


*(Shadow of) The Raven: an intermedial adaptation from literature
to music /*

*‘(Shadow of) The Raven’: uma adaptação intermediária da
literatura para a música*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at establishing theoretical and analytical dialogues between intermedial studies and adaptation studies in the analysis of the conceptual album *Shadow of the Raven* (2007), by the American band, Nox Arcana, which is a reference to Edgar Allan Poe's literary text. Considering the importance of going beyond the traditional vector literature-cinema and elaborating a metalanguage able to involve other textual architectures, as suggested by Hattner (2010) concerning the circulation of literature in conceptual albums, intermedial studies collaborate on thinking about the role of convergence among different media in the production of meanings; besides, it contributes to overcoming a binary reading of medial transpositions in adaptations (DINIZ, 2018). Guided by the construction of collaborative knowledge between theoretical perspectives and research interests, we outline our first reflections on the transition of a predominantly written medium, the literary, to a hearing and non-alphabetical medium, the instrumental music. The theoretical framework is based on authors from adaptation studies (HATTNER, 2010; HUTCHEON, 2006, 2013;

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MILTON, 2015), intermedial studies (RAJEWSKY, 2005; CLÜVER, 2006; DINIZ, 2018), and music (WISNIK, 1989; SHUKER, 2002).

KEYWORDS: Adaptation studies; Intermedial studies; Literature; Music; Shadow of the Raven.

RESUMO

*Este estudo tem como objetivo estabelecer diálogos teóricos e analíticos entre os estudos de intermedialidade e de adaptação na análise do álbum conceitual *Shadow of the Raven* (2007), da banda estadunidense Nox Arcana, que faz referência às obras de Edgar Allan Poe. Ao considerar a importância de ir além do vetor tradicional literatura-cinema e de elaborar uma metalinguagem capaz de abarcar outras arquiteturas textuais, como sugere Hattnher (2010) em relação à circulação da literatura em álbuns conceituais, os estudos de intermedialidade colaboram para pensarmos o papel das convergências entre diferentes mídias na produção de sentidos; além disso, contribuem também para superarmos uma leitura binária das transposições midiáticas nas adaptações (DINIZ, 2018). A partir da construção de um conhecimento compartilhado entre abordagens teóricas e interesses de pesquisa, esboçamos um ensaio inicial sobre a passagem de um meio predominantemente verbal, o literário, para um meio auditivo e não alfabético, o musical-instrumental. O aporte que fundamenta nossas discussões está baseado em teóricos dos estudos de adaptação (HATTNER, 2010; HUTCHEON, 2006, 2013; MILTON, 2015), dos estudos de intermedialidade (RAJEWSKY, 2005; CLÜVER, 2006; DINIZ, 2018) e da música (WISNIK, 1989; SHUKER, 2002).*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estudos da adaptação; Estudos de intermedialidade; Literatura; Música; *Shadow of the Raven*.

1 Introduction

Integrating intermediality with adaptation studies may appear, at first sight, such a thorny proposal; however, we aim to show how we are thinking about the post-modern convergent phenomena in both areas. As well stated by Diniz (2018), the term adaptation “should go beyond a concept of a binary reading in mediatic transpositions” (p. 58, our translation). This is a way of contributing to the reflections around the conceptual and terminological difficulties, encouraging the revision of paradigmatic presuppositions that we defend, and inciting the studies in both areas of knowledge to new perspectives and applicabilities. Clüver (2006) argues that intermedial or inter-arts studies involve not only a simple transposition from a medium to another but transpositions among what we indistinctively name “artistic expressions” (Music, Literature, Dance, Painting, Architecture, Opera, Theater, and Cinema). In agreement with the author, these studies “start from the comparison between literature and anything else under the general concept of ‘art’” (p. 11, our translation), even belonging to different fields. However, Diniz (2018) remarks that the term “intermedial studies” is the most recent to designate the phenomenon that covers the relationships between texts that circulate in different semiotic systems. Clüver emphasizes that the term medium is related to the transmission of “a sign (or a complex of signs) to, and among, human beings with the help of appropriate transmitters, which can even overcome spatial and/or temporal distance” (2006, p. 24, our translation). Diniz notes that arts such as dance, music, or painting “can also

communicate through their signs” (2018, p. 43, our translation) and, thus, can be considered media as well.

