Time and Dynamism in the Visual Narrative of *the Invention of Hugo Cabret*

William Soares dos Santos[1] & Guilherme Diniz Machado[2]

Abstract

In this article, we investigate the construction of the visual narrative in the book *The invention of Hugo Cabret*. We attempt to understand how images, throughout the book, are carriers of meaning and how their construct and disposition contribute to the chronological structure of the narrative. We assume that narrative analysis is a social process (Bastos & Santos, 2013) and that narrative performance encompasses the perception of the perspective of the present (Järvinen, 2004; Bastos & Santos, 2006), and of its sense of an ending (Mishler, 2002; Freeman, 2015). The results indicate that illustrations are used in the book *The invention of Hugo Cabret* in a way that they constitute a visual narrative whose formal elements proper of visual arts construction (line, form, light etc.) characterize their chronological aspect, as well as confer dynamism to the reading of the text. One of the elements that orient our reading is the constant relations to cinematographic language that the book attempts to establish with its readers.

Keywords: Narrative Studies; Literature Studies; Time and Narrative; Image and Narrative; Hugo Cabret.

1. Introduction

One of the possibilities of starting a reflection on children's literature is to think that its composition stems from different beliefs upon childhood, through which different ideologies are activated during the construction process of children's literature with the objective of better reaching its public and tell different stories through a given perspective. Children's literature[3] itself may bring many questions and tensions, among which we are able to highlight the following ones: a) the fact that, in many cases, it is written by adults, with their own beliefs and ideologies, towards a target public that they do not belong, establishing a text that keeps at its core a vertical power relationship; b) it may be written regarding not only children, but also people who surround them (parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers etc.), since the books are bought and, many times, read and recommended by them, and; c) children's literature, at first, may be conceived with the objective of instructing and entertaining, but also share the interests of the literary market (editors, libraries etc.) (cf. O'Sullivan, 2013).

Another important question is brought by Blommaert (2005), who argues that children depart from books with pictures to reach written representation at its fullest and, even though the access to multimodal texts (with both pictures and written texts) is a practice exercised by children and adults, the author sustains that such combination loses strength in the ideological conception of what it means to learn how to read and write.

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[1] Associate Professor at the College of Education and at the Interdisciplinary Program of Post-Graduation in Applied Linguistics (PIPGLA) at the College of Letters of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ (Programa Interdisciplinar de Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada (PIPGLA) da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ). Av. Horácio Macedo, 2151 - Cidade Universitária da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, CEP: 21941-917, Brasil. Phone +55 (21) 3938-9750. E-mail: william_soares@yahoo.it.
[2] Master's student at the Interdisciplinary Program of Post-Graduation in Applied Linguistics (PIPGLA) at the College of Letters of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ (Programa Interdisciplinar de Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada (PIPGLA) da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ). Av. Horácio Macedo, 2151 - Cidade Universitária da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, CEP: 21941-917, Brasil. Phone +55 (21) 3938-9750. E-mail: g.diniz.machado@gmail.com.
[3] In Brazilian Portuguese, this genre is titled infant-juvenile, a term formed by two words, the first one linking to children until 11 years old and the second one meaning preteens and teens (Azevedo, 2005), which is a combination that produces tension.

For Hunt (2010), the discredit of the combination between pictures and written texts occurs because the illustrated book is devalued in front of other literary genres, for besides it being considered only to children, illustrations are not seen as language, but, in the best case, as support for the linguistic content. Despite that, the relationship between written and visual texts may receive at least eight functions: representative, descriptive, narrative, symbolic, expressive, aesthetic, ludic, conative, metalinguistic, phatic, and punctuation (Camargo, 1995). However, the image does not necessarily perform just one of such functions, and it is common for them to perform many functions at the same time.

Therefore, we understand that the illustrated book is the one that presents images with meaning negotiation between visual and written texts, and that it may also play a role at the characterization of temporal and spatial dimensions (cf. Nikolajeva & Scott, 2011) of the told story. This is the case of the book *The invention of Hugo Cabret*, which, differently from the majority of illustrated mass published books, does not present written and visual texts together. On the contrary, it alternates them, so that visual texts (pictures) and written texts complement each other to form a full narrative. Our research investigates how such visual narrative is constructed. In view of the questions above, we propose, for this study, the following objectives: (1) to analyze how the image becomes carrier of content through spatial configuration and (2) to identify how the use of images may represent time and dynamism in the narrative of *The invention of Hugo Cabret*.

