
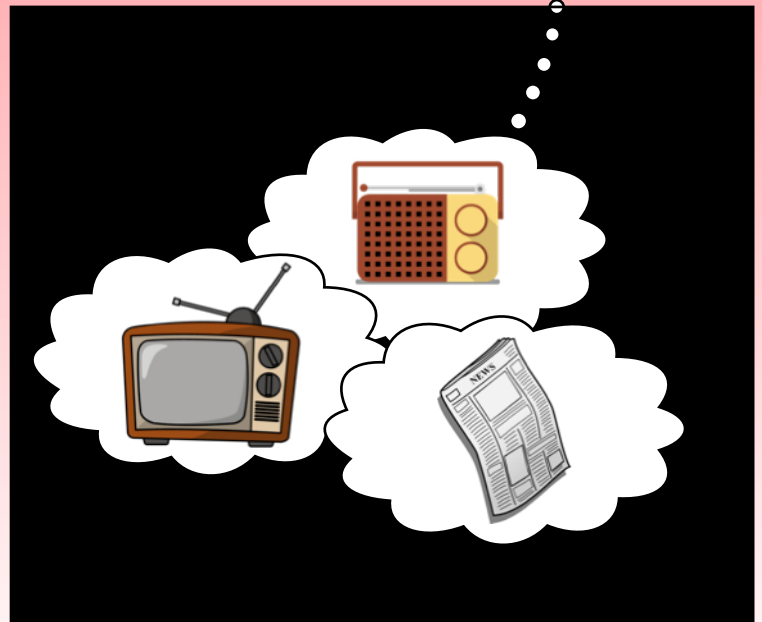
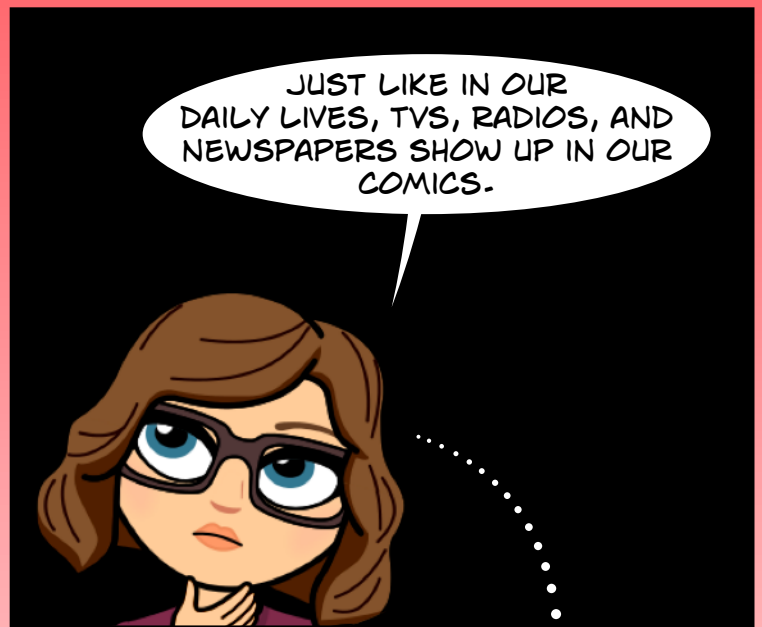




**THE MEANING OF MEDIA
IN PERSEPOLIS AND
THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS**



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21 NOVEMBER 2017



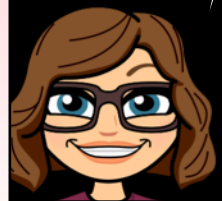
THOUGH *PERSEPOLIS: THE STORY OF CHILDHOOD* BY MARJANE SATRAPI IS A MEMOIR AND *BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS* BY FRANK MILLER IS FICTION, BOTH USE FORMS OF MEDIA WITHIN THE STORY TO ADVANCE THE PLOT AND GIVE READERS MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

IN THEIR OWN WAY, BOTH AUTHORS ALSO COMMENT ON THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN SOCIETY. THERE IS AN EMPHASIS ON THE WAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT USES THE MEDIA AND THE WAY THE MEDIA PRESENTS SENSATIONALIST NEWS AND INFORMATION BASED ON OPINION RATHER THAN FACT.



IN PERSEPOLIS AND THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, THE AUTHORS INSERT MEDIA INTO THE COMIC IN DIFFERENT VISUAL WAYS. WATCH OUT FOR ME AS I POINT THOSE OUT AS WE TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE BOOK.

THEN WE'LL DISCUSS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW THE PEOPLE IN THE MEDIA ARE DRAWN AND THE MAIN CHARACTERS. YOU'LL BE SURPRISED BY THE DIFFERENCE.



SO I'LL USE WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM THIS GUY NAMED SCOTT MCCLOUD.



APPARENTLY, HE'S PRETTY BIG IN THE COMIC WORLD, AND HE WROTE A BOOK CALLED UNDERSTANDING COMICS THAT BREAKS DOWN HOW EVERYTHING WORKS.



BUT LET'S NOT GET AHEAD OF OURSELVES. LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT BOTH COMICS FIRST.



IN PERSEPOLIS, MARJANE SATRAPI IS A 10 YEAR OLD GIRL IN 1980 GROWING UP IN IRAN. THE SHAH'S FALL FROM POWER MADE ROOM FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. MEANWHILE, IRAN AND IRAQ CONTINUED TO DISAGREE OVER BORDER ISSUES AND THE FIGHT EVENTUALLY EVOLVED INTO A FULL ON WAR. FOR MARJANE, IRAN WAS NOT ONCE SHE ONCE KNEW, BUT IT WAS HER HOME, AND SHE GREW AND CHANGED AS IT DID.