Regarding adaptation studies, Milton (2015) theorizes that they also focus on the transition from one medium to another. Its origin is the “monolingual ramification of departments such as the English literature department, theater, cinema, and music studies” (p. 18). Similarly to intermediality, the adaptation studies started being established as an area from the dialogue with other arts. However, the most consistent and recognized dialogue inside Language studies (including common sense) is undoubtedly the adaptation from literature to cinema. In addition to this traditional literature-cinema vector, Hattner (2010) points out that, nowadays, adaptation studies should also include the “elaboration of a metalanguage able to contemplate the typical characteristics and processes of [other] textual architectures” (p. 151, our translation). As an example, Hattner (2010) indicates the circulation of literature in concept albums, such as *Shadow of the Raven* (2007), by the American band Nox Arcana, an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s works to music. The author considers it as one of the recent epistemological challenges of adaptation studies, once we cannot ignore the interferences of media convergences in our senses, interactions, and concept of art. As reported by Diniz (2018), the transformation of literature into music can be classified as an intermedial phenomenon because it combines “at least two conventionally different media” (p. 46, our translation).

In this type of combination, the challenge increases when we think about the importance of having not only theoretical and literary knowledge to build a solid field for this kind of convergence, but also the language and techniques of the other side of the vector being analyzed, in this case, music. It is precisely this stimulus that motivated the development of this study, whose aim is to unite adaptation studies to intermediality in the analysis of the transition from literature to music. We intend to sketch an initial essay about this considerably unusual vector, in which the transposition from a predominantly verbal medium, such as the literary, to a non-alphabetical medium – the musical-instrumental – takes place. Milton (2015) recognizes that the lack of analysis concerning interlinguistic elements (including the musical language) in adaptations to other media is the biggest obstacle to adaptation studies. It is impossible to master the terminology, taxonomy, and approaches of every area of knowledge which contemplating the processes of adaptation, mainly because adaptation “has run amok” (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 11): it has even reached theme parks and virtual realities.

In this regard, it is necessary to settle our *locus* of speech, whose point of contact is the teaching in Letras courses, and the differential aspect is the music education of one of the authors¹. We believe in the construction of collaborative knowledge, not only concerning the theoretical approaches (adaptation and intermedial studies), but also the interests of research (literature and music). It is this idea of collective agency postulated by Lévy (1997) in the area of cyberspace that incited us “to think as a group, concentrate our intellectual and spiritual forces, and negotiate practical real-time solutions to the complex problems we must inevitably confront” (p. xxvii). On that account, we can associate our competences to the other peoples’ skills in such a way that we can act better when together than when separate from each other.

For this reason, this paper aims to establish theoretical and analytical dialogues between intermedial and adaptation studies in the analysis of the concept album *Shadow of the Raven*² (2007), by the American band Nox Arcana, which is a reference to E. A. Poe’s work.

2 Intermedial adaptations: beyond the obstacles

Adaptation studies still come under criticism when compared to intermedial studies, despite its increasing popularity. Hutcheon (2006, p. xii) agrees that “whether it be in the form of a videogame or a musical, an adaptation is likely to be greeted as minor and subsidiary and certainly never as good as the ‘original’”. Considering that this “original” is traditionally a written text, it is important to contest any pejorative approach by proposing “adaptation as adaptation” and challenging principles related to logophilia. By doing so, we problematize the sacralization of words in opposition to other languages.

Besides, if we consider that the adapter is the first responsible for the interpretation of the source text, followed by the target audience interpretation, the reception of the adaptation should be valued both on an individual and collective level. This approach validates the conception based on the suggestion that two observers never build the same image of a work of art, whether it be literature or music. That’s why in any medium, what “is presented to comprehension, interpretation,

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² Available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdTLsALAAf4-3uXGoNgyThJ70KjaQ00K> . Accessed: May 13th, 2020.

and critical reaction as a text is framed simultaneously and spontaneously through respective conventions of current reception, ideological attitudes, and intertextual interferences” (CLÜVER, 2006, p. 16, our translation).

