines itself, marks its borders, and distinguishes itself from other forms of philosophical inquiry.

Similarly, parergon is only a "peripheral example" for Kant in his attempt to distinguish the boundaries of the artistic object, with the initial purpose to describe

the basic constituencies of aesthetic judgment. In Kant's view, parergon refers not only to the frame, but also to other elements within a painting, such as draperies on human figures or columns of the palaces. Moreover, it is secondary or supplementary to the work (*ergon*), as "mere ornamentation" that can be detached from the essence of the work of art. In this case, Kant acknowledges not only the frame surrounding a painting, but also some other elements within it as exterior to and inessential for the essence of the work of art.

Yet, as Derrida illustrates, the example of parergon offered by Kant is in fact a matter of separating inside from outside, which turns out to be a problematic operation. For instance, if the frame of a painting is considered to be superfluous and exclusive to it, this would also mean an undermining of its function – that of constituting the artwork by framing it. Therefore, if the frame constitutes the painting, is it a part of it, or still outside of it? According to Derrida, these questions make one gradually arrive at the "insistent atopia" of the parergon, which is a recurrent problematic not only in the Kantian discourse, but in any discussion of aesthetics and all philosophical discourse on art. Derrida writes:

> Neither work (ergon) nor outside the work, neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work. It is no longer merely around the work. That which it puts in place – the instances of the frame, the title, the signature, the legend, etc. – does not stop disturbing the *internal* order of discourse on painting, its works, its commerce, its evaluations, its surplus - values, its speculation, its law, and its hierarchies. (Derrida, 1987, 9)

Thus, although Kant refers to parergon in order to determine what can be counted as an artistic object, such an endeavor of determination points out all other philosophical oppositions, which Derrida aims to reveal and confront. Because, when simplified to the extreme, Derrida's philosophy can be said to be a method aiming a resistance and attack to what has been constructed, and therefore a tendency towards discovery, by means of exposing the naked ground of a construction on which something new can be built. Thus, deconstruction, one way or another, is primarily to question and shake the foundations of several "frames." At any rate, being Derrida's main interrogations, ethnocentrism, logocentrism, phonocentrism, metaphysics, ontotheology, and the concept of science are all frames that centralize certain ideas by enclosing them via borders that exclude others.

Derrida identifies the system of thought common to Western metaphysical tradition as logocentric in the sense that it always locates the "center" of any text or discourse within the "logos" (meaning word, reason, or spirit). The outside of the center, therefore, is always externalized and hierarchically subordinated via several binarisms. According to Derrida, however, any concept can only function because of its opposite, which is regularly presented as harmful, deficient or secondary by the Western metaphysical tradition.

By this critique of "metaphysics of presence," Derrida actually challenges the principle of "noncontradiction," which somehow constitutes the very basis of intellectual disciplines and the possibility of a unified expression. He shows that every concept "depends for its existence on that which it is *not*" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 7, original emphasis), though the other is repressed, excluded or relegated to

secondary positions so far. In other words, there is no one "originary presence," which is not traced by an absence at the same time.

Exemplified by *différance*, deconstruction is not only a critique but also a practice. In other words, deconstruction unpacks logocentrism and displaces the hierarchies by playing on the "margins," without at the same time imposing a new set of hierarchies or repeating the same binary structures.

As is can be anticipated, deconstruction and deframing can be considered as "doubles," since both of them attempt to reveal the margins of a frame and how it constructs the concurrent binary opposition of inside/outside. As it was explained above, deframing is not a repetition of cinema's inevitable modes of deframing, but it is its insistent practice, which aims not to reframe or define any new frame. Like deconstruction, deframing emphasizes that what is invisible, hidden, or lacking is actually a possibility, veiled by the granted centering of the frame.

This significant relation between deconstruction and deframing has not truly been remarked, since Derrida's thoughts are not applied in film studies. In an attempt to do so, Peter Brunette and David Wills analyzed Derridean thought in order for them to shed a light on film and film studies in *Screen/Play: Derrida and Film Theory*. In a chapter titled "The Frame of the Frame," they analyze the film frame in terms of Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of parergon. Besides, Brunette and Wills had mostly dealt with deconstructing film theory, rather than particular film texts. However, some of the points that are useful for this thesis will briefly be mentioned.

First of all, they identify that the film frame functions via "invagination," which

> is one of the terms […] for deconstructing the fundamental division between inside and outside […] since the vagina […] can be seen in a sense as exterior tissue that has been folded inside, and thus as exterior and interior at the same time […] This internalized pocket of externality can in fact be larger than the exterior that is said to enclose it. The concept can be applied to film by considering that genre distinctions are usually seen as existing *outside* or drawing their definition from *outside* the individual film, but actually always *inside* it at the same time through citation and reference and through each text's individual semiotic functioning, which must always apply to a code that exists without. (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 46, original emphasis)

In this respect, Brunette and Wills state that the outside of a film text is always folded into the inside of it, and therefore the inside is always larger than it is assumed to be. Here, what the outside designates is "real life, the mirror, consciousness, desire, film history, genre conventions, a society's culture, and so on" (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 105). Similarly, there is no such thing as a purely cinematic code, since cinema borrows its narrative structures mainly from literature and theatre. Since any film text intentionally or by obligation cites from many of these sources, the assumption that the film text is an integral entity with an identifiable closed frame becomes irrelevant. Any framing, therefore, turns out to be a deframing that somehow refers to an absolute off-screen space.

Further, Brunette and Wills bring film into the domain of the "textual" with respect to Derrida's understanding of "writing" as representing otherness in general. Writing is considered to be an imitative, altered form of the natural language, which is

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speech. As Derrida argues, the spoken word has always stood in relation to truth, since the "presence" of the speaker is considered as supplying immediacy. In other words, speech is acknowledged as providing a whole, coherent meaning, whereas writing is considered as supplementary or subordinate to speech, with the belief that the "absence" of the writer while reading results in an inherent, indirect, mediated meaning.

Derrida disturbed this hierarchy between speech and writing, by demonstrating that there is no central, originary meaning, and speech is as mediated as writing as well. Brunette and Wills, then, applied this deconstructive reading into film studies:

> In the case of cinema, its 'writenness' simply seems less obvious because it is received as still more natural and direct than speech. Verbal expression, for one thing, obviously manifests itself in many different registers, as well as different languages, and does seem to require at least a modification of 'effort,' whereas watching a film seems to require no effort at all. From this point of view, the visual occupies a position of primacy with respect to the verbal similar to that which speech occupies with respect to the written. (Brunette & Wills, 1989, 61-62)

Therefore, one of the effects that take place once we consider "film as writing" is the deconstruction of the visual's position of primacy before the verbal. Besides, when the visual is made to be understood as incoherent and as mediated as writing, it is no longer relevant to look for the meaning in the centrality of the film text. On the contrary, meaning comes to reside "elsewhere": at the margins, both in and out of itself.

3. FRAMING AND DEFRAMING IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

V FOR VENDETTA

The mimema as a thing is a sort of vehicle for 'man-made

dreams produced for those who are awake.'

Plato

3.1 The Graphic Novel V for Vendetta

V for Vendetta is a comic book series written by Alan Moore and illustrated by David Lloyd. Its first episodes were originally published in black-and-white between 1982 and 1985 in *Warrior*, a British anthology comic published by *Quality Comics*. After the cancellation of Warrior in 1985, *DC Comics* published a compilation that reprinted the Warrior stories this time in color in 1988, and then completed the episodes that remained unpublished due to the cancellation. In this new edition, Tony Weare drew the chapter "Vincent" and also contributed the chapters "Valerie" and "The Vacation"; while Steve Whitaker and Siobhan Dodds worked as colorists on the entire series. The series, including Alan Moore's "Behind the Painted Smile" essay and two interludes outside the central continuity, was then collected as a "graphic novel"[6], and published in the United States by DC Comics' *Vertigo* imprint.

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[6] This thesis will draw upon the graphic novel imprint as its source.

VfV is set in a dystopian future in Britain, imagined from the 1980s about the 1990s, which is ruled by an extreme fascist party called "Norsefire." The story takes place after an international nuclear war that indirectly but severely affected the United Kingdom. "V," the mysterious anarchist vigilante dressed in a "Guy Fawkes" masque, designs an extended plan that turns his personal vendetta[7] of being victimized by the totalitarian government, into a social revolution that aims to bring it down. In the meantime, "Evey," the other main character of the story, encounters V. She goes through an experience that significantly changes her life and eventually makes her V's successor.

One of the major influences on the work was the political and cultural climate of Britain in the early 1980's, as indicated in the prefaces Llyod and Moore wrote separately for *VfV,* as well as in Moore's essay *BPS*. In this regard, the course of Llyod's preface follows as a critique against the "cheeky, cheery" (*VfV*, 1989, 5) contents of the British televisions, and the audiences who like to watch them. In his final sentence, he states that "there aren't many cheeky, cheery characters in V FOR VENDETTA […]; and it's for people who don't switch off the News" (*VfV*, 1989, 5, original emphasis).

On the one hand, Moore posits in *BPS* that the historical background of the story was the prediction that Margeret Thatcher's Conservative government would lose the 1982 elections; the Labour Party that replaced it would allow Britain to largely escape from a nuclear war; and yet, this post-holocaust situation would be taken over

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[7] Historically, the word "vendetta" has been used to mean a blood feud. The word is Italian, and originates from the Latin "vindicta," "vengeance." In modern times, the word is sometimes extended to mean any other long-standing feud, not necessarily involving bloodshed.

by fascists in the 1990's (*BPS*, 1989, 271). However, since Moore's predictions had turned out to be unlikely, he stated in his preface that:

> Naiveté can also be detected in my supposition that it would take something as melodramatic as a near-miss nuclear conflict to nudge England towards fascism. Although in fairness to myself and David, there were no better or more accurate predictions of our country's future available in comic form at that time. The simple fact that much of the historical background of the story proceeds from a predicted conservative defeat in the 1982 General Election should tell you how reliable we were in our roles as Cassandras. (*VfV*, 1989, 6)

On the other hand, as Moore indicates in *BPS*, what he wanted to bring into the plot were: George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, Thomas Disch, Judge Dredd, Harlan Ellison's "*Repent, Harlequin!" Said the Ticktockman*, *Catman* and *The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World*, Vincent Price's *Dr. Phibes* and *Theatre of Blood*, David Bowie, *The Shadow, Night Raven, Batman*, *Fahrenheit 451*, the writings of the New Worlds school of science fiction, Max Ernst's painting *Europe After the Rain*, Thomas Pynchon, the atmosphere of British Second World War films, *The Prisoner*, Robin Hood and Dick Turpin (*VfV*, 1989, 270).