PERSEPOLIS

THE STORY OF A CHILDHOOD



MARJANE SATRAPI



YOUNG, SUAVE BRUCE WAYNE IS GONE IN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, REPLACED BY A MUCH OLDER MAN. NOW IN HIS FORTIES, BRUCE RETIRED AS BATMAN SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE. THOUGH HIS BODY ACHES, THE CITY OF GOTHAM IS OVERRUN BY MUTANTS AND AN OLD VILLAIN IS ON THE LOOSE YET AGAIN. BATMAN COMES OUT OF RETIREMENT TO SAVE THE DAY, BUT NOT EVEN SUPERMAN SUPPORTS HIS ACTIONS. WITH A BIG PART OF THE CITY AGAINST HIM, WILL BATMAN SAVE THE DAY?

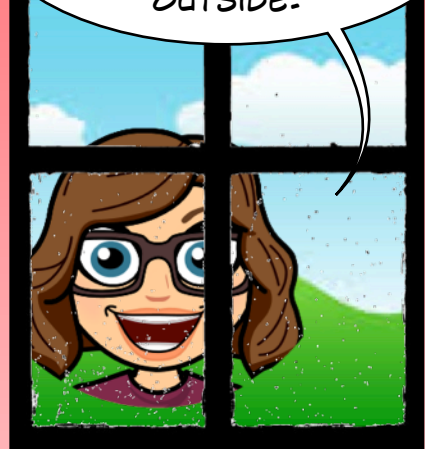
TWO VERY DIFFERENT STORIES RIGHT? SO HOW COULD I POSSIBLY COMPARE THEM?

REMEMBER THE MEDIA!! THAT PART IS IMPORTANT.

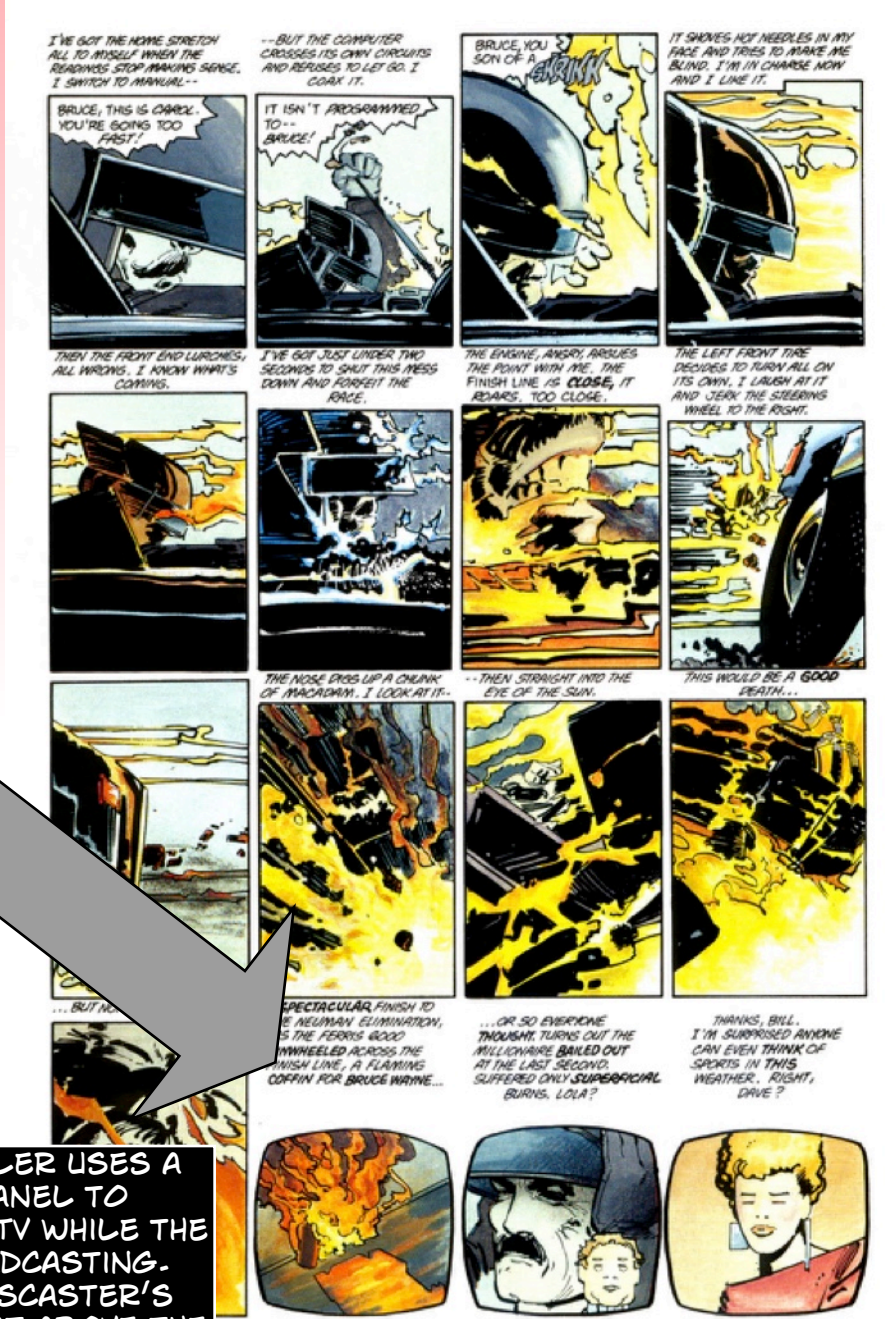


A CHARACTER CAN ONLY SAY SO MUCH. WHILE MARJANE AND BATMAN ARE RUNNING AROUND DEALING WITH THEIR OWN LIVES, THERE IS A WHOLE WORLD THAT IS STILL GOING ON AROUND THEM.