In this regard, we build meaning under situational limits (and we are never out of a situation, Fish (1980) had already pointed out in *Is there a text in this class?*), and this assumption implies that an immutable and definite interpretation to texts will never be possible. Every meaning presented as normative, whether by literary or musical critics, is determined institutionally and is not intrinsic to any form of art. Considering that institutions are not universal and timeless, these same authorized and prescriptive meanings in a specific moment can be changed whenever new demands (re) arise. As members of an institution, we inherit its ways of making meanings:

That is why it is so hard for someone whose very being is defined by his position within an institution [...] to explain to someone outside it a practice or a meaning that seems to him to require no explanation, because he regards it as natural (FISH, 1980, p. 320-321).

In other words, a musician will listen to a song paying attention to different elements when compared to an ordinary listener. The meaning that first comes up depends on the person’s background and on what is more common in that specific context and situation of reception. The reason is that “communication occurs within situations and that to be in a situation is already to be in possession of [...] a structure of assumptions, of practices understood to be relevant in relation to purposes and goals that are already in place” (FISH, 1980, p. 318).

This discussion is particularly relevant in adaptation studies because it demystifies the idea of a literary text’s essence embedded in language. If considered so, no intermedial adaptation would be able to transport the meaning of a source text, especially when dealing with instrumental music expressed through a different medium from the written word. Clüver (2006) notes that to consider such aspects in intermedial adaptation studies means taking into account the target work to investigate the processes and movements responsible for the format in the target medium. On that account, we get closer to more functional aspects and keep our discussions off simplistic analysis on the unnecessary and illusory search for a supposed fidelity since “the new version does not replace [or intend to replace] the original” (p. 17). Even though intermedial adaptations have been frequently characterized by their subversive presence, mainly in transpositions from the

canonical literature, in this study, we approach the literary text as a concrete, material, and multimodal medium, in opposition to a mythical, inaccessible, and monomodal text.

Thinking about the multimodal aspect of the arts allows broader perspectives on how meanings transform and are transformed in the dynamics of meaning construction, unlike the traditional dynamics of western graphocentric culture: from left to right, from top to bottom (IEDEMA, 2003). This deconstructive approach contributes to the idea of communication through non-verbal signs as well, for example, instrumental music, leading us to the conclusion that the language and the alphabet cannot embrace all forms of communication, of domains of human experience, and of meaning construction in postmodernity.

3 The modes of engagement in *Shadow of the Raven's* intermedial adaptation

Considering the previously mentioned, we will analyze the concept album *Shadow of the Raven* (2007)³, an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's works to instrumental music, composed by the American band Nox Arcana. The band was formed in 2003 by Joseph Vargo and William Piotrowski and is known for creating haunting soundscapes with strong gothic appeal and classic horror references. In an interview for the *Music Street Journal* (2006)⁴, Vargo classifies his music style as *gothic fantasy* in which a depressive and obscure atmosphere of mystery prevails. Besides, Vargo has created various artistic and literary projects within the same theme, including his album covers. However, in this paper, we will concentrate our analysis on the musical aspect of the adaptation. In keeping with Vargo's literary interests, besides the album based on Poe, there are also other concept albums: *Transylvania* (2005), musically expounding upon Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; *Necronomicon* (2004) pays homage to H.P. Lovecraft, and *Blackthorn Asylum* (2009) revisits the work *From Beyond*, by the same author; *Carnival of Lost Souls* (2006) takes listeners inside a traveling circus that harbors living nightmares and sinister secrets, in the tradition of Bradbury; and finally, *Grimm Tales* (2009), album that brings the childhood nightmares of the Brothers Grimm to life.

According to Shuker (2002), concept albums and rock operas first emerged in the 1960s, after Pete Townshend of the English band *The Who*, credited as pioneering the concept, released

³ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdTLsALAAf4--3uXGoNgyThJ70KjaQ00K>. Accessed: May 13th, 2020.

⁴ Available at http://musicstreetjournal.com/interviews_display.cfm?id=100086. Accessed: May 18th, 2020.

Tommy (1969), which was adapted to the cinema and the Broadway too. Shuker argues that concept albums and rock operas usually are unified by a theme, which can be instrumental, compositional, narrative, or lyrical and, in this form, “the album changed from a collection of heterogeneous songs into a narrative work with a single theme” (2002, p. 5).