In fact, the sources that the story of *VfV* refers turned out to be much more than Moore had mentioned in his essay. There are a myriad of other references made from painting, literature, cinema, theatre, poetry, music, religion, political history, chemistry, botany and so forth. Possibly, not only the strength of the story and its political stance, but also the richness of content in *VfV* inspired many music groups and it is adapted both into theatre and cinema. *Pop Will Eat Itself, Jacosta, Def Con Dos* and *7th Son* are all bands, which directly named their songs in relation to *VfV*, or

referenced it in their lyrics. *Shadow Gallery*, a progressive metal group, takes its name directly from V's lair which is called the same. Besides, a Swedish production company called *Stockholms Blodbad* staged a theatrical adaptation of the graphic novel in 2000, under the title *The Land Where You Do As You Please,* which is the name of a novel by Enid Blyton and the third book of the graphic novel.

3.2 The Frame and Framing in the Graphic Novel V for Vendetta

In the graphic novel *VfV*, Norsefire is the right-wing political party that rules the United Kingdom. The name of it probably alludes to the Nazi Party and/or the National Front. According to the story, the party comes to power by taking improper advantage of Britain's post-holocaust state: In 1980's, the Labour Party wins the elections. However, an international nuclear war outside Britain has knock-on-effects on the country's economy. Due to environmental pollution and climate change, decline of agriculture, lack of food, diseases, mass riots, and the consecutive chaotic atmosphere, the government collapses and the fascist Norsefire regime comes to power.

Norsefire unites with the surviving big companies, influences the Church, takes over the media and establishes Norsefire Television (NTV), and finally creates a closely-monitored society with a high level of surveillance and thus no individual privacy. Under the guise of "order" and a "clean" society, the party also sends blacks, Pakistanis, radicals and homosexuals to concentration camps, and makes medical experiments on them.

In addition, "Fate" is the name of the state's computer system. Adam J. Susan (also called as The Leader), who is the new Prime Minister of Britain and the head of the fascist party is bodily and emotionally attached to this computer system. He reckons it as his "godlike bride." A firm believer of pure fascism, Adam J. Susan values survival, strength and unity above everything, and sees freedom and individual liberty as unnecessary luxuries. Further, he is a Neo-Nazi fanatic who despises anyone who is not white, Christian and heterosexual, stating that he believes in "the destiny of the Nordic race" (*VfV*, 1989, 37).

In accordance with Susan's principles, we see a poster in one of the scenes hung on a wall saying "strength through purity, purity through faith" (*VfV*, 1989, 11). This slogan is an allusion to George Orwell's one of the three super-states "Oceania" in his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*, across which a similar slogan is displayed prominently: "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" (Orwell, 2000, 1). In the novel, this is the slogan of the Party and it is written on the building of the "Ministry of Truth." This ministry actually does the opposite of what its name implies: It is responsible for the falsification of historical events in accordance with the Party doctrine, and is involved in news, entertainment and the fine arts.

Similarly, the role of propaganda is a very significant tool by which Norsefire creates and sustains the poor quality of life by conditioning the masses to believe that society is proper and just. In this respect, Lewis Prothero serves the government by broadcasting the commanded propaganda as the "Voice of Fate." The idea behind this is to make people believe that it is really Fate who is speaking, and thus give them confidence by making "Fate appear more human" (*VfV*, 1989, 17).

"The Voice," one of the section headings of the graphic novel, therefore symbolizes the frame through which the public is made to believe in a government employee, as if he was really fate. This auditory frame actually is enframed by a larger one, since it represents one of the institutions of the State. Common to the characteristics of corporatism, society is illustrated as fully identical with the State, as well as being a body with different institutions as its organs. As it is depicted in the graphic novel, the surveillance organizations are "The Ears" and "The Eye," the police is "The Nose," the secret police is "The Finger," and the media, which is under the control of the state is "The Mouth." Voice of Fate is one of the strongest weapons of "Ministry of Propaganda," which is a division of The Mouth.

We are reminded here of Lebensztejn and Derrida on the "invisibility" of the frame. It can be argued that Norsefire exploits the "controlling" function of the frame to the outmost extent. Its administration depends on a very "well and closely framed" society, in which there is almost no possibility for the public to escape or even realize the borders that they are surrounded with.

In accordance, besides surveillance and propaganda, prohibition is an important tool for Norsefire to control the masses. We understand this when Evey comes to V's lair and there encounters with are a myriad of books and music. She says in surprise: "It's unbelievable! All of these paintings and books… I didn't even know there *were* things like this. All I've ever heard is the military stuff they play on the *radio*" (*VfV*, 1989, 18, original emphasis). V replies her in this way: "You couldn't be expected to know. They have *eradicated* culture […] They eradicated *some* cultures more thoroughly than they did others" (*VfV*, 1989, 18-19, original emphasis).

In addition to "eradicating culture," Norsefire regime actually "eradicates history" as well. The previously mentioned "dark past" of the Party is not even known by the state's police and the leading government figures. Moreover, the present is hidden from the people as well, since the government continuously attempts to cover the truths about the key events taking place in the country (especially the V case), by falsifying or writing scenarios on them.

Where the public resides in the graphic novel, therefore, is the very outside of reality, history, life etc., which are all together externalized and hidden by the only available frame, which designates the point of view of the Party. Evidently, this point of view happens to be the absolute centre of the fascist ideology, which determines false or partial representations for each and every aspect of life. In this regard, British people are mere spectators with no free will/view at all.

3.3 Deframing in the Graphic Novel V for Vendetta

After V's "terrorist" attacks begin to shake the firmly established frame of the state, as the population grows to identify with V and question the oppression they live under, the government tries anything to reframe it. However, the more it tries to sustain the "invisibility" of the fascist frame, the more the government's veils reveal themselves. V, ironically covered in a masque, disturbs the masquerading function of the frame via certain methods, and show people that they are off-the-screen.

3.3.1 Rewriting History

Guy Fawkes (13 April 1570 – 31 January 1606) was an English military man and a member of a group of Roman Catholics, who attempted to carry out "The

Gunpowder Plot" on 5 November 1605. The Gunpowder Plot was a plan to assassinate the Protestant King James I (James VI of Scotland), his family, and most of the Protestant aristocracy, by blowing up the Houses of Parliament during its annual opening session. The plotters' aim was a revolution in the government of England, which would have killed the King along with leading noblemen, and would have led to the installation of a Catholic monarch (Fraser, 1997, 9-10).

However, the plan was detected before its completion, and Fawkes was found guilty of executing it. As a consequence, he and his co-conspirators were punished to be "hanged, drawn and quartered" for treason and attempting murder. When Fawkes was to be hanged until almost dead, he jumped from the gallows, thus his neck broke and he died. In this way, he at least avoided the horrific final part of this form of execution (Fraser, 1997, 9-10).

Every year on November 5, the Gunpowder Plot's failure is celebrated with fireworks as a condemnation in the name of "Guy Fawkes Night" (also known as Bonfire Night or Fireworks Night), in the United Kingdom, other Commonwealth countries and regions, and Australia. Besides, it is the custom for children to make effigies of Fawkes, equipped with a grotesque masque, to be burnt on the November 5 bonfire (Haynes, 1996, 18).

The time of the story of *VfV* begins in 5 November 1997, i.e. on the 392nd anniversary of Guy Fawkes Night. We see Evey Hammond and V dressing separately in their rooms. While V puts a Guy Fawkes masque on, the graphic novel not only establishes its first significant relation between V and Fawkes, but it also

refs Guy Fawkes Night, since similar masques are traditionally burnt in this event as it was mentioned above.

Not much later in the story, V rescues Evey from Fingermen, who are about to rape her after arresting her for prostitution, by using his warfare skills and a tear gas. Afterwards, V tells Evey that, that night is "special," since it is a "celebration" and a "grand opening," and he asks her if she does not remember the traditional English rhyme (*VfV*, 1998, 13):

> Remember, remember
>
> The 5th of November
>
> The gunpowder treason and plot
>
> I know of no reason
>
> Why the gunpowder treason
>
> Should ever be forgot (*VfV*, 1998, 14)

As soon as V utters the very last words of the rhyme, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament blow up. V states Evey that he is responsible for the incident and that there is more. He means the following fireworks that form the shape of a "V." This depiction apparently refers the common practice of exploding fireworks for celebration on Guy Fawkes Night. Moreover, Evey and his locations are also remarkable: They stand opposing to the Parliament building, which is the same location that Fawkes was hanged.

This scene is significant, since it represents V's succession in doing what Fawkes had failed. In other words, V takes the idea/l of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot

as a model for initiating his own plot. Destroying the government, which is a consequence of several other plans, actually takes place towards the end of the story. Still, it can be argued that V completes Fawkes' idea/l by achieving to blow up the Parliament. Therefore, it can also be argued that V not only rewrites the historical event by holding and completing this idea/l, but also its condemnation with the Guy Fawkes Night, by turning it into a celebration.

Hence, the historical reference to Guy Fawkes Night and its condemnation points out some important points on reframing, deframing and the relation between the two. Firstly, it reveals that "celebration" and "condemnation" are two views of commemoration. Each one of them is a conditional viewpoint on history, which closes the eyes to the "other." History, therefore, is given only as a "story" that is told through a particular frame –considerably centered according to "an" eye that determines "a" certain visibility. In this case, when V rewrites history by completely changing its perception, what he does is essentially apperceiving history, above the limits it is taken for granted. Thus, he not only reframes, but also deframes history by supplying people with a sustained look outside the margins of the picture.

Accordingly, one year later at the time of the story, V once more makes people remember Guy Fawkes by broadcasting a speech from the state radio by taking hold of the Voice of Fate. In the name of Fate, he announces that all the surveillance systems will be shut for three days:

> Almost four hundred years ago tonight, a great citizen made a most significant
> contribution to our common culture. It was a contribution forged in stealth and
> silence and secrecy, although it is best remembered in noise and bright night. To

commemorate this most glorious of evenings, her majesty's government is pleased
to return the rights of secrecy and privacy to you, its loyal subjects (*VfV*, 1998,
187).