SO THE AUTHORS USE THE MEDIA TO INFORM THEIR READERS AND THE CHARACTERS ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON OUTSIDE.



BATMAN DEFINITELY USES IT MORE. I MEAN IT'S THERE FROM THE FIRST PAGE!



NOTE HOW MILLER USES A ROUNDED PANEL TO REPRESENT THE TV WHILE THE NEWS IS BROADCASTING. HERE THE NEWSCASTER'S COMMENTS FLOAT ABOVE THE SCREEN.



IN PERSEPOLIS, THE USE OF MEDIA IS OFTEN MORE SUBTLE.

YOU HAVE TO LOOK REAL CLOSE.



FOR EXAMPLE, SATRAPI USES IT TO INCORPORATE THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN IRAN INTO HER DAY TO DAY LIFE.



JIMMY CARTER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, REFUSED TO GIVE REFUGE TO THE EXILED SHAH AND HIS FAMILY.



IT LOOKS LIKE CARTER HAS FORGOTTEN HIS FRIENDS. ALL THAT INTERESTS HIM IS OIL!



IT'S ANWAR AL-SADAT WHO WILL ACCEPT HIM IN HIS COUNTRY



SEE HERE THAT SATRAPI JUST DRAWS THE TV AND NEWSCASTER INTO WHAT LOOKS LIKE A LIVING ROOM.



HE IS THE PRESIDENT OF EGYPT.



AND WHY IS HE TAKING IN THE SHAH?

THEY'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR A LONG TIME. THEY BOTH BETRAYED THE COUNTRIES OF OUR REGION BY MAKING A PACT WITH ISRAEL.



IN ANY CASE, AS LONG AS THERE IS OIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST WE WILL NEVER HAVE PEACE.

SATRAPI COULD HAVE TOLD US HERSELF WHAT IT WAS PRESIDENT CARTER SAID, BUT INSTEAD SHE LET US LEARN THE INFORMATION IN THE SAME WAY THAT SHE MOST LIKELY WOULD HAVE AS A CHILD - THROUGH THE TV.



LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE. LET'S ENJOY OUR NEW FREEDOM!

NOW THAT THE DEVIL HAS LEFT!



MAYBE SADAT WELCOMED THE SHAH BECAUSE HIS FIRST WIFE WAS EGYPTIAN.

SURELY NOT! POLITICS AND SENTIMENT DON'T MIX.



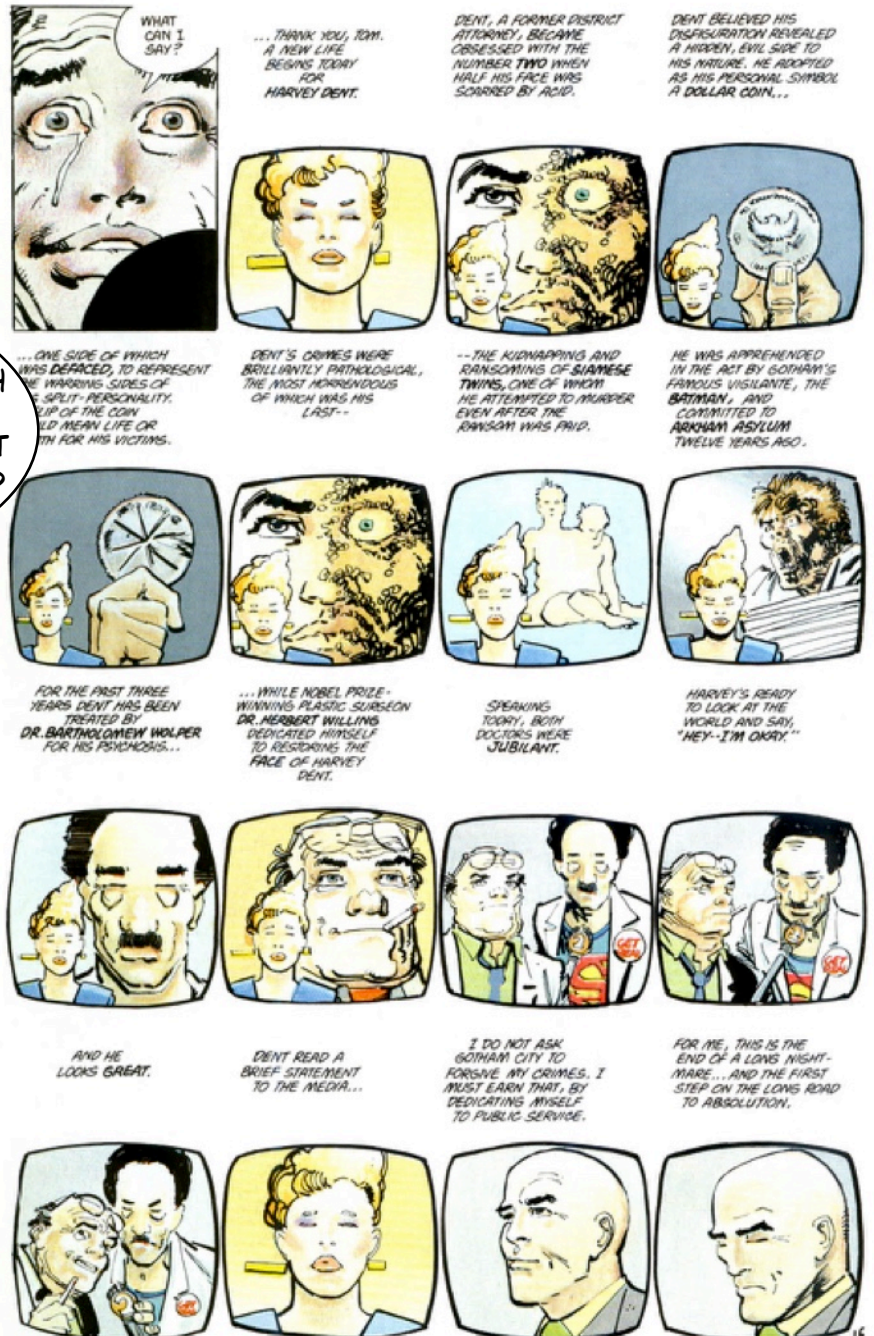
IN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, BECAUSE TV IS CONSTANTLY PRESENT, THE READER FOLLOWS BATMAN'S LIFE AND THE NARRATIVE THAT THE MEDIA IS CONTINUING.