Next, we present the theoretical bases of our research, relating it to narrative studies, and reflecting upon the nature and structure of narrative discourse.

2. On time and narrative

Regarding the different propositions of understanding narrative, we adopt a perception in tune with Freeman (2015) of narrative as understanding of the social world in which we are inserted. This idea of narrative implies a retrospective dimension, that is, a look from the present toward what happened in the past, i.e., we take into consideration that narrative elaboration involves the *perspective of the present* (cf. Järvinem, 2004; Bastos e Santos, 2006; Bastos & Santos, 2013). This comprises the perception that narratives are elaborated with a certain objective, its audience, and the story's sense of an ending in mind.

Mishler (2002) had already identified two ways of understanding time in narratives: (1) as chronological, sequential, linear – which he associates to the works of Labov and Waletzky (1967 and 1972); and (2) as experiential, which he associates to the work of Ricoeur (1980). These perceptions of time, however, do not relate dichotomously, for they set up different narrative aspects, so that a narrative may present both temporal perceptions (Ricoeur, 1980).

Labov (1972) understands narrative as a way of recapping experiences, ordering them temporally according to a linear sequence of events. Thus, it establishes a causal relationship between the narrative elements or units. It is important to observe, however, that these units may be independent from each other. It all depends on how they are ordered in the narrative discourse. Besides considering Labov's formulations, Mishler (2002) highlights the perception that the sense of an ending affects the understanding of a past event, which, relating it to Freeman's work (2015) would be the narrative's retrospective dimension itself. Parallel to this perspective, it is important for us to stress here other perceptions of time that Ricoeur (1980, 1984) identified when discussing narrative time, besides the experiential one. They are: *time of narrating* and *narrated time*.

Narrated time considers the narrative time, that is, the time of objects inserted in a narrative. On the other hand, time of narrating considers the time of the utterance of a narrative, that is, the time of both the narrator and the listener. Therefore, Ricoeur (1980) questions what makes a listener pay attention to a narrative and follow its events. He acknowledges, then, the importance of the conclusion of a certain story. According to him, it is the sense of an ending that determines a narrative. Hence, a narrative may have as its most important temporal element, not the past or the present, but the future (Ricoeur, 1980).

Regarding this perception, we may consider that the temporal movement involved (intertwining of past, present and future) in the narrative construction makes events part of something bigger, which allows us to trace relations between experiences that, at the time of occurrence, would not be possible. In this sense, as put by Freeman (2015:29), narratives are interpretative, for "in the realm of narrative, we are always and inevitably reading for meaning".

The structure of narrative discourse enables us to relate temporally distant events. For Freeman (2015), this happens because of the capacity of narrative temporal ordering, which we associate to Linde's (1993) discussion about coherence: for a text to be considered coherent, it is necessary to follow certain temporal order, since only then we are able to establish causal relations, once it is after such relations that we form expectations and understanding about the world.

The comprehension of narrative as mode of understanding implies considering its temporal construction in order to make meaning out of the reported experience (Freeman, 2015). This perception may be associated to Nietzsche ([1882] 2001) and its elaboration of what would be the act of naming: What we say about the occurrence is what creates it; therefore, when we narrate an event, we first have to name it, which already evokes a comprehension, a look from the present over the past. Therefore, when narrating an event, we have to insert it in the social world, which thus corroborates Ricoeur's (1980) statement that chronological and experiential times are tied.

This understanding of how time functions in a narrative meets the perspective of language as activity (cf. Fabrício, [2006] 2018), who suggests "people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk" (Cameron, 1997:49). It is in that sense that Gee (2011:30) defines Discourse as:

"A characteristic way of saying, doing, and being. When you speak or write anything, you use the resources of English to project yourself as a certain kind of person, a different kind in different circumstances. You also project yourself as engaged in a certain practice or activity. If I have no idea who you are and what you are doing, then I cannot make sense of what you have said, written, or done".