In V's plan, the mentioned three days are a means to create "chaos," which is the
precondition to reach the true anarchist state. In this case, and in V's terms, referring
history is not a means to indicate the past, but the future as well. At any rate,
common to the characteristics of dystopian fiction, *VfV* is a warning and satire that
show current trends estimated to a nightmarish future. Obviously, the futuristic
portrayal of the story has strong parallels with the past as well, such as the Nazi
Germany. Yet, in any case, the story aims a social critique at totalitarian societies,
either originating from the past or the present.

Moreover, the end of *VfV* turns the dystopian story into a utopia, since although
anarchy does not fully take place (the story ends at the point of chaos), the nearness
to an anarchist state can easily be considered as a utopia. For the destruction of the
totalitarian order creates a possibility for people to reframe a new society, whether be
it anarchist or not. Therefore, as Michel Foucault argues:

> [U]topian and dystopian visions are not necessarily diametrical opposites […]
> Utopian visions of an ideal society often inherently suggest a criticism of the
> current order of things as nonideal, while dystopian warning of the dangers of
> 'bad' utopias still allow for the possibility of 'good' utopias, especially since
> dystopian societies are generally more or less thinly veiled refigurations of a
> situation that already exist in reality. Moreover, dystopian critiques of existing
> systems would be pointless unless a better system appeared conceivable. One

might, in fact, see dystopian and utopian visions not as fundamentally opposed

but as very much part of the same project. (qtd. in Booker, 1994, 15)

In this regard, the reference to Guy Fawkes in *VfV* can be read as a past coming from future. Guy Fawkes and his-tory is past, but only in terms of a future that it means to generate. Thus, not only the character V in relation with the story, but also the text *VfV* as such offers an understanding of deframing as a way of enhancing the borders of history. At any rate, the above mentioned political influences of the work signify a new perception of Guy Fawkes and his-tory (This point is going to be analyzed later in this thesis).

3.3.2 Anarchy

There are very different forms and traditions of anarchism, which in some points correspond, and in some others oppose to each other. However, a basic commonality that might prove true for all types of anarchism is that it is, in someway or another, to be against all kinds of rulership and hierarchy. As Paul Eltzbaher points, the etymology of the word "anarchy" suggests that it

does not mean simply opposed to the *archos,* or political leader. It means opposed to *archē*. Now, *arch,* in the first instance, means beginning, origin. From this it comes to mean a *first principle, an element*; then *first place, supreme power, sovereignty, dominion, command, authority*; and finally *a sovereignty, an empire, a realm, a magistracy, a governmental office*. (qtd. in Weir 11, 1997, original emphasis)

Interestingly, this is also where deconstruction comes in. As it was mentioned in the second chapter, what Jacques Derrida, the leading figure of deconstruction, had

demonstrated was that in Western metaphysics, any system posits an origin, a center, from which everything arrives, and to which everything returns. Whatever this originary presence is, what deconstruction aims to deconstruct is first and foremost the privileged status of it, and later the hierarchical binary oppositions that it means to produce. Again, it was illustrated that deframing correspondingly aims to shake the primacy of the center, and replace it with the margins. Therefore, along with deconstruction and deframing, "anarchy" can easily be considered as having a family resemblance with the semantic field of terminology of "de-…" as well.

In addition, in order to deconstruct, or to deframe anything, it is obviously essential to know the originary frame very well.

> Something has been constructed, a philosophical system, a tradition, a culture, and along comes a deconstructer (who) destroys it stone by stone, analyses the structure and dissolves it […] One looks at a system […] and examines how it was built, which keystone, which angle […] supports the building; one shifts them and thereby frees oneself from the authority of the system. (Wigley, 1989, 17)

In the graphic novel *VfV*, it can be observed that V knows the frame of the government exactly as the above quote mentions. Therefore, the means V chooses for the end makes him fairly accomplish his purpose. Actually, if a truly anarchist state was taken as V's final purpose, it would be meaningless to say that he accomplished it. However, what V actually aims to do is to bring the public into the phase between fascism and anarchy, "Verwirrung," a German word meaning "confusion," or "chaos," and thus leave them a change to decide for their future -only "preferably" an anarchist state.

In this case, similar to deconstruction, anarchy as proposed by V is not a means of coming up with a new government claiming sovereignty over people. It is rather based on the idea that the old society has to be declined before a new one can be built upon.[8] In this case, the ideal act of anarchy should not assert or perform a reframing/reconstructing, but it has to reside on deframing/deconstructing. Following this trace, deframing as depicted by the graphic novel is also a means of revealing the previously framed frame, which is the government's authoritarian frame.

In his attempt of deframing, V firstly blows up the Houses of Parliament and the Big Ben, which was beforehand considered as rewriting history. After this attack, the Leader yells to the head of the Finger as: "your incompetence has cost us our oldest *symbol* of authority and a jarring *propaganda* defeat." (*VfV* 16, 1998, emphasis mine) On the other hand, although V has a personal revenge to be taken from all the people he kills, they are also strategically very important people for the process of "manipulating" the public. For instance, Lewis Prothero is again a "symbol" (of Fate), and Bishop Anthony Lilliman represents Party in the clergy and directs the religious "propaganda." Therefore, it can be said that V has a perfect understanding of what "symbols" mean for the effective work of propaganda, and how the government utilizes them.

Similarly, when he blows up the Old Bailey next, V knows that he actually blows up the "symbol of justice." Anyhow, before his act, V has a theatrical dialogue with Madame Justice which ends with V's conclusions that "anarchy […] has thought [him] that justice is meaningless without freedom"[9] (*VfV*, 1998, 41). In this case, one

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[8] Refering to ideas of Mikhail Bakunin.
[9] Again refering to Bakunin.

of the strongest weapons of the government, which is an alleged, symbolic justice, is replaced by V with freedom, which is something that is completely not (re)presented. In other words, the false perspective of justice is deframed by referring the off-screen, where inhabits freedom.

Yet, more importantly, later in the story, V seizes the Jordan Tower, the broadcast centre of the Party, and there he broadcasts an anarchist speech that evokes people to shoulder the responsibility of their own lives. By this way, he utilizes the government's major apparatus of framing, namely the media, in order to provide the public with a different perspective –a different frame. In order to help people more, V then destroys Party's communication and surveillance centre, allowing for the right to speak off-the-record. He also accesses to the Fate, and in this way, he maintains the mental collapse of the Leader, by sending him uncanny messages supposedly from his "godlike bride."

Via all these endeavors, V finally creates the "chaos" that is needed to reach the establishment of a truly anarchist state. All forms of authority in Britain vanish, and the future is left uncertain. On the one hand, V's accomplishment mirrors the fact that a control-centered frame can be shaken by pursuing its own structure. What originates out of this deconstructive/deframing maneuver is, on the other hand, a verily uncontrolled condition, namely "chaos."

In this respect, chaos appears as a possibility that sheds a light on the future. Obviously, there is no certainty that another imperialistic government will not follow. However, this dilemma, this enigmatic occasion that chaos causes is the

"voice of the off-screen." It is what was once silenced and unforeseen. It is the centrifugal force of the margins. In Derrida's terms, it is an "aporia" that denies the framework of the orthodox logic:

> Every totality, [Derrida] shows, can be totally shaken, that is, can be shown to be founded on which it excludes, that which would be in excess for a reductive analysis of any kind […] This excess is often posed as an 'aporia', the Greek word for a seemingly insoluble logical difficulty: once a system has been "shaken" by following its totalizing logic to its final consequences, one finds an excess which can not be construed within the rules of logic, for the excess can only be conceived as neither this nor that, or both at the same time – a departure from all rules of logic. (Bass, 1982, xvi-xvii)

3.3.3 Intertextuality and Theatricality

The graphic novel *VfV* is an intertextual work, which gives numerous artistic references from literature, painting, cinema, music, theatre, poetry, and so on.[10] Although it is unnecessary to list these one by one here, Moore's insistent methods of referring and quoting should be mentioned as alternative deframings, since the consecutive effect of these are "looks" beyond the margins of the story and the medium. In other words, whenever the story refers to some other text, the reader naturally finds him/herself in an absolute off-screen, whose coordinates are only limited with the knowledge and imagination of the reader. Therefore, it can be argued that via intertextuality, *VfV* somehow accentuates that the meaning of a text cannot solely reside within its borders, but also in other spaces and the viewers that it communicates.

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[10] For a detailed information on these references, see "An Annotation of Literary, Historic, and Artistic References in Alan Moore's Graphic Novel, V for Vendetta," from http://madelyn. utahgoth.net/vendetta/ vendetta2.html.

Moreover, besides the level of "content," *VfV* also employs intertextuality at the level of "form" as much again: In the first place, it in some occasions becomes a self-reflexive "meta-narrative" which refer to the text as such, destroying the boundaries between author/reader, story/reality.

For instance, Evey once says V: "You *rescued* me! Like in a *story*" (*VfV*, 13, original emphasis)! Similarly, a policeman makes an interpretation on the characteristics of V after he enters a train by jumping onto it from a wall: "All this business about boarding moving trains is like something out of the *pictures. Normal* people can't *do* things like that." (*VfV* 23, 1998, original emphasis)

Yet, most importantly, "theatre" and "theatricality" constitute the cornerstones of *VfV,* in terms of intertextuality at the level of form. And above all to be illustrated in this context, it should firstly be maintained that "Vaudeville" -being one of the section headings of the graphic novel- centralizes its place in *VfV* by means of coming into existence with the very gestures of V. Anyhow, with an allusion to Shakespeare[11], he once states Evey that "all the world's a stage and everything else is *vaudeville.*" (*VfV* 31, 1998, emphasis mine)

Furthermore, the intertextual nature of the graphic novel as such can said to be having a close resemblance with the form of vaudeville, which was a form of "variety theatre" that flourished in North America from the 1880s through the 1920s. It was a mixture of music, comedy, athleticism, magic, animal acts, opera,

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[11] "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts" (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene vii).

Shakespeare, acrobatics, dance, lectures given by celebrities and intellectuals, specialty acts etc. (Kibler, 1999, 23-28)

On the one hand, V's "vaudevillian theatre" comprises almost all of these various types of art and entertainment, which can be considered as separate but connected theatrical acts, each accounting for a part of a vaudeville show. For instance, V regularly quotes from different plays of Shakespeare; he plays piano; he makes an illusion show to Evey; he changes his Fawkes masque with another for a particular mise-en-scene he designs (to be explained shortly); his way of fighting is always like acrobatic performances; he makes ironic jokes in the most tragic conditions; he likes to dance; and he often plays the role of the "lecturer," who -often severely- educates the people around him[12].