THE FIRST TIME MILLER REALLY USED THE MEDIA TO GIVE A BACKSTORY IS WHEN EXPLAINING WHAT HAPPENED TO HARVEY DENT, A FORMER DISTRICT ATTORNEY WHO TURNED EVIL AFTER HALF OF HIS FACE WAS TRAGICALLY BURNT OFF.



INSTEAD OF BRUCE WAYNE HAVING TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE ABOUT HARVEY DENT, THE MEDIA JUST TELLS THE READER ABOUT HARVEY DENT'S ACCIDENT, REHAB, AND RECENT RELEASE.



THOSE TWO
EXAMPLES ARE NOT THE
ONLY TIME THE BOOKS USE
THE MEDIA TO CONTINUE THE
BACKGROUND NARRATIVE.

IN
PERSEPOLIS, UNLIKE IN
THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS,
THE MEDIA IS NOT JUST
PORTRAYED THROUGH THE
TV.

MARJANE USES...



NEWSPAPERS..



THE KEY

THE IRAQI ARMY HAD CONQUERED THE CITY OF KHORRAMSHAHR. THEIR ARMS WERE MODERN, BUT WHERE IRAQ HAD QUALITY, WE HAD QUANTITY. COMPARED TO IRAQ, IRAN HAD A HUGE RESERVOIR OF POTENTIAL SOLDIERS. THE NUMBER OF WAR MARTYRS EMPHASIZED THAT DIFFERENCE.



HERE
MARJANE USES
THE NEWSPAPER TO
COMMENT ON THE
DIFFERENCES IN THE
IRAQI AND IRANIAN
ARMIES, AND THE
LARGE NUMBER OF
DEATHS THE
IRANIAN FORCES
SUFFERED.



AGAIN SATRAPI JUST
DRAWS IN THE MEDIA.
IN THIS CASE, SHE
PUTS A PHYSICAL
NEWSPAPER IN
MARJANE'S HANDS
FOR HER TO READ FROM.



WHAT IS THAT I SEE?



THERE THE RADIO IS, JUST DRAWN INTO THE BACKGROUND WITH A TEXT BUBBLE COMING FROM IT.



AND RADIOS!



HERE, THE RADIO ANNOUNCER MENTIONS IRAN RECLAIMING A CITY, WHICH MARJANE'S MOTHER THEN COMMENTS THAT IT IS FOR THE FOURTH TIME. THIS MOMENT GIVES MARJANE THE CHANCE TO GIVE MORE DETAIL ABOUT JUST HOW HARD THE WAR IS TO WIN.



ANOTHER TIME THAT THE MEDIA EFFECTIVELY CONTINUES THE NARRATIVE IN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS IS IN THE PAGE FOLLOWING BATMAN'S DEATH.

WHILE GRAVEYARD SCENES ARE SHOWN FOLLOWING BATMAN'S EPIC FIGHT WITH SUPERMAN, THE MEDIA COMMENTARY IS WHAT TELLS THE READER WHAT THEY MAY HAVE ALREADY INFERRED: BATMAN IS "DEAD."



... CLOUD HAS ALMOST COMPLETELY CLEARED IN THE PAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS. THE PRESIDENT HAS DECLARED A STATE OF STABILIZED EMERGENCY...

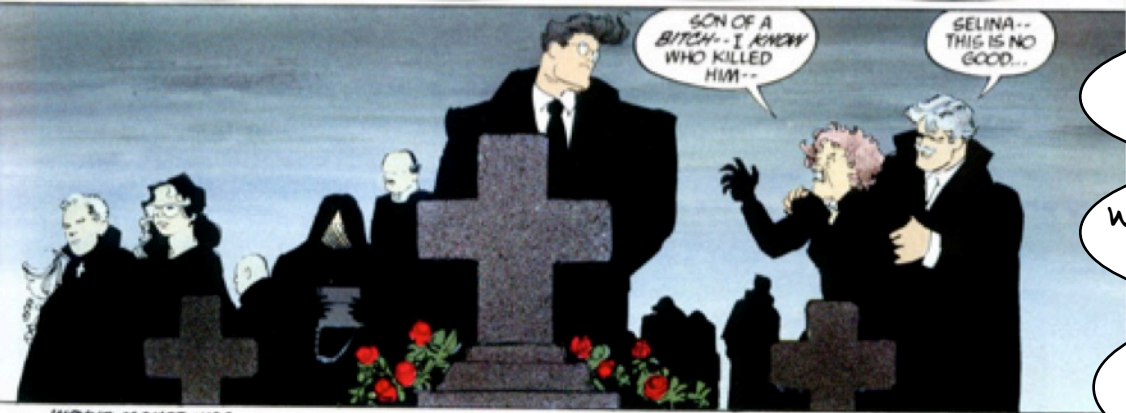
REPEATING THE WEEK'S TOP STORIES-- THE SPECTACULAR CAREER OF THE BATMAN CAME TO A TRAGIC CONCLUSION...