The biggest challenge for the analysis of *Shadow of the Raven* is that, unlike other concept albums, such as *The Raven* (2003), also based on Poe, by the American musician Lou Reed, or *A-lex*, by the Brazilian band Sepultura, based on the novel *A Clockwork Orange*, by Anthony Burgess, the Nox Arcana’s album is instrumental. Kraciuk (2013) points out that *A-lex* (2009) may be considered a typical example of adaptation from literature to music since its construction and its lyrics follow the structure of the original book and the events that take place in the plot. Somehow his rationale corroborates the argument that, in some cases, fans expect the search for fidelity towards the source text in the adaption (HATTNER, 2010). Hence, “the lyrical layer of the album is supported by music to evoke certain feelings while listening to the album” (KRACIUK, 2013, p. 4) for “music can create a certain mood, can evoke various emotions in listeners, and can act as a background for lyrics” (p.20). Hutcheon (2013) acknowledges that, in the case of adaptations to musicals or operas, “music offers aural ‘equivalents’ for characters’ emotions and, in turn, provokes affective responses in the audience; sound, in general, can enhance, reinforce, or even contradict the visual and verbal aspects” (p. 23). However, how to undertake the analysis when we deal with instrumental music, as in *Shadow of the Raven*? In Hutcheon’s opinion, we should not assess an adaptation based on its degree of fidelity to the source text, but based on the level of ability and creativity of the adapter to deal with the source text as an act of appropriating, interpreting and creating something new. She emphasizes that, when dealing with different media, it is necessary to treat “adaptation as adaptation”, i.e., as both a product and a process. That involves an interpretive doubling, where the audience moves back and forth between the source work and the work they are experiencing. Concerning the modes of engagement, besides the three categories proposed by Hutcheon (*tell*, *show*, and *interact*), we have added a fourth (*feel*) to analyze the adaptation to the instrumental music we are looking at in this paper. Unlike a live performance on stage where the audience interacts actively close to musicians (singing along, jumping or dancing), due to physical proximity and people’s human heat, listening to an instrumental music album is a more introspective task that requires attentive listening of the sounds and provokes different feelings and sensations compared to the former. To clarify this fourth category, we will draw on

attention to the seminal work *O som e o sentido*⁵, by the Brazilian professor, researcher, essayist, and musician José Miguel Wisnik (1989), for whom the intangible aspect of music, unlike the verbal language, expresses the communication between the material and the spiritual world. According to Wisnik:

Music does not refer to, nor designate, visible things, as the verbal language does, but it strongly points to the non-verbalizable. It crosses defensive nets that the consciousness and the crystalized language oppose to its action and touches striking linking points of the mental and the bodily, the intellectual and the affective. That is why it is capable of provoking the most passionate adhesions and the most violent refusals (WISNIK, 1989, p. 28, our translation).

From this point on, intermediality studies are essential to help us understand the adaptations involving music as a target medium. According to Rajewsky (2005), the concept of intermediality can be divided into three subcategories: (1) as a *medial transposition* which transforms a given medium product into another, such as the adaptations from literature to the cinema; (2) as *multimediality/media* combination which includes the articulation of different media to create a new one, e.g. opera, film, theater, performances, computer or Sound Art installations; (3) as *intermedial references* through medial border-crossing, such as references from a literary text in a movie and vice versa. For us, the third subcategory is the closest to the adaptation proposed by Vargo. As Rajewsky makes clear:

Intermedial references are thus to be understood as meaning-constitutional strategies that contribute to the media product's overall signification: the media product uses its own media-specific means, either to refer to a specific, individual work produced in another medium [...] or to refer to a specific medial subsystem (such as a certain film genre) [...]. The given product thus constitutes itself partly or wholly in relation to the work, system, or subsystem to which it refers [...]. Rather than combining different medial forms of articulation, the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means (2005, p. 52-53).