On the other hand, considering the text *VfV* in terms of vaudeville, it can be argued that similar to its blending of various forms of art and entertainment, Alan Moore's gathering together of different fields and genres of art via multiple references create a general vaudevillian atmosphere in the graphic novel as such. The importance of this determination, however, resides in a less noticeable fact: *VfV* has a classical narrative structure, in terms of progressive characters, a linear story with a dramatic arc, and a sense of spatial and temporal continuity. Yet, its synchronic "vaudevillian atmosphere" somehow disturbs the text at its heart, by contradicting its narrative structure.

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[12] In this respect, V is in harmony with Proudhon's ideas, who in "*Du Principe de l'art et de sa Destination Sociale* had urged the artist 'to present the interaction between individual and environment' in order to help other individuals understand 'the various values of existence'. This conception of the artist as a realist observer who helped to educate the masses was modified by Kropotkin, who regarded the artist as the conscience of humanity, an individual whose creative contributions to society had the power to change it" (Weir, 1997, 116).

We have already described intertextuality as a mode of deframing, which insistently direct the reader elsewhere, out of the frame. In this regard, a "vaudevillian framing" can be recognized as another deframing without difficulty, since it subverts the common understanding of dramatic narration that aims to pull the spectator within the text, by continuously supplying them with lines of escape.

As Pascal Bonitzer argues, deframing is a stylistic or ideological method of escaping the conventional representational regimes. Both vaudeville itself and its application by Alan Moore suggest such an attempt of breaking away from common representational regimes. In *VfV*, vaudeville works as a cut through the classical narrative structure of the work. More importantly, this resistance, this attack comes from within the very object of attack –the classical narrative structure. At any rate, deframing is first of all a way of framing, which disturbs the borders of the frame from within it. Vaudeville, therefore, becomes in the graphic novel a "subversion of viewpoint and position" (Bonitzer, 2006, 187), which opens up a field for new arrangements.

Furthermore, setting aside vaudeville now and continuing with other aspects of theatricality, what the graphic novel in its entirety puts forward is that "acting," for V, is the intersection point of art and politics. He is both an act-or and an anarchist act-ivist. He is an "anarchist artist," who "has no trouble in saying […] that art has the same meaning as the act" (Weir, 1997, 4).[13]

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[13] V's attitude is realized to be very much in harmony with anarchism, which always had strong affinities with several artistic movements. The most well-known examples are: French Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism, and Artistocracy.

And even the introductory depictions of V signify the fact that for him, politics is art, and in particular, it is theatricality. Or alternatively, V's theatre is a political staging that aims to correct the putrefied condition of the country:

In the first panel of the graphic novel in which he is seen, V enters a coulisse-like dressing room, his back turned against the reader. There are theatrical props around his dressing table, which is surrounded by light bulbs. When his visage appears for the first time, it is with a "masque" that he wears. While he completes his "costume" with a hat and a cloak, he seems as if he is preparing to go on to the stage. Truly, the initial words that he utters in the graphic novel turn out to be a quote from Macbeth. Moreover, after V blows up the Houses of Parliament a few pages later, he calls this event as the "overture," and states that it is time to "prepare for the first act" (*VfV*, 1997, 14).

As an illumination of V's stance, Jacques Ranciere, in *The Politics of Aesthetics* states that "[p]olitics and art are not two separate and permanent realities about which one should ask whether they have to be connected or not. Each of them is a conditional reality, that exists or not according to a specific partition of the sensible" (Ranciere, 2004)**.** He defines what he names the "partition of the sensible" as the "distribution of times and spaces, places and identities, that way of framing and reframing the visible and the invisible" (Ranciere, 2004)**.**

> [Art] is political insofar as it frames […] a specific space-time sensorium, as this
> sensorium defines ways of being together or being apart, of being inside or
> outside, in front of or in the middle of, etc. It is political as its own practices
> shape forms of visibility that reframe the way in which practices, manners of

being and modes of feeeling and saying are interwoven in a commonsense, which means a 'sense of the common' embodied in a common sensourium. It does so because politics [...] is first of all the configuration of a space as political , the framing of a specific sphere of experience, the setting of objects posed as 'common' and of subjects to whom the capacity is recognized to designate these objects and discuss about them. Politics first is the conflict about the very existence of that sphere of experience, the reality of those common objects and the capacity of those subjects. (Ranciere, 2004)

In this respect, both art and politics are about getting out of the common frames, by reframing what the society renders speakable, audible, and visible. As it was explained before, V similarly allows the public to escape from the dominant fascist frame by giving them back their rights to speak, to hear, to see, etc., i.e. providing them with alternative "space-time sensoriums." However, V's defining of a "sphere of existence" for the public takes place simultaneously at the levels of politics and art. In other words, he makes politics and theatre share the function of arranging the "setting," by means of bringing into "stage" different figures of speech, which were sent or just waiting "off-stage" in order for their parts to come.

In light of this framework of V, the most intriguing "acts" that he plays in his vaudevillian theatrical movement are now going to be presented.

The first one happens to be a staging that he puts on in his own lair for Lewis Prothero, who was the commander of Larkhill Concentration Camp (before becoming the Voice of Fate) that once held V. As it was mentioned, V prepares for this play by changing his masque and costume after stating that "all the world's a stage and everything else is vaudeville" (*VfV*, 1998, 31).

V's mise-en-scene is a representation of Larkhill, with a reproduction of the oven that used to burn people in the camp. Although Prothero (dressed by V in a commander uniform) is aware that this is a representation, he goes insane after V burns his collection of invaluable dolls in the oven. Thus, in this particular case, V resorts to "mimesis" merely as part of his play -as a tool for re-presenting and re-membering history. However, in another much more significant other case, he employs mimesis in such a way that it makes representation more effective than presence, or reality:

In time, Evey develops a strong attachment to V. However, upon asking V why he does not even attempt to sleep with her, and if he is her father, V closes her eyes, as if they were playing a game, and then abandons her on a street after telling that her father is dead. Trying to perpetuate her life with this traumatic information and without V, Evey involves in a romantic relationship with Gordon Deitrich, who is a petty criminal. Yet, a Scottish gangster murders Gordon soon thereafter.

Evey tries to take revenge, but someone captures her from the back, while she lies in wait for Gordon's murderer. She gets fainted, and when she recovers consciousness, she finds herself in a cell. Accused of attempting to murder Peter Creedy (the new Security Minister of the Finger), as well as working for the "codename V," she gets detained, has her head shaved, and tortured for days. Yet, at the meantime, she finds a letter written on toilet paper in her cell, from a former prisoner called Valerie. As we learn from the autobiographical letter, Valerie was an actress who was imprisoned for being a lesbian. She writes that although "it sells for so little," "[our integrity] is the very last inch of us" (*VfV*, 1998, 156), and we are only "free" within

that inch. "We must never lose it, or sell it, or give it away. We must never let them take it away from us" (*VfV*, 1998, 160), even if we know that we are going to die for it.

Inspired by Valerie's story, Evey refuses to collaborate with the interrogators, in spite of all the torture and the final threat of being shot "behind the chemical sheds" (*VfV*, 1998, 161). Upon her decisiveness, one of the interrogators tells her that she is free.

Yet, when Evey goes "out," she discovers that the "outside" is merely V's hideout, the Shadow Gallery, and her imprisonment was a mise-en-scene constructed by V with the purpose of "setting her free" through a suffering like the one that shaped him. Evey firstly has a nervous breakdown followed by an asthma crisis, and she hates V for what he has done. However, her anger eventually gives way to acceptance of her new "free identity," since V makes her hold on to her experience by expressing what "actually" happened in that cell:

> Evey: You say you want to set me *free* and you put me in a prison.
>
> V: You were already in a prison. You've been in a prison all your life.
>
> […]
>
> V: I didn't put you in a prison Evey. I just showed you the bars.
>
> Evey: You're wrong! It's just *life* that's all! It's how life is! It's what we've got to put up with.
>
> V: You're in a prison, Evey. You were born in a prison. You've been in a prison so long, you no longer believe there's a world outside (*VfV*, 1998, 168-170, original emphasis).

Here, what V does to Evey is actually a "play within a play," which is a dramatic device that was firstly used by Thomas Kyd in his *Spanish Tragedy*. After Kyd, William Shakespeare used this device in a variety of his plays. The most well-known example is found in *Hamlet*, where Prince Hamlet asks a traveling troupe of actors to act "Murder of Gonzago" in front of Claudius, the uncle of Hamlet and the new king.

The play depicts the story of a king who is poisoned, and it parallels the story of Hamlet, where Prince Hamlet's father, the King Hamlet, is poisoned by his brother Claudius. Prince Hamlet calls this play as "the mouse trap" (Shakespeare, 1998, Act III, scene ii), and he expresses what he aims to obtain by making Claudius subject to a play that parallels his own crime in these words: "The play's the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (Shakespeare, 1998, Act II, scene ii). Thus, Prince Hamlet thinks of figuring out if Claudius is really guilty of murdering his father or not, by following his reactions appearing while watching the play. In other words, in order to reveal the "truth" behind his father's death, Prince Hamlet resorts to a "play."

What is different in V's "play within a play" from Hamlet's is that he is the only audience to watch it, since the readers are also unaware that they are within a play. The "mouse trap" catches the readers together with Evey. However, as it is going to be illustrated in the next chapter, this trap has a more powerful effect in the film version of *VfV*, since the film constructs an explicit identification with Evey. Due to the capabilities of the medium, and perhaps because of a counter intention than that of the film's, the graphic novel does not let its readers to identify with a particular

character. Still, though to a lesser extent, the "trapped" readers partake in Evey's experience and thus go through the catharsis with her.

However, even without identification, this "play within a play" and its development into the catharsis of the story has a very significant function, given that the resolution of Evey's experience is a transformation in her character, which ultimately turns her into V. Yet, before clarifying this function, it is firstly essential to question the notion of "representation" and its different aspects as incorporated in the graphic novel.

Gayatri Spivak has provided important insights on "representation," by returning to Marx, who identified two senses for the term: The first one is "Vertretung," or "speaking for," as in politics. The other is "Darstellung," or "making present," as in art, media and philosophy. At the level of Vertretung, representation suggests to mediate or to delegate for someone's interests. At the level of Darstellung[14], representation suggests to designate and to predicate someone. As it can be predicted from the discussions so far, V's politics is hence only relatively a Vertretung, but it is without question a Darstellung.