... AS THE CRIMEFIGHTER SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK WHILE BATTLING GOVERNMENT TROOPS,

HE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD BILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE-- AND HIS DEATH HAS PROVEN AS MYSTERIOUS AS HIS LIFE...



THE NEWSCASTER ALSO EXPLAINS THAT GOTHAM IS RETURNING TO NORMAL,



BATMAN WAS IN FACT BILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE,

WAYNE MANOR BURNT TO THE GROUND,

ALFRED, BRUCE WAYNE'S BUTLER, WAS ALSO FOUND DEAD,

WAYNE MANOR WAS LEVELLED BY A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS. SET APPARENTLY, BY WAYNE'S BUTLER, FOUND DEAD FROM A STROKE AT THE SCENE...

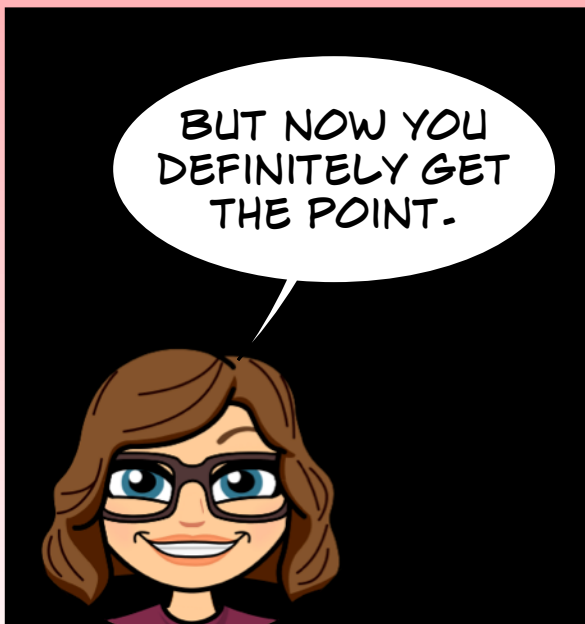
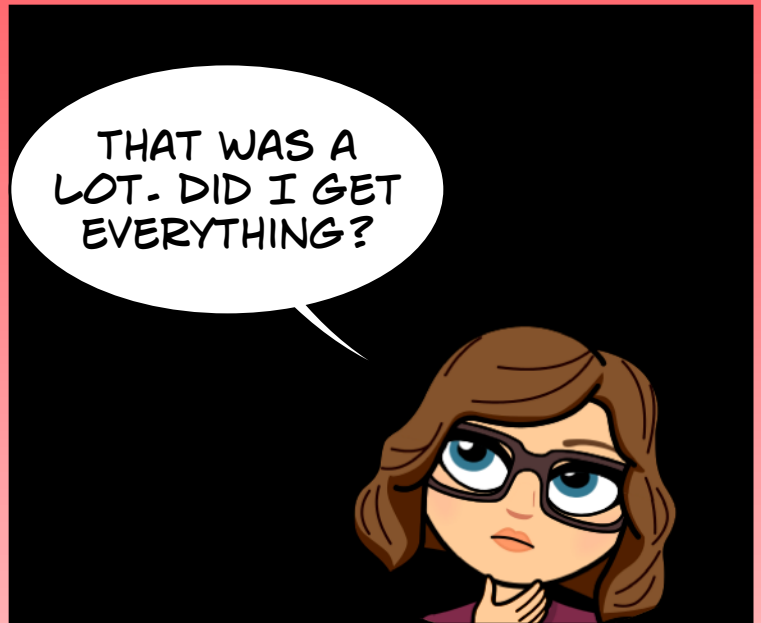
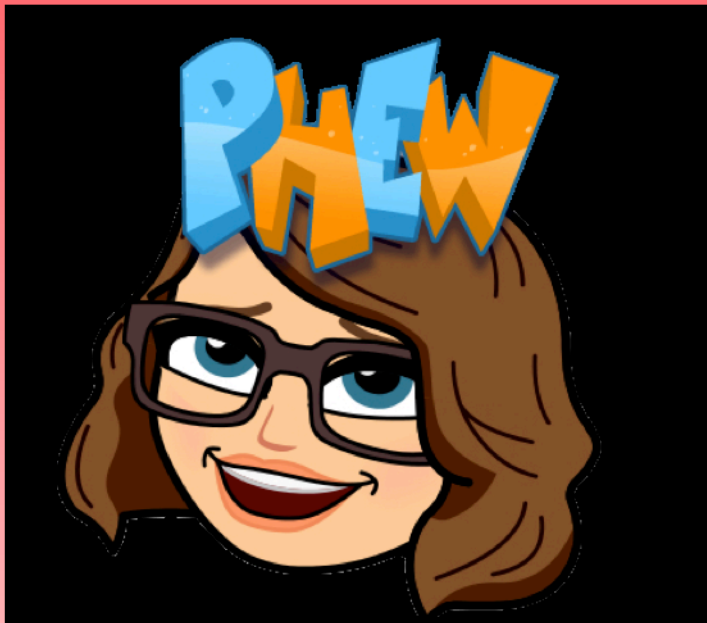
... FLAMES DESTROYED WHATEVER EVIDENCE MAY HAVE EXISTED AS TO BATMAN'S METHODS. ALSO MISSING, IT SEEMS, IS THE WAYNE FORTUNE...

INTERNAL REVENUE AGENTS INVESTIGATED WAYNE'S RECORDS, FINDING HIS EVERY BANK ACCOUNT EMPTY. EVERY STOCK SOLD...



AND THAT BRUCE WAYNE'S FORTUNE SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED





WHILE USING THE MEDIA THROUGHOUT BOTH STORIES, THE AUTHORS ARE ALSO SUBTLY, AND SOMETIMES NOT SO SUBTLY, COMMENTING ON THE MEDIA.