Bearing this in mind, the adaptation of Poe's works to the instrumental music in *Shadow of the Raven* constitutes a way of evoking or simulating aspects of the source text through the use of the musical language and its specificities. Because it is a non-verbal language, the abstract

⁵ Available only in Portuguese.

character of instrumental music uses specific artifices and resources of its medium to make sense of the source work. Therefore, we have to be aware of a series of elements, such as the choice of instruments, timbre, composition techniques, and performance styles. For Rajewsky, a given product or adaptation cannot genuinely reproduce the elements and structures of the source medium through the specificities of its target medium, for “it can only evoke or imitate them” (2005, p.55). Hence, an intermedial reference “can only generate an illusion of another medium’s specific practices” (p.55). In Rajewsky’s view, this illusion “solicits in the recipient of a literary text, say, a sense of filmic, painterly, or musical qualities, or—more generally speaking—a sense of a visual or acoustic presence” (p.55), depending on the modality of adaptation one is being exposed. Nowadays, we have the opportunity to attend live concerts where holograms simulate the presence of deceased celebrities, such as Freddie Mercury (*Queen*) and Cazuza (*Barão Vermelho*). It is noticeable that Rajewsky used the verb “imitate”, for the word shadow also means: (a) an imperfect and faint representation; (b) an imitation of something, according to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary entry. However, we do not know exactly if the title of the album *Shadow of the Raven* indicates an imperfect attempt to imitate Poe’s works – as a *mea culpa* in which Vargo assumes his incapacity to transpose the allegedly “essence” of the source literary text –, an incidental coincidence, or whether the title reinforces the dark character of Poe’s works, since *shadow* also means the darkness or diminished light caused by the blocking of a light source.

However, we have to be careful not to connect the term “illusion” to its pejorative meaning, that is, as deceiving. We understand that the adaptation of Poe’s works to Vargo’s music is connected to the concept of *phantasmagoria*. The term was coined in London in the early 19th century to describe ghost-shows (the precursor of holograms, ironically speaking). Ghost-shows were “illusionistic exhibitions and public entertainments in which ‘specters’ were produced through the use of a magic lantern (CASTLE, 1988, p.27) and mirrors in a dark room. Castle argues that the initial connotation of the term *phantasmagoria* as an external public performance for an audience has changed to refer to something internal and subjective, i.e., “the phantasmic imagery of the mind” which the author named “the spectralization or ghostfying of mental space” (p.29). In other words, it would be a kind of “absorption of ghosts into the world of thought” in which ghosts are, of course, only “things of the mind” (p.29). According to Castle, this concept also contributed to the establishment of rational thought. Taylor (2017) analyses the aspects of *phantasmagoria* in *Liederkreis, Op. 39*, a composition by Robert Schumann made out of the poetic work *Intermezzo*, by Eichendorff. Taylor remarks that music has the potential to provoke phantasmagoric effects

through the creation of a cognitive atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, as well as a sense of motion unallied with any apparent physical object. For this reason, we contend that the adaptation from literature to the instrumental music in *Shadow of the Raven* is more connected to the mode of engagement of *feeling*, since the three categories proposed by Hutcheon (2013) are not suitable enough for the specificities of this kind of medium.

4 A brief interlude⁶

We beg the reader to excuse us for a moment to tell an anecdote that may be helpful to understand the analysis that we will carry out throughout the next section. In 2017, during a stay in Toronto, Canada, we had the opportunity to visit the exhibition *Guillermo del Toro: at home with monsters* (AGO, 2017). It portrayed the work of the Mexican filmmaker, strongly influenced by the Victorian Era and writers like Poe, Lovecraft, Shelley, and Stoker. The exhibition was organized based on the fantastic and horror universe witnessed in del Toro's films, characters, creations, and creatures, as well as on the authors that influenced him. As we walked into the exhibition, we could listen to a piece of melancholic background music, a minor key melody performed by a faraway instrument that let the atmosphere even darker. As we sneaked into the other rooms, that gloomy melody was getting closer and more intense. When we finally approached it, we could contemplate the formidable instrument that was provoking enormous discomfort. Situated right at the center of the room, on a Persian rug with shades of purple and blood red, we could stare the brown parlor grand piano. On its lid, there was only a triple candleholder and the old chart of the *Piano Sonata 14 (Moonlight Sonata)*, by Beethoven⁷, performed by a pale young pianist wearing a black slightly worn-out suit. Nevertheless, that was not an ordinary room. At the entrance, several ravens were sitting above the chamber door. That was the anteroom of the original setting replica of the poem *The Raven*, by E. A. Poe, where the very author (probably made by wax), sitting at his armchair, could be contemplated by the visitors while they listened to the rain clapping at the window and the thunders rumbling far away.