In light of Spivak's demonstrations, it should firstly be underlined that, with his "masque," V certainly does not designate or predicate Guy Fawkes. In fact, Guy Fawkes is only a symbol, which derives its value not with what it represents, but what it cannot represent: The masque designates all the "oppressed" within the story, as well as an idea, a suggestion, which is not only of rewriting history, but also the

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[14] The etymology of the word "Darstellung" reveals that it comes from "stellen," which basically means "to stand, to set, or to put in." Interestingly, "stellen" also forms the word "gestell," which means "frame."

present and the future for those marginal tones. In this respect, and obviously with the support of the story, the masque in another level represents the invisible remnant of the margins voice out of the story as well. Since the story is about a "possible" dystopia against totalitarian regimes, the masque also represents a call for revolution against all such orders that the readers are very possibly acquainted with.

And therefore, what the masque is unable to represent is certainly present, i.e. still represented. The masque is what Deleuze calls the off-screen as "what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present" *(MI*, 1989, 15) Hence, rather than masquerading V or anything else, the masque actually works as an exposition of what is hidden, what is repressed, what is othered in the country of the story, and each and every place in the "real" world. With this capacity to reveal and emphasize the presence of the concealed, the masque works as a device of deframing.

Moreover, returning to V's "play within a play," what that signifies is the irrelevance of the well-known distinction between representation and reality. In other words, V's play within a play represents the common urge of presuming reality as something that cannot exactly be reproduced via representation, due to the factor of mediation involved in it. For, V's theatre is composed of false representations, and as the case of the trick played on Evey –and therefore on the readers- reveals together with the motto of "life is a stage," it suggests that a play might become inseparable from life.

Obviously, how V demonstrates freedom to Evey is a representation, mediated through a mise-en-scene. Nevertheless, it turns out to be life itself, or perhaps more than life for her. In other words, when the "conscience of Evey" is caught, it

produces in her mind a powerful sense of reality, a sense that she does not prefer to give away, even after discovering that it was a representation.

In addition, Evey's "story" is well-known to the readers, not only because it alludes to Nazi Germany or any other past dictatorship, but also because it is presently "actual" in the world this way or another. In V's terms, "it's not an uncommon story" (*VfV*, 1989, 169). Hence, when the "conscience of the reader" is caught simultaneously with Evey, the re-presentation of the story becomes the apperception of life, which is realized to be merely a play within a play within a play…

In this case, acknowledging politics as theatricality, V destroys a political staging with another one. Therefore, he deframes the common opposition of presence/representation, by unveiling that politics is already a play within the play named "life." What matters for everyone (for the public of the story as well as the readers), yet, is to play their parts in the stage called world, and hence partake within some "space-time sensorium."

Last but not least, the key deframing effect of the graphic novel arises, when all these deframings that are tried to be illustrated in this chapter are combined with the "empty space" that V as a whole provides for the readers. Since the graphic novel never reveals neither V's face behind the masque, nor his identity, the only possibility of filling the empty mysterious space that it occupies is left to the readers. The delivery of the masque to Evey does not change this fact, since Evey is situated at the same level with the readers' as a victim of a totalitarian society. Thus, when

the readers try to identify the masque, they can only associate it with what it, and the story represents, rather than who it masks.

Consequently, on the one hand, the masque becomes a symbol of "act-ion" for everyone, who feels victimized, oppressed, marginalized etc. On the other hand, Evey's cathartic experience becomes a means of liberation for those, who find out or remember that they are "already in a prison" so far, yet want to have a "role" outside the bars from now on.

4. FRAMING AND DEFRAMING IN THE FILM V FOR VENDETTA

To revolt is a natural tendency of life. Even a worm turns against the foot that crushes it. In general, the vitality and relative dignity of an animal can be measured by the intensity of its instinct to revolt.

Mikhail Bakunin

4.1 The Film V for Vendetta

The 2006 film adaptation of *VfV* is produced by *Joel Silver* and the *Wachowski Brothers*, who also wrote the screenplay, and directed by *James McTeigue*. It was filmed in London, United Kingdom; and in Potsdam, Germany, by *Warner Bros. Pictures*. It had its first major premiere on February 13 at the Berlin Film Festival. The film stars Hugo Weaving as *V*, Natalie Portman as *Evey Hammond*, Stephen Rea as *Inspector Finch*, and John Hurt as *Chancellor Sutler*.

Alan Moore explicitly disapproved and disassociated himself from the film. Unlike David Lloyd, who supported the adaptation, Moore wanted his name not to appear in the closing credits, due to his opinion that the film script contained plot holes which are contrary to *VfV*'s original theme, as well as his previous frustrations from film adaptations of his other work (*From Hell* and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*). He stated:

One of the things I don't like about film is its incredible immersive quality. It's kind of bullying - it's very big, it's very flashy, it's got a lot of weight and it throws it around almost to the detriment of the rest of our culture […] Real art and the things that actually change our culture tend to happen on the margins. They don't happen in the middle of a big marquee […] Those words, 'fascism' and 'anarchy', occur nowhere in the film. It's been turned into a Bush-era parable by people too timid to set a political satire in their own country. In my original story there had been a limited nuclear war, which had isolated Britain, caused a lot of chaos and a collapse of government, and a fascist totalitarian dictatorship had sprung up. Now, in the film, you've got a sinister group of right-wing figures -not fascists, but you know that they're bad guys- and what they have done is manufactured a bio-terror weapon in secret, so that they can fake a massive terrorist incident to get everybody on their side, so that they can pursue their right-wing agenda. It's a thwarted and frustrated and perhaps largely impotent American liberal fantasy of someone with American liberal values against a state run by neo-conservatives -which is not what 'V for Vendetta' was about. It was about fascism, it was about anarchy, it was about [England] (The Last Angry Man, 2007).

4.2 Framing and Reframing in the Film V for Vendetta

Truly, as Moore states, in the film adaptation of *VfV*, there are significant changes in the plot line; the minor characters are not present and the characterizations of the majors' are fairly dissimilar; the anarchist themes are almost totally removed; there are no drug references; and the political message is visibly updated. Yet, although it is possible to agree with Moore and consider all of these "reframings" as unfaithful revisions that disturb the integrity of the original work, this thesis prefers to see the matter in a new light.

Here, it will be argued that the film adaptation reframes the graphic novel with the purpose of addressing an international 2006 film audience, as well as making it relevant for wider political issues. In this respect, it will be pointed that the film does preserve the theme and premise of the graphic novel as far as a two hour potential allows, yet carries its critique to a contemporary context.

However, since the reframings that are made for the film are not chief objects of this study, it is pointless to analyze them entirely here. Still, given that some of the major reframings are essential for the effective work of deframings, those are going to be explained in the first hand. Afterwards, the ways in which the reframed content of the graphic novel is framed in the film will basically be pointed out.

To begin with, whereas Alan Moore's graphic novel is a reaction to Margaret Thatcher's Administration, Wachowski's version adapts the story to point a finger at the Bush's. It does this through several allusions, rather than directly mentioning the U.S. As a result, the film reads as a universal declaration against America and its turning of people into impassive subjects. In this respect, the film facilitates and extends the scope of identification with the context, since the object of attack is very much available and ubiquitous.

This leads us to another modern-day reference, to the effect that people are generally critical attitude towards the governments and the systems, as well as supposedly being aware of each and every method that oppresses and controls them, yet still unmotivated to act against them. At this point, although both the graphic novel and the film avoid accusing the indicated governments, and instead accuse the public for

having enough knowledge on the things that are "wrong" but still doing nothing for a change, the film alters the original plot and involves the public, inspiring a nation towards an achievable revolution. In accordance, we see the public collected to watch the extravagant explosion of the Parliament building at the end of the film, each person wearing a Guy Fawkes masque, united with the hope and strength for new good days to come. The graphic novel does not go so far. Instead, it merely focuses on V's attempts to inspire one person to carry on his heritage, with the insinuation that if he can inspire one, this can lead to an inspiration of the whole nation.

Aside from all the reframing, what the outstanding way of framing this contemporary context explicitly is (at least in its generality), is the Institutional Mode of Representation that Hollywood uses as its stylistic narrative structure. As it has been mentioned before, this type of representation used in the film is described by Alan Moore as having an "incredible immersive quality," as well as being "very big" and "very flashy" with "a lot of weight."

In other words, the film employs a very glamorous cinematography, whose influence on the audience surpasses that of the graphic novel, in terms of involving them into an appealing "spectacle." In relation, the film structures the narrative in such a way that it facilitates identification with the main characters and the context. In other words, although both the graphic novel and the film are "popular" narratives, the latter's reframing of the former greatly involves the traditional themes and representation styles of Hollywood.

In view of that, it is firstly important to point out that the Parliament building explodes at the beginning of the graphic novel. This merely happens to take place as an initial sign from V. Yet, in the film, the plot is completely reversed and the explosion is located at the very last sequences of the film, in order to create a suspension. Moreover, all the events in the film success towards this explosion, as the ultimate hit, the "great finale," watched by millions in admiration and affection.

On the other hand, it can be said that the particular narrative technique of the film *VfV* is what literature names as a "frame narrative," whereby a main story is composed out of shorter stories. In this respect, *VfV* includes six main stories and a sub-story, which are inserted within the main continuity with different purposes, aside from making the audience eventually immerse into the story. In other words, these stories are strongly tied with utilizing the "centering" function of framing to the utmost possible, since the effect of them is to capture the audience, and allow them to penetrate into the text more and more.

The introductory retrospective prologue depicts the story of Guy Fawkes and establishes its relation with the main story. This scene, which does not exist in the graphic novel, is narrated via a voice-over so as to support the visual depiction. Interestingly, although the scene personifies the voice-over via a woman, who cries while watching the execution of Fawkes, the voice actually belongs to Natalie Portman -Evey of the film. Thus, Evey's voice-over can said to be acting as a sign of the bridging function of the film, which parallels his-tory with her-story. In this case, even the prologue positions Evey as the main character of the story, and begins to work so as to allow the audience to identify with her.