IN PERSEPOLIS, IRAN'S MEDIA REFLECTS THE OPINIONS AND IDEAS OF THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE AT THE TIME.



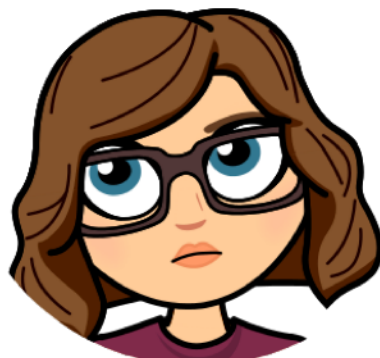
AND SO TO PROTECT WOMEN FROM ALL THE POTENTIAL RAPISTS, THEY DECREED THAT WEARING THE VEIL WAS OBLIGATORY.

WOMEN'S HAIR EMANATES RAYS THAT EXCITE MEN. THAT'S WHY WOMEN SHOULD COVER THEIR HAIR! IF IN FACT IT IS REALLY MORE CIVILIZED TO GO WITHOUT THE VEIL, THEN ANIMALS ARE MORE CIVILIZED THAN WE ARE.

INCREDIBLE!
THEY THINK
ALL MEN ARE
PERVERTS!!



OF COURSE,
BECAUSE THEY
REALLY ARE
PERVERTS!



WHEN RELIGIOUS LEADERS TOOK OVER FOLLOWING THE END OF THE SHAH'S REIN, THEY USED TV TO TELL CITIZENS WHY THEY SHOULD HAVE TO WEAR THE VEIL.

IN BATMAN, PEOPLE HAVE A LOT OF AIRTIME TO JUST GIVE THEIR OPINIONS.



I THINK THAT...

BECAUSE BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS SATIRIZES SOCIETY THROUGHOUT THE COMIC, IT COULD BE THAT THEY ALLOW ANYONE TO SPEAK ON TV IN THE WAY THAT ACTUAL TV STATIONS ALLOW JUST ABOUT ANY "EXPERT" TO SPEAK.



WITHOUT ACTUALLY KNOWING BATMAN'S THOUGHTS AND MOTIVATIONS, THE MEDIA'S OPINION COULD GIVE YOU A DIFFERENT IMPRESSION OF WHO THE MASKED VIGILANTE IS.



HEARING FROM THE TWO SIMULTANEOUSLY GIVES READERS A UNIQUE POINT OF VIEW.

...BUT HE'S HARDLY AS DANGEROUS AS HIS ENEMIES, AS HE? TAKE HARVEY DENT, JUST TO PICK A NAME...

THAT'S CUTE, LANA, BUT HARDLY APPROPRIATE AND HARDLY FAIR TO AS TROUBLED A SOUL AS HARVEY DENT'S.

HE CERTAINLY IS TROUBLE FOR HIS VICTIMS.

WAS LANA WAS, IF HARVEY DENT IS, RETURNING TO CRIME -- AND PLEASE NOTE THAT I SAID IF -- IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE'S NOT IN CONTROL OF HIMSELF.



AND BATMAN IS?

CERTAINLY HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DOING. HIS KIND OF SOCIAL FASCIST ALWAYS DOES.

THEN WHY DO YOU CALL HIM PSYCHOTIC? BECAUSE YOU LIKE TO USE THAT WORD FOR ANY MOTIVE THAT'S TOO BIG FOR YOUR LITTLE MIND? BECAUSE HE FIGHTS CRIME INSTEAD OF PERPETRATING IT?

YOU DON'T CALL EXCESSIVE FORCE A CRIME? HOW ABOUT ASSAULT, RAPE? OR BREAKING AND ENTERING? HUH? TRY RECKLESS EN

PING



SORRY, MORRIE, BUT WE'RE OUT OF TIME -- THOUGH I'M SURE THIS DEBATE IS FAR FROM OVER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CAME IN LATE, TODAY'S POINT VERSUS POINT...

... WAS CONCERNED WITH LAST NIGHT'S ATTACK ON DOZENS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN CRIMINALS BY A PARTY OR PARTIES WHO MAY HAVE BEEN THE BATMAN.

ALSO OF CONCERN IS THIS MORNING'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY POLICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER THAT A DEFACED DOLLAR COIN, WAS FOUND ON ONE OF THE SUSPECTS...

... IN LAST NIGHT'S PIVOTAL ROBBERY THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE CRIMES OF HARVEY DENT WILL RECOGNIZE THIS AS HIS TRADEMARK.



POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON HAS REFUSED TO CONFIRM THAT HE HAS ISSUED AN ARREST ORDER... SCREW THE PRESS!

STILL HOT ON THE HEELS OF BATMAN'S APPARENT RETURN. NO MORE LEAKS, GALLAGHER--OR I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD ON A STICK!

SON OF A... THIS DOES GIVE ONE A SENSE OF DEJA VU...