This brief flashback seeks to illustrate the way that music, perhaps the most abstract and subjective form of art, when inserted in some contexts, such as the beginning or the end of a love

⁶ A piece of instrumental music performed as entertainment between the acts of a play or opera.

⁷ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tr0otuiQuU>. Accessed: May 19th, 2020.

relationship, a movie soundtrack or a TV commercial, can exacerbate different feelings and sensations in the human mind. According to Wisnik, a sound “is a differentiated object among the concrete objects that inhabit our imagination because, despite being clear, it is invisible and impalpable” (1989, p. 28, our translation). For us, as ordinary visitors at that admirable and disquieting exhibition, the melody of Beethoven could translate the ineffable and express our feelings at that moment: a feel of anguish, fear, but, at the same time, contemplation and fascination. Wisnik recognizes that “music, a non-referential language that does not designate objects, cannot cause fear, but it can cause anguish, which is connected, in Freud’s view, to a state of undetermined expectation that takes place due to the absence of the object” (1989, p. 29). Undoubtedly, the experience we had at the exhibition would not be the same without the music and the piano. The anguish caused by the anxiety in discovering the source of that creepy melody, allied to the presence of del Toro’s creations and creatures, strongly corroborated the feeling inflicted on the visitors.

Considering the episode narrated above, we conjecture that the biggest challenge would be the development of a methodology that supports the analysis of intermedial adaptations involving music as the target medium, such as the literature-music vector. Such an enterprise could evoke the understanding that to achieve a thick description, in Geertz terms, of the analyzed object, it would be necessary for both the analyst and the reader to know some music theory concepts. In this sense, the analyst must consider that “most of what we need to comprehend a particular event, ritual, custom, idea, or whatever is insinuated as background information before the thing itself is directly examined” (GEERTZ, 1973, p.9), i.e., there is a “multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render” (p.10). However, to make our musical-theoretical analysis more accessible to our reader, we will take into consideration what Wisnik (1989) suggests in his book:

I do not demand a musical education from my reader, but the sense of listening, and the disposition to think, like in music, in different keys – where there is a combination of sound perception, body interaction, and also the poetic thought, the sociohistorical thought, the anthropological thought, or any other (p.12, our translation).

Furthermore, as Wisnik (1989) suggests, we try to avoid all technical terminology that cannot be explained or exemplified. The examples may be in the form of references to music

snippets from the album *Shadow of the Raven* or links to other artist's songs that may be helpful for our reader to understand the concepts discussed in this analysis.

5 Dissipating “The Shadow(s) of the Raven”

As already mentioned, in *Shadow of the Raven*⁸, the songs do not have lyrics, except for tracks 1 and 21 (the first and the last in the album) that bring texts recited by Vargo. On the one hand, track 1, *Darkest Hour*, is a kind of prologue in which the composer performs a monologue⁹ to invite the listeners to get in the macabre universe of his tale. By the end of his speech, Vargo introduces the following songs saying the verse “once upon a midnight dreary”, an allusion to the poem *The Raven* (POE, 2002). On the other hand, on the last track of the album, *Nevermore*, the musician recited the final stanza¹⁰ of the same poem that, in this case, works as the album’s epilogue.

Firstly, it is noticeable the preponderance of minor keys in the album. However, what does that mean? Initially, it is useful to make a brief distinction between major and minor chords. Perhaps our reader has already had the opportunity to study any musical instrument in a music school, with a teacher, or even watching videos on the internet. If this is the case, the reader must have heard that major chords, e.g. C major, E major, G major etc., usually sound “joyful”. On the other hand, minor chords are the ones that usually sound “blue”. Although it is a simplistic explanation, it will help us clarify our analysis since we do not intend to carry on intricate theorizations that may confuse our reader. A useful example is one of the most popular and well-known tunes in Western Hemisphere, *Happy Birthday to You*, composed in a major key. Obviously, this is a joyful song. Therefore, it would be odd if the composer had used a minor key. However, the previously

⁸ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdTLSALAAf4--3uXGoNgyThJ70KjaQ00K>. Accessed: May 13th, 2020.

⁹ “Ye who read these words are still among the living, but I who write shall have long since gone my way into the region of shadows. Plagued by ghosts from the past, my soul can find no release from its eternal sorrow. Lost loves, spirits of the dead... madmen and devils have each in turn visited me here in the solitude of my chamber, to haunt and torment me. I implore you to heed my tale, as I relate the grim and ghastly things that befell me in my darkest hour... once upon a midnight dreary....”