The other four stories within the story appear in the form of flashbacks: The first one shows Evey's childhood memories, and it becomes an informative scene that explains part of the reason behind the current situation of the country. Another flashback that appears as the visualization of Delia's (the chief doctor at the Larkhill Detention Centre) diary extends this illumination of the dark past. A further flashback, which stands as the final assertion of truth, appears towards the end of the film, where V tells Finch the past happenings with the unknown connections that he presents. In the final flashback, Inspector Finch makes a visit to Larkhill, and there he imagines the events that took place there, in order to give meaning to the bits and pieces of information about V, which he tries to pull together.

Evey's prison scene cuts the main continuity much more than all of these stories, and together with a sub-story -the visualization of Valerie's letter- inserted into it, this part sets up the climax for Evey's transformation. Obviously, same as the graphic novel, this part is where V's "play within a play" takes place. However, since the film configures an evident identification with Evey, the audiences partake in her catharsis much more powerfully than the graphic novel. As a result, the film ultimately achieves to make the audience feel that they can be like V as well, since Evey, to whom they identified with, becomes V's successor.

The following part of this chapter will analyze the deframings employed in the film mostly on behalf of this process of identification-catharsis-resolution, since the deframings serve to increase the effect of the process.

4.3 Deframing in the Film V for Vendetta

As it was illustrated in the previous chapter, the graphic novel *VfV* foregrounds "framing" as a question, and observes the frame procedures especially in the construction of ideologies, history, and representation. The methods by which the graphic novel reveals and deframes these frames and framings were pointed out as "rewriting history," "anarchy," "intertextuality" and "theatricality." This final method was examined particularly under the dramatic device of "play within a play."

The film, on the other hand, not only reevaluates and reinforces all of these deframings of the graphic novel, but also adds to them. In other words, deframing is carried to different formal levels in the film adaptation, while preserving to a great extent the contextual level that the graphic novel provides for it.

The film maintains deframings in a double gesture: On the one hand, it transgresses the limits of its very narrative structure, which was mentioned as being a mode of mainstream representation with a high level of framing as centering. On the other hand, the film employs a visible technique of inserting TV screens within the narrative, which not only opens up an "absolute" off-screen that communicates with the audience, but also reinterprets and extends the function of a "play within a play."

In this respect, the film mostly appears as a "metafiction," "which draws attention to the fact that life, as well as [fictions], is constructed through frames, and that it is finally impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins" (Waugh, 1996, 29).

Therefore, bringing fiction and reality on the same plane by asserting that life is already a play, the film deframes its own frame as such. However, different from its graphic novel counterpart, the film combines this function with the catharsis that transforms not only Evey, but also the audience into V.

In this way, the film presents a more participative experience on behalf of the audience, which consequently turns both *VfV*'s as one text that is perceived as a "symbol of resistance" by many people.

4.3.1 Screen within a Screen

To begin with, after the prologue that narrates the story of Guy Fawkes, the film opens with an image of a "face" (Lewis Prothero) covering the whole screen, which makes a protest speech against America, whilst propagandizing England with a racist and fascist discourse in the guise of morality and attachment to God. If one does not pay attention neither to the channel logo (BTN) at the left bottom corner and the "anchorman posture" of the face, nor the bluish tone of the screen, the image may be confused with a close-up of a face that directly speaks to the film audience.

However, the camera slowly stands back and widens its angle, and thus the audience clarifies that the face is seen through a TV that is located in V's coulisse-like dressing room. V does not watch the TV but he only listens to the voice of Prothero, while he is putting his Guy Fawkes masque on, in front of a mirror.

Later on, the camera makes a pan to Evey's room, in which she is making up in front of a mirror. Prothero's voice continues throughout the pan, supplying the synchrony,

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and with the camera widening its angle once more, we make sure that Evey is listening to the same program from a TV located at her right side. Afterwards, the camera changes its position for a few times between these two locations. Until Evey and V finish dressing up, we see both of them interchangeably with the details of their actions, constantly accompanied with Prothero's voice, or the inserted close-ups of the TV screen.

In this case, it seems that the initial and following deframings, by which Prothero's face addresses the audience off-screen, are all reframed, providing the audience with spaces that the TV's are located, and thus justifying the unity of the filmic space. Therefore, Prothero's direct looks into the camera turn out to be natural consequences of displaying a TV program, in which the speaker necessarily looks into the camera.

However, since neither Evey nor V is watching the TV, the film audience remains the only one spoken to. In other words, although the TV screen creates two off-screens, one "inside" the filmic space and the other "outside" of it, since there is no audience in the inside to watch it, the deframing cannot be argued to be reframed, or "pragmatically justified." At any rate, although the location of the TV's in both rooms are situated at the edges, Prothero's eyes continuously address the film audience even from these difficult standpoints, which is also made salient with the bluish tone of TV that is in contrast with the pastel tones of both rooms.

This deframing firstly functions to place the audience in opposition to Prothero's discourse, for the image of him is an apparent parody of American right-wing

pundits, and the feeling his speech creates is more likely to be abhorrence and detestation than sympathy. In relation, the deframing also functions for the film audience to ally with the main characters of the story -V and Evey-, who similarly disregard Prothero's discourse. In this context, the deframing thirdly functions to spatially bring together the film audiences with V and Evey. Therefore, the deframed frame of the screen somehow opens itself to the absolute subtle/off-screen, where the film audiences reside. In other words, the film screen vanishes, and Prothero speaks to the film audience as if there were no mediation.

Fig.1: Prothero's looks towards the audience at the off-screen.

Moreover, a recursive setting in the film is a dark room, where we see Adam Sutler as a gigantic "face" that communicates with his cabinet through a huge screen. This further screen within a screen representation of the film is perhaps the formalizing of the difference between Adam J. Susan of the graphic novel and Adam Sutler of the film, as it was mentioned earlier.

In other words, their alternative "appearance" in two *VfV*'s signifies the opposition between the two characters as well. In the graphic novel, Adam J. Susan is personally in contact with his men. He is not a ruthless brain, whose body is totally excluded from the frame. Whereas in the film, Sutler is only seen as a gigantic "face," the rest of his body cut off by the edges of the huge screen.

In fact, his whole body happens to be included within the frame only for two times throughout the film. One of these is a parody of him in a TV show. Thus, his body represented in a TV screen within the film screen is not even truly his body, but an imitation of it. In the other case, in which we finally see his "living" body, it is at the point of his death. In this case, Sutler can said to be mostly depicted as a symbol of the "big brother," which represents an amalgamation of various dictators, or "power" in general. As a result, the power figure in the graphic novel gains a much louder voice in the film.

Fig.2: Adam Sutler and his deframed face.

The film gives way to other TV images several other times within the narrative. Most of these are "news," which are about the developments around the V case. In all of them, the film provides us with successive shot-reverse-shots, which show the TV screen and the audience within the film one after the other.

With the news images, the film conveys the message that the way to control people (in the present day) is performed through the media, which is a weapon effectively used by governments. That is, the media has the upper hand over people's lives: It frames the dominant ideology of the given government in order to exercise its

surveillance on people. Thus, by engaging them with the framed scenes which reinforces the oppressor's control over its subjects, the government uses the media to make people passive.

On the side of the news audience's in the film, they are shown not to believe in everything that they see or hear. However, they continuously sit on their couches and watch the happenings, the course of which actually flow "outside" of them. In this respect, they are merely outsiders as well, since they do not actually partake, but only view the events, which are filtered via the government's and media's frames.

Fig.3: "Fabricated" news and the public watching it in suspect.

However, more significantly, the film displays "actual" pieces of news in two separate scenes. The first one is where the lesbian prisoner Valerie's letter is visualized in Evey's imagination. Here, Valerie and her lover watch the news together in fear, since the time is at the point of Sutler's appointment as the High Chancellor, and his seizing of "the enemies of the country." The second one is the flashback by which V illustrates Finch the truths about the country's past, and therefore his very own story of victimization.

Unlike the previous ones, which are in harmony with the film's general cinematography, the news images selected for these scenes strike the audience with their resemblance with the "actual" news format that we are accustomed with. Truly, in these scenes, the news format of BTN is replaced by real-time images from the Iraq War and the London Tube Bombing, as well as the related protests against Bush.

Therefore, the film suddenly deframes itself, once more blending and transcending the boundaries of fictive and real worlds. It "pulls the spectator out of the fullness of the image on the screen by suddenly constructing alternative loci of representation, and thus other frames" (Aumont, 1997, 110).

In this case, it can be argued that the reason behind the insertion of these news images, which present us the "history," and particularly, the history lived by the victimized, is to address the "implied audience." In other words, different from the previous news images, which are viewed by the general public, these news, coming from the "real" world, is viewed by the marginalized people in the story. Since they

are not mere witnesses, but actual victims of history in the flesh, they especially speak to those, who similarly feel marginalized.

As a consequence of this occasion, these news images become one of the most effective patterns of the film throughout its course of creating for its implied audience a call to take action against injustice, oppression, and so on.
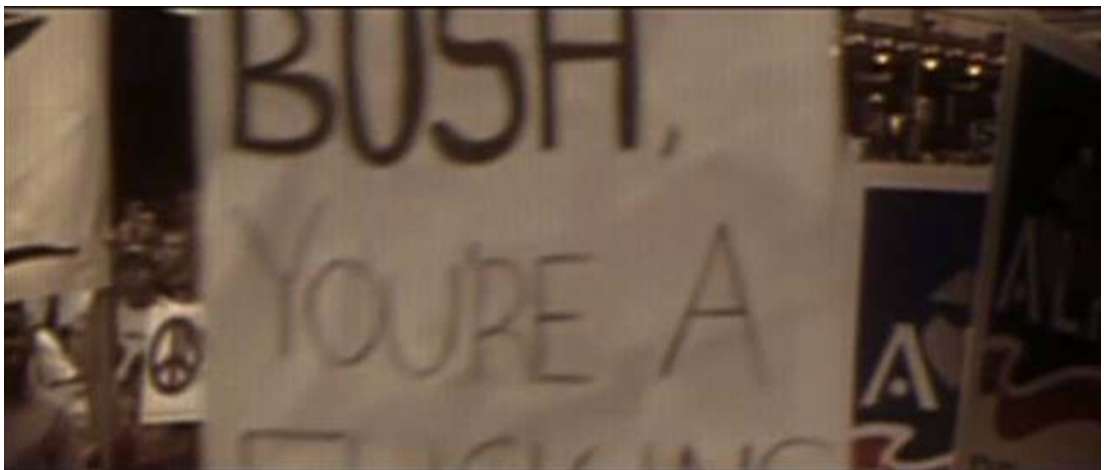
Fig.3: "Actual" news viewed by the victims of the story.