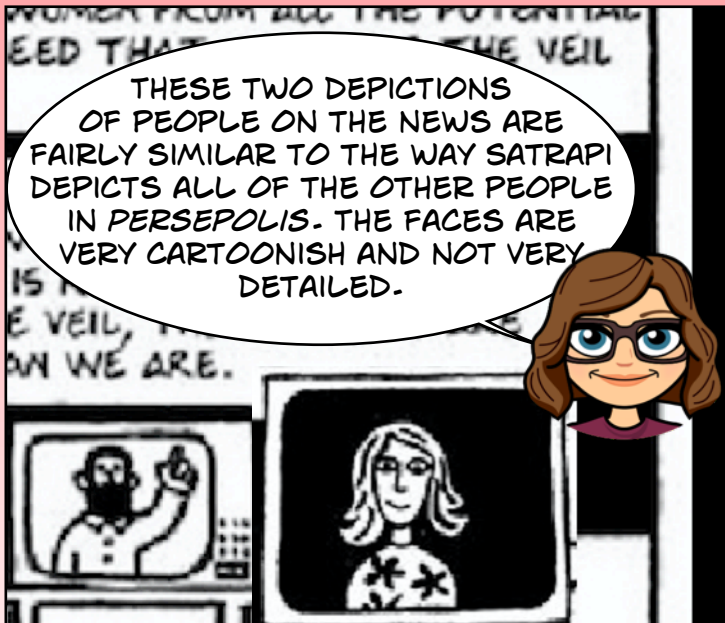
TURN THAT GOD DAMNED THING OFF, MERKEL. A SAD, STRANGE CRIMINAL WAS HARVEY DENT? COMMISSIONER, IF YOU PLEASE...

NOTE THE SQUIGGLY LINES HERE COMING FROM THE TV. IN UNDERSTANDING COMICS, MCCLLOUD MENTIONED THAT CHANGING THE BUBBLE IS ONE WAY TO DISTINGUISH SPEAKERS, OR IN THIS CASE THE TV.

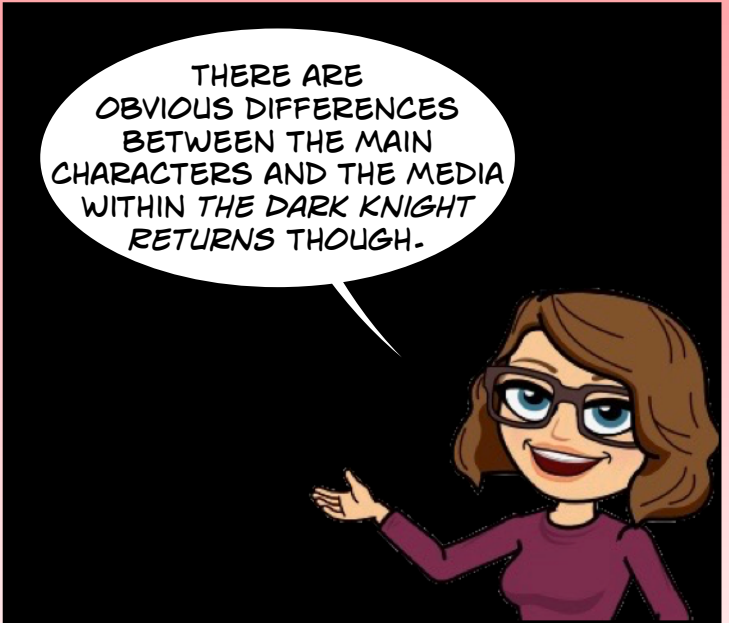




ANOTHER WAY THAT THE AUTHORS COMMENT ON THE MEDIA, IS THROUGH THEIR DEPICTION OF THE PEOPLE SPEAKING. MILLER USES A MUCH MORE ABSTRACT STYLE IN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, WHICH IS ANOTHER SIGN OF THE TONE THE BOOK TAKES ON THE MEDIA.



THESE TWO DEPICTIONS OF PEOPLE ON THE NEWS ARE FAIRLY SIMILAR TO THE WAY SATRAPI DEPICTS ALL OF THE OTHER PEOPLE IN PERSEPOLIS. THE FACES ARE VERY CARTOONISH AND NOT VERY DETAILED.



THERE ARE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MAIN CHARACTERS AND THE MEDIA WITHIN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS THOUGH.



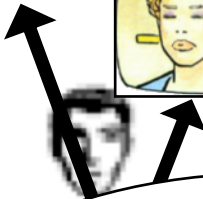
HERE WE SEE A NEWSCASTER, BRUCE WAYNE, AND A HOST FOR A SPECIALTY SHOW. THESE ARE ALL VERY DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER. I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE THESE FALL ON MCCLOUD'S CHART, AND THEN WE'LL TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE POSSIBLE REASONS WHY.





HERE THE DIFFERENT IMAGES ARE LAID OUT ON THE PICTURE PLANE. FROM REAL (MORE DETAILED) TO LANGUAGE (LESS DETAILED), AND UP TO ABSTRACT, THEY ALL FALL INTO DIFFERENT PLACES.

BRUCE WAYNE IS THE MAIN CHARACTER AND THEREFORE MORE DETAILED, MAKING HIM SEEM MORE REAL.