¹⁰ “And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted — nevermore!”

mentioned *Piano Sonata 14 (Moonlight Sonata)*, by Beethoven, was composed in C# minor. Hence, it has an aura of melancholy and sadness.

Even so, it does not mean that all major-keyed songs are joyful, and all minor-keyed songs are melancholic. There are several other aspects, such as the tempo (slower or faster), the rhythm (a *samba-canção* is not the same as a carnival's *samba-enredo*), the melody, the arrangement, the lyrics, that make a song sounds one way or another. The song *Não tenho lágrimas*¹¹ (BULHÕES; OLIVEIRA, 1989), by Paulinho da Viola, is a useful example of a major-keyed song whose lyrics are, let us say, blue. The fact is that, in *Shadow of the Raven*, the songs are predominantly minor-keyed. Since they are mainly instrumental songs, the dark and melancholic atmosphere pervades the album and alludes to the works of Poe. Some examples in which a “lay” listener can easily perceive the minor key are the introductions of the songs *Melancholia* (track 2), *Haunted Memories* (track 6), *Legacy of Sorrow* (track 8), *Mysteries of the Night* (track 11), *The Raven* (track 13), and *Lenore* (track 15). It is interesting to notice that the titles of the songs make references to the gothic atmosphere and Poe’s tales, poems, and characters.

Similarly, consonance and dissonance have a central role to reinforce the dark and creepy atmosphere in the compositions. In the Middle Ages, for example, the dissonant tritone¹², also named *diabolus in musica* (WISNIK, 1989), was avoided because of its unsettling sound, as well as other moral and metaphysical aspects (which are not convenient to be analyzed in this paper), as pointed out by Wisnik. A practical example for noticing the dissonant tritone is the main riff of the song *Black Sabbath* (1970)¹³, by the homonymous English band, in which the notes G and C# form an interval of three whole tones, that is, a tritone. We can also perceive this interval (maybe not so easily for a lay listener) in some songs of *Shadow of the Raven*, such as *Darkest Hour* (track 1, starting at 00:28), *Morbid Reminiscence* (track 14, starting at 00:06), and *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (track 18, starting at 00:19, performed at the organ). In *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, it is interesting to notice that the song finishes with a tritone, which may cause a feeling that the music goes unresolved, thus creating a strained or even anxious feeling of something uncompleted. Simply put, the idea of consonance is related to a pleasant feeling of stability and accordance, while dissonance provokes a feeling of instability, conflict, and friction, that is, as something unresolved.

¹¹ Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppt05Y5IW_Y. Accessed: May 22nd, 2020.

¹² An interval of three whole tones, as when we play the notes C and F#, for example.

¹³ Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IVdMbUx1_k. Accessed: May 20th, 2020.

An example of a dissonant chord can be heard in *Descent Into Madness* (track 3, starting at 00:34, performed at the piano).

Another element that reinforces the horror and gloomy atmosphere in the album is the choice of instruments, such as the piano, the organ, the harpsichord, the violin, as well as the way they are arranged and performed. Let us take the organ as an example. Undoubtedly, the powerful and unmistakable sound of the instrument has been used widely in horror soundtracks. One of the most emblematic compositions for the organ is *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*¹⁴ (we highlight the minor key once again), by Johann Sebastian Bach. Perhaps one of the most memorable movie scenes is the unmasking of *The Phantom of the Opera*¹⁵, accompanied by the composition of Bach. The same music piece was also used during the opening credits of the movie *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*¹⁶, by director Rouben Mamoulian, freely inspired by the work of Robert Louis Stevenson. Although this version was performed by an orchestra and not by the organ, the audience may have felt frightened while listening to that impressive melody. More recent soundtracks of *The Phantom of the Opera* (WEBBER; HART, 1986) also feature the organ, such as the musical theme song¹⁷. The fact is that the suspense and horror aura that the sound of this instrument evokes was widely explored by Vargo and Piotrowski in *Shadow of the Raven*. We selected some snippets in which our reader-listener will be able to listen to the instrument, such as in *Melancholia* (track 2, starting at 01:55 up to 02:15), *Descent Into Madness* (track 3, from 00:09 up to 00:31), *The Cask Of Amontillado* (track 10, starting at 02:17 up to 02:42), *Lenore* (track 15, from 02:04 up to the end), and *Masque of the Red Death* (track 20, the entire song).