4.3.2 The Masque

The final flashback of the film, which was mentioned earlier, also happens to be a very interesting deframing, for it employs a very unusual narrative strategy that denies any border for the film frame:

Inspector Finch makes a visit to Larkhill, and he tries to imagine the events that took place there, in order to give meaning to the bits and pieces of information that he tries to pull together. (In the graphic novel, he takes LSD, in order to keep pace with V of the past, who blew up the detention centre in spite of being drugged.) In other words, by visiting Larkhill, what Finch aims to obtain is to understand V and the way he thinks, hoping that if he can be like V for a while, he can discover his whereabouts, identity, or any other information that might be helpful. After his visit, he expresses what he felt there to his colleague in these words:

> I suddenly had this feeling that everything was connected. I felt like I could see everything that had happened, and everything that was going to happen. It was like a perfect pattern laid out in front of me, and I realized that *we were all a part of it, and all trapped by it* (emphasis mine).

While he explains, the film presents us a flow of images, which not only portray previous scenes from the film, but also subsequent ones, even including V's death and the very ending sequences of the film. Thus, although the images flow fast, making them difficult to capture, the flashback actually turns out to be a flashforward at the same time, which in some way provides the audience with the whole story.

On the one hand, this deframing in the form of a flashback/flashforward allows the audience to disregard the "closeness" of the film frame, whose margins appear as a world of possibilities. On the other hand, it signifies that even the end of the story is not important when there is no boundary that separates reality from fiction, since what matters is the fact that we are all players in the play within a play within a play…

Moreover, similar to Evey, Finch's awakening occurs when he achieves to make the truth into a play, i.e., imagining himself in place of V, and thus behind his masque. However, in this circumstance, he does not discover something about V, but something about himself and the frames around him.

The masque, what it presents and represents were already analyzed in the previous chapter. However, as for the film, it should be maintained that it implies another profound existence.

First of all, it generates a major deframing effect, when we consider the fact that an "immobile" expression is contrary to the very nature of cinema. Preserving a static entity on the screen throughout two hours is a challenging endeavor, in terms of keeping pace with the moving frames of cinema.

Further, the masque suggests that the space it occupies within the frame is actually "empty" and this emptiness cannot pragmatically be justified, since what lies "behind the painted smile" is never revealed in *VfV*. Rather, the empty space it suspends

forever is made to designate the off-screen voice of the margins, in and out of the story.

Therefore, the only possibility that the film provides the audience as a way of reframing the deframing effect of the masque remains to identify with V's idea. At any rate, V hands his revolution (blowing up the Parliament) over Evey before the point of his death, and states his reason for doing this as:

> Because this world, the world that I'm a part of and that I helped shape, will end tonight. And tomorrow, a different world will begin, that different people will shape, and this choice belongs to them.

At the end of the film, millions of people, among whom the dead people are also present (Valerie and Gordon), all together gather facing the Parliament building. In this scene which brings together the past, the present and the future, each and every person wears Guy Fawkes masques.

After the destruction of the Parliament, Finch asks Evey who V was. Her response happens to be what %52 paraphrased in the Manifesto of Rage. "Who was he?" "He was Edmond Dantes. And he was my father, and my mother. My brother. My friend. He was you, and me. He was all of us."

4.4 The Influence of V for Vendetta

VfV turned into a concept and political event throughout the world, especially after the release of the film adaptation. In this respect, two examples from Taiwan, and one example from Turkey with far-reaching effects will be mentioned below.

In 11 October 2006, "an anti-Chen protester dressed as the character 'V' from the film *VfV* carried posters comparing Chen and Chinese President Hu Jintao to Adolf Hitler" (Shu-Ling, 2006). In 24 October 2006, Lee Ao, a Taiwanese legislator, protested a bill that would authorize billions of dollars for purchasing American arms. He crashed into the Taiwan Parliament, in which a committee was deciding on the controversial bill, in the costume (Guy Fawkes masque and long black dress) of the character "V" of *VfV*. Ao threw a tear gas on the hall and gave voice to his protest in a decided tone. After the act, the bill, which was being vetoed from 2004, was vetoed once more (Hsu, 2006).

On the other hand, "%52" is a recent anarchist formation that consists mostly of students from Bogazici University. For the present, their actions take place mainly in Istanbul. The formation explicitly relates itself with the film *VfV*, and therefore not much indirectly with the graphic novel origin of it. Guy Fawkes masques are what the activists of %52 wear during their acts, as well as the background of their web site, which moreover contains a section from the film. Besides the visual quotations, the conceptual basis of their manifestos and actions express the inspiration taken from the film. With their own words, which is taken from the 5th of November (a recurrent thematic in *VfV*, being the date that Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up the houses of Parliament) dated introduction of "The Manifesto of Rage"[15]:

> %52 is the struggle call against governments and power relations that usurp our
>
> life. Against the power of the brutal, it is the vivid rage of believers of freedom
>
> and imagination. It is the ratio of children and youth to the general population,
>
> who are subjected to attacks that are executed in this land via a capillary

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[15] The following qutotes are my translations of %52's manifesto, which is originally named "Öfkenin Manifestosu."

network of circumstances. It is approximately 37.5 million people, whose

dreams and hearts are broken, who are cruelly forced to die in their already short

lives. It is the painful stories of the one's under 26, who became %52 of the

registered population of 72 millions. It is the bloody share in these lands of

globalizing tyranny. (%52, 2006)

For now, there are 38 "struggle pages" that the manifesto undertakes. The initial part

of the struggle pages mostly utilizes numerical data. "We exhibited the data that

governments mostly use with the purpose of profit-making and death, and tried to

use their weapons against them" (%52, 2006). The second and third parts focus on

"theoretical efforts that can turn into analysis and practical action" (%52, 2006). As it

is stated in the manifesto, although each of these struggle pages takes up specific

issues, they are strongly attached to each other with the underlying purpose of not

turning our backs to other's problems and joining against each and every injustice.

"%52, which offers separate organizations and individuals to act as one, is an

uprising of the fierce youth, who do not want to live on their knees any more" (%52,

2006).

Furthermore, %52 declares that:

it is not an offer of political action, which tries to have a place of its own among

the opposition relations. It tries to express its existence with its passion for life

and freedom. It dearly wishes to act, not in the perspective of suspended dreams,

but right now, from today to tomorrow, in the struggle perspective of a social

revolution. This manifesto is not only against the governments, but also to

opposing actions that wants to hold power. It does not believe any of the

opposition apparatuses, which detain people with political-ideological-economic

promises and sweet lies. (%52, 2006)

A shorter answer that the manifesto gives to the question what %52 is, is actually a paraphrase from the ending sequences of the film *VfV*, in which the police officer Finch asks Evey who V was: "It is you, me, them, these, and others." Yet, the manifesto extends this sentence by stating that "[i]t is the children, the youth, who are only a part of millions of people living in this land, unaware of each other, yet all subject to various attacks" (%52, 2006).

5. CONCLUSION

In the preface of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin specifies that the thesis of his essay is "about the developmental tendencies of art under present conditions of production" (Benjamin, 1985, 218), meaning mechanical reproduction, whose development has since gone far beyond Benjamin's observations. Anyway, emulating Marx, he announces that such a thesis has "prognostic value," which ought to be utilized "as a weapon […] for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art" (Benjamin, 1985, 218). For he acknowledges that whereas the "uncontrolled application" of concepts attributed to art "would lead to a processing of data in the Fascist sense" (Benjamin, 1985, 218), the concepts he is going to introduce in the Artwork Essay are not useful for such purposes.

The epilogue of the essay clarifies and enhances the idea mentioned in the preface. Actually, the elaborations of Benjamin on "mechanical reproduction of the work of art" and of its consequences, with his emphasis on film as the "most powerful agent" and manifestation of this process gains their significance with regard to his preface and epilogue. In other words, Benjamin's elaborations develop into an overture by means of the beginning and ending sequences of his work.

In the epilogue, extending his argument mentioned in the preface, Benjamin writes that "[t]he logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life." "The violation of the masses […] has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values" (Benjamin, 1985, 241).

The meaning of these statements resides not only in the body of the Artwork Essay, but also in this question: Why and how did Fascism violated this apparatus –namely film? Benjamin does not fully respond this question in the essay. Though, his very last sentences give a hint about the issue:

> 'Fiat ars pereat mundus'[16], says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of '*l'art pour l'art.*' Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art (Benjamin, 1985, 242).

Although the hint he gives here is about Futurism, in fact, Benjamin's decisive analysis on the subject matter firstly appeared in *Theories of German Fascism,* which is a review of a collection of essays that provided for him a present picture of WWI around 1930's. Benjamin here traces the transformation of the war experience into myth by the German Fascist ideology. He captures in the essays material that leads him to identify the phenomenon of Fascism as "the aesthetization of politics."

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[16] "Let there be art, though the world shall perish."

Therefore, the reason for Benjamin to "logically" link Fascism with the introduction of aesthetics into political life is not only about the inseparable connection between Italian Futurism and Fascism, but also about the Nazi Propaganda.

Joseph Goebbels was Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda throughout the regime of Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945. The role of this ministry was to centralize Nazi control over all aspects of German cultural and intellectual life, particularly the press, the radio and the visual and performing arts. However, cinema was given priority by Goebbles among the propaganda media. Alluding cinema, he stated that "the best propaganda is that which as it were works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the public having any knowledge of the propagandist initiative" (qtd. in White, 1998, 638). Favoring "a cinema of pleasure" in this context, he ensured that film studios continued to produce a stream of comedies and light romances, which drew mass audiences to the cinema, where they would also watch propaganda newsreels and Nazi epics such as the films of Leni Riefenstahl (*The Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia*).

Returning to Benjamin's Artwork Essay after these historical details, one can argue that especially the preface and epilogue of it reveals an important point, which is Benjamin's awareness that the power of cinema that he eventually praises can possibly turn into something very destructive by means of politics.

The outcome of this determination for the conclusion of this thesis, however, resides in the fact that what Benjamin calls "uncontrolled application" actually suggests a very controlled manner in which aesthetic knowledge is employed for the means of

politics. Propaganda, first of all, requires a "very-well-framed" structure and application of it, which cannot signify any non-control at all. In fact, the "achievement of the desired object" means that the frame is constructed in such a successful manner that it becomes invisible. Recalling Derrida in relation to Goebbel's assertion, "what has produced and manipulated the frame puts everything to work in order to efface the frame effect, most often by naturalizing it to infinity" (Derrida, 1987, 73).