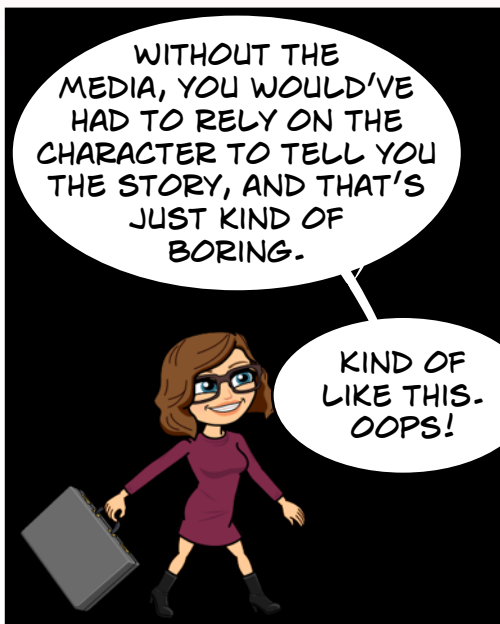
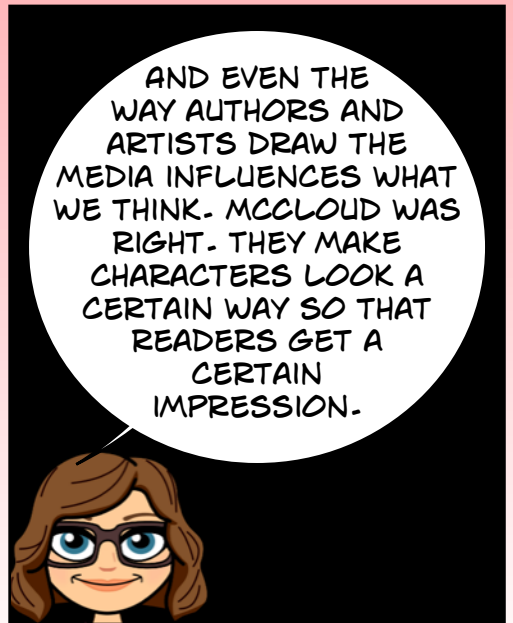
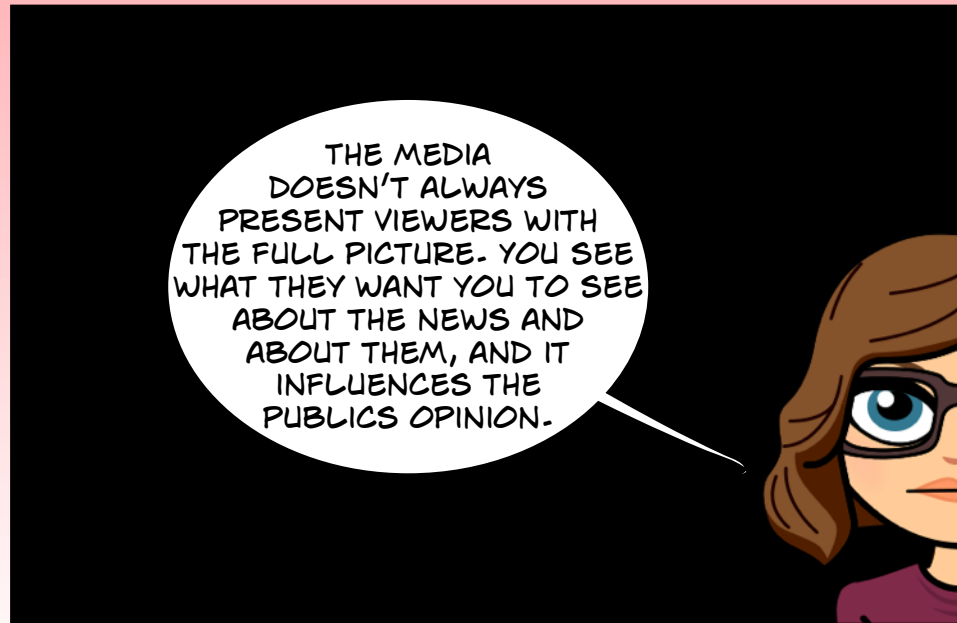
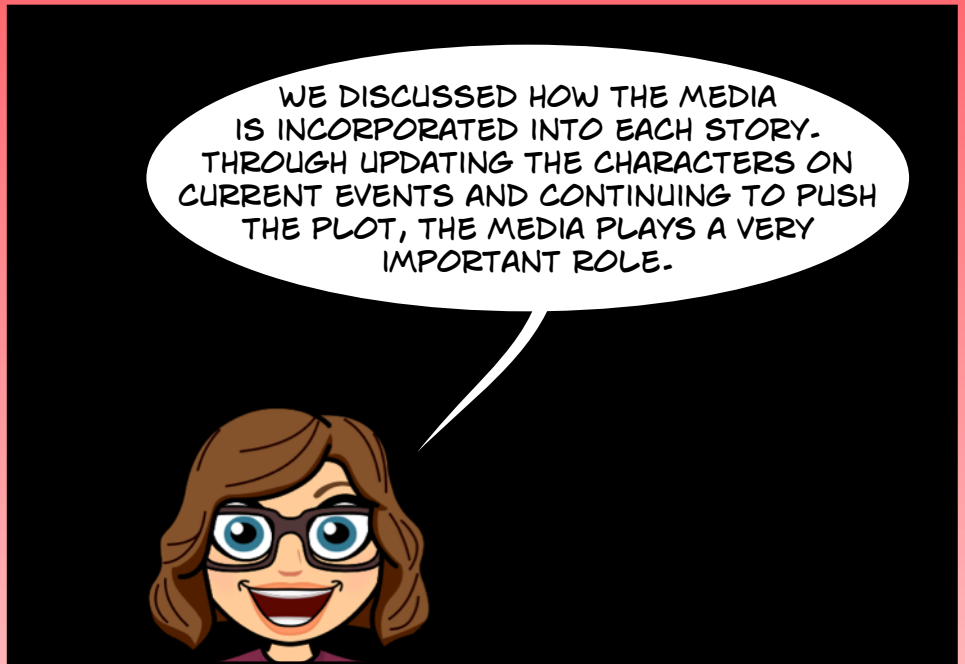


Reality

Language



COMPARED TO BRUCE WAYNE, BOTH EXAMPLES OF THE MEDIA ARE BOTH LESS DETAILED, AND THE MAN IS MORE ABSTRACT THAN THE WOMAN. THIS COULD BE MILLER'S WAY OF VISUALLY DEPICTING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WOMAN, A NEWSCASTER, AND THE MAN, THE FRONT RUNNER OF AN OPINION HOUR. HE COULD BE DEPICTED AS MORE ABSTRACT BECAUSE HE IS LESS RELIABLE OR SEEN IN A MORE NEGATIVE LIGHT THAN THE WOMAN.



THANKS FOR READING!