The ostinatos are also widely used in the compositions of *Shadow of the Raven*. Roughly speaking, an ostinato is a short melody or pattern that is repeated continuously throughout a composition as a reiterated thematic musical motif. A typical example of an ostinato created for a horror soundtrack is *Halloween's* theme song¹⁸, composed by John Carpenter (1979). The song starts with a creepy piano musical phrase that is repeated throughout the entire composition. In *Shadow of the Raven*, we can find some examples of ostinatos in the songs *The House of Usher*

¹⁴ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z69C2Jqp42Q> . Accessed: May 23rd, 2020.

¹⁵ Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyvgJYTwJK8&feature=emb_logo . Accessed: May 23rd, 2020.

¹⁶ Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=2Q1FNM0JQZ0&feature=emb_logo . Accessed: May 23rd, 2020.

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JaeBxYCI9k> . Accessed: May 23rd, 2020

¹⁸ Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=24&v=pT4FY3NrhGg&feature=emb_logo . Accessed: May 28th, 2020.

(track 4), *Haunted Memories* (track 6), *Annabel Lee* (track 7), *The Cask of Amontillado* (track 10), *The Raven* (track 13), *Lenore* (track 15), and *A Dream Within a Dream* (track 16).

Furthermore, the sound effects are meaningful in Vargo's adaptation of Poe's works. In several tracks, we can listen to the scary sound of the wind blowing, bad auguries announced by bell tolls, and female vocalises¹⁹ that make references to Poe's characters, such as Madeline, Annabel Lee, and Lenore. In *The Black Cat* (track 9), Vargo presents the sound of an agonizing feline – a clear allusion to the mutilation suffered by the animal in the homonymous tale – whose pain seems to increase toward the end of the track. In *Midnight Dreary* (track 12, not coincidentally), the meaning is reinforced by the tic-tac sound of a clock that chimes exactly twelve times to announce midnight. *The Tell-Tale Heart* (track 17) starts with a drum that refers to the heartbeat of the victim in the homonymous tale. The listener can also hear a creaking door, suggesting the moment when the murderer peeps his asleep victim in Poe's source text. In *The Pit and the Pendulum* (track 19), we can hear the movement of a pendulum – a key-element of the tale's plot – while we listen to a *crescendo*²⁰ melody that increases the tension and the listener's feeling of anguish. Last but not least, *Nevermore* (track 21) presents the final stanza of the poem *The Raven*. The denouement of the album brings a creepy singing crow, while we hear a man being buried alive and begging for help, an allusion to the several characters entombed (alive or not) in Poe's works.

Final considerations

How can we cope with intermedial adaptations from literature to music with all their specificities without having theoretical music knowledge? Epistemologically speaking, we understand that it is not possible to know all media and their characteristics to analyze every intermedial process. We believe the future development of adaptation and intermedial studies requires collaborative work among different disciplines, epistemological domains, and knowledge fields. This paper does not intend to exhaust interpretation possibilities, approaches, and analysis. Its intention is to approximate dialogues left behind in the development of these studies considered

¹⁹ Arrangement in which a performer sings vocal sounds rather than a text, typically from polyphonic music of the XIII and XIV centuries.

²⁰ In music, *crescendo* is related to dynamics. It is indicated by musical notation that gradually increases loudness in a piece of music.

homeless. Precisely, they are homeless for not belonging to a traditionally specific place inside the great and legitimate areas of knowledge. Being between arts and media means that theoretical and analytical negotiations in the process of intermedial adaptations are essential for its effective establishment as an area.

Our analysis suggests that literature needs to be approached in a more unsacred way, leaving behind the idea of an essence embedded in the written word and the book. We do not mean we should replace the old with the new, for one type of medium does not eliminate the other, but (re)signify it in such a way that both of them can complementarily coexist. This coexistence may motivate new expansions of perspectives (MONTE MÓR, 2018) in the reader-listener through different media. To conclude, we believe the primary contribution of this study is to act as a trigger to arouse interest in future research involving various textual architectures and media in postmodernity.

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