However, obviously, a "well-frame" does not necessarily imply the utilization of artistic principles for propaganda. (Even Futurism cannot be reduced to its relation with Fascism. It is at first an art movement that has respectable contributions to modernism.) What we usually appreciate as a successful piece of art is correspondingly a well-framed structure as well.

Correspondingly, similar to any propaganda, in terms of addressing and affecting sense perception, the film *VfV* is a very well-framed work. Although it is vastly criticized for altering the original graphic novel by several means, as well as re/depoliticizing it, its framework ultimately had a far-reaching effect on many people. Its conceptual details are planned in such a way that in spite of its popular stance, it made a very clear and influential critique especially of contemporary politics and media. When combined with the formal details, it turned into a symbol of resistance for many individuals and groups, %52 and the protests in Taiwan being only some examples provided here.

Furthermore, a discussion of the "aestheticization of politics" or the converse approach of "politicizing aesthetics" must begin by identifying various uses of the normative notion of "aesthetics," and then go on with examining the expression in view of those very uses.

Martin Jay specifies in "The Aesthetic Ideology as Ideology; or, What Does It Mean to Aestheticize Politics," some salient uses of the term "aesthetics." The first one, which directly relates to Benjamin's statements "derives from the *l'art pour l'art* tradition of differentiating a realm called art from those of other human pursuits, cognitive, religious, ethical, economic, and whatever" (Jay, 1992, 43). Here, the autonomy and self-referentiality of art is above everything. Jay right after asserts that "[a] politics aestheticized in this sense will be equally indifferent to such extra-artistic claims, having as its only criterion of value aesthetic worth" (Jay, 1992, 43).

As Jay argues later in his essay, when such "antiaffective, formalist coldness" attitudes are extended to politics, very problematic results may easily follow. "For the disinterestedness that is normally associated with aesthetic seems precisely what is so radically inappropriate in the case of that most basic of human interests, the preservation of life" (Jay, 1992, 44). Rephrasing Benjamin, this actually refers to mankind's self-alienation experiencing "its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order" (Benjamin, 1985, 242).

On the other hand, another use of the term "aesthetics" identified by Jay is again connected with Benjamin's connotation of the "aestheticizing of politics" as much as his insights on the viewing of the work of art before/after the loss of its aura. This one "is identified with the seductive power of images" as Jay mentions "whose appeal to

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mute sensual pleasure seems to undercut rational deliberation." "[T]he aestheticization of politics in this sense means the victory of the spectacle over the public sphere" (Jay, 1992, 45).

At this point, what Benjamin means by the statement "[c]ommunism responds by politicizing art" can be understood. The official approach of the communist's to art, which is Soviet Realism, shows a very strong contrast to "art for art's sake" movement. It is instead dedicated to the realistic representation of proletarian values and life, with the purpose of instructing the masses in order not to be caught by the appeal of the spectacle.

In this respect, although aesthetic worth is an explicit quality of the film *VfV*, it is clearly not the only principle of it. As a matter of fact, the film's aesthetic agenda is only secondary and supplementary to its political agenda. Moreover, the seductiveness of the film not only serves to motivate its audience towards possible actions, but also creates a demand for the graphic novel.
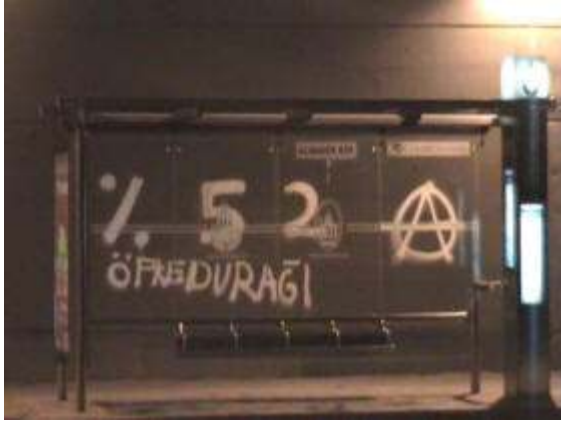
In this respect, late in the Artwork Essay, Benjamin establishes a curious connection between Dadaism and film. In order to do that, he firstly states that "one of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later" (Benjamin, 1985, 237). In this context, he identifies Dadaism as promoting a demand for the film. Because, what their poems and painting "intended and achieved was a relentless destruction of the aura of their creations." What Benjamin means with destruction is the fact that Dadaist works were creating a shock effect on the audience. In this way, they were acquiring a "tactile quality" by
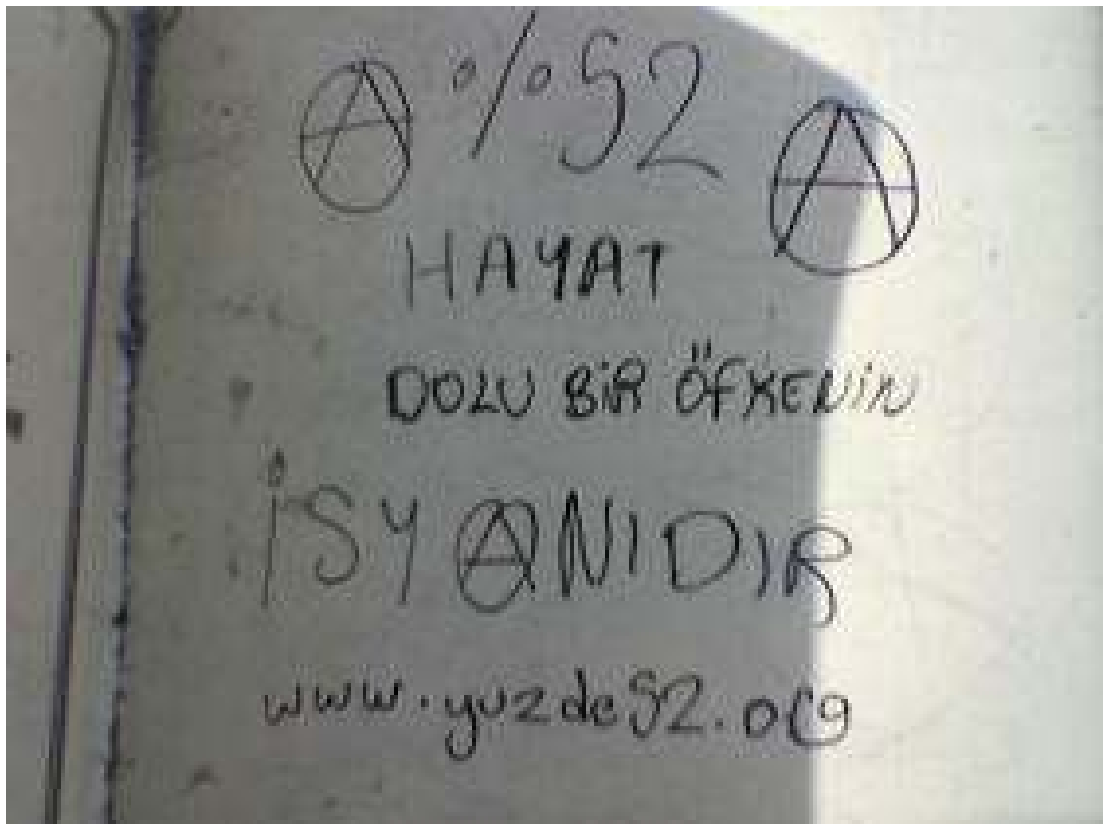
hit[ting] the spectator like a bullet. Film, as Benjamin argues, has this tactile quality as its primary destructing element.
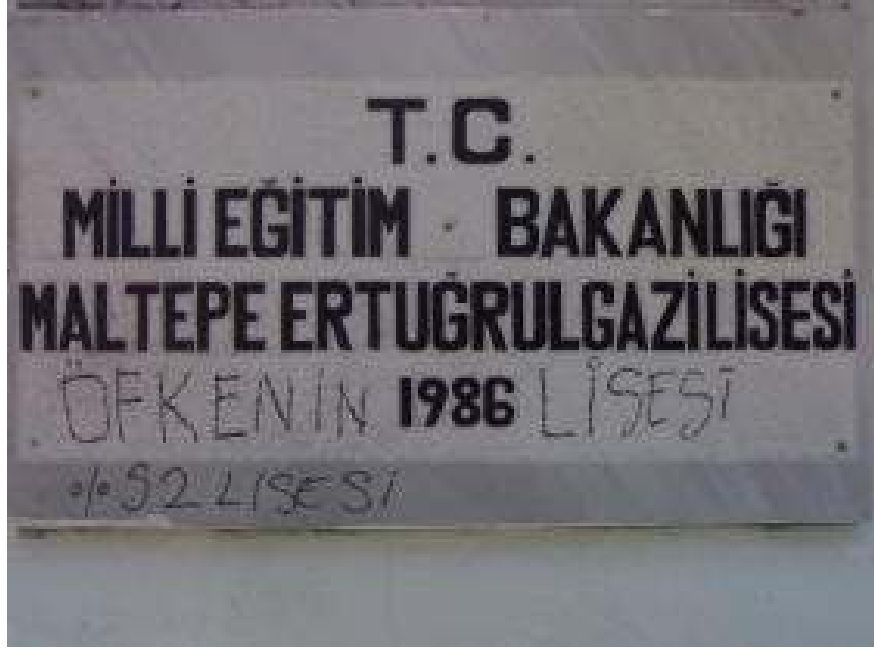
According to Benjamin, via mechanical reproduction, art ceases to be an object of contemplation and instead becomes merely a matter of taste. "The greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public" (Benjamin, 1985, 234). Moreover, when presented before a large public, the responses towards the work of art are delivered in a controlled manner. The critical individual viewpoint is displaced by the predetermined mass response.

What we realize in the film *VfV* is the exploitation of the artistic function and the tactile quality of cinema to the utmost possible. However, these serve "as a weapon […] for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art" (Benjamin, 1985, 218). In other words, the film responds the aestheticized politics of capitalism by politicizing a popular aesthetics.

APPENDIX

T.C.
MİLLİ EĞİTİM · BAKANLIĞI
MALTEPE ERTUĞRULGAZİLİSESİ
ÖFKENİN 1986 LİSESİ
%92 LİSESİ

%82 öfkeye
adanmış bir hayatın
Başkaldırısıdır!

EV DEĞİL
ORMAN
DEVLET DEĞİL
ANARŞİ

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