The concept of discourse, therefore, comprises the question that language, actions, objects, values etc. combine in order to construct a social identity, which beyond being performed, must also be recognizable by a community of practice. Hence, having a social identity means performing it for an audience in situational activities socially constructed by both the performer and others (Gee, 2011). That means that the comprehension of a narrative is related to our interactions with the social world, to how we position ourselves in it, and how we are positioned by it.

Another important question here is the construction of expectations. Assuming that language is ideological, that is, it is oriented by beliefs on social categories such as gender, race, sexuality, class, age etc., which affect our perspective of the world, such beliefs are not only rational conclusions about what we are, for example, or what we define as wrong or right, since they also affect our perceptions, which may become naturalized, about others and ourselves, as well as what we expect from certain social groups (Lemke, 2005). These expectations are based on our life experiences and on the discursive construction of others through different means, such as media, school, family, books etc.

Considering social interactions, Giddens (1981) argues that it is through time (and space) that relations between objects and events are expressed. If narrative is a mode of understanding and time is one of the modes through which such understanding is constructed, it is important to reflect upon how time is expressed in narratives. One of the possibilities is to think time as semiotic recourse (Baynham, 2015), pursuing a comprehension of how time constitutes the narrative instead of just orienting it.

Social semiotics treats the meaning of semiotic recourses (words, images, colours, sounds etc.) as contextual instead of inherent (Gray, 2010), which implies that the choice of what will be represented is ideological. Aumont (2001: 103) defines representation as "a process through which it is instituted a representative, which, in a certain limited context, will take the place from what it represents"[4], wherein a recognition of what is being represented is necessary (Gombrich, [1965] 1983). Therefore, the spectator both constructs and is constructed by the image (Aumont, 2001), which constitutes the two-way street of performance. In this respect, it is possible to read images in order to identify which perspectives of the world are constructed through them. For such, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) propose four aspects of analysis, considering photographs and drawings: (1) *who* is being depicted (regarding social groups), (2) *where* they are, (3) *how* they are depicted, and (4) *what* they are doing. These four aspects, by forming an interaction that evokes and repeats meanings, may constitute a visual narrative structure.

4"um processo pelo qual institui-se um representante que, em certo contexto limitado, tomará o lugar do que representa."

As for the time of visual narratives, Aumont (2001) talks about time of the spectator and the represented time: the former takes into consideration the senses of present, of duration (which is felt and not perceived, that is, the look from the present over the past), of future (tied to expectations), and of synchrony and asynchrony (the question of simultaneity and, if not, which phenomenon precedes another) – such time may be associated to narrating time, though for Ricoeur (1984), both narrator and audience share the same time, while for Aumont (2001) they share different times, for the spectator has direct access to the object produced by the narrative. The represented time takes into consideration time as a result of occurrences, which implies that time would be a representation of our sensations, thus being operated under a process of interpretation.

Aumont (2001) distinguishes between temporalized image (movie, video) and not-temporalized image (painting, engraving, photography). Laffay (1964) argues that cinema, regarding temporality, is characterized by the fusion of images, the superposition of images and the acceleration of images. These aspects would form a temporalized image – which does not mean that the static image, such as painting and frame, does not comprise time perception and involvement. In fact, Ostrower (1983), when discussing the space of images, argues that it is characterized by dimensions of height, width and depth, plus the time dimension, and thus visual elements would be organized through such spatial dimensions. However, it is important to notice that, in art, the space of images is not an absolute concept in the sense it is literally a place, but rather an experience. For the next section, we present the corpus of our investigation, taking into consideration the foucaultian perspective of "order of discourse" ([1971] 1999), that is, those who talk about the book, from where, what is said, and which institution motivates and spreads what is said.

3. Hugo Cabret

The book *The invention of Hugo Cabret* rely on both written and visual texts, and it was written and illustrated by the same person, the north American Brian Selznick, being published in 2007. Afterwards, it was released as a movie in 2011. In Brazil, the book was translated by Marcos Bagno and published by Edições SM, as well as categorized as children's literature. The book tells the story of Hugo Cabret, described as a "boy (…) full of secrets" (p. ix), whose parents died, so that he is in custody of an uncle who is missing. Hugo lives in a train station and spends his days doing his uncle's work – adjusting the station clocks – so that nobody realizes that his uncle is missing. Therefore, Hugo sneaks through the train station and tries his best to be invisible in order not to attract unwanted attention, after all, as it is indicated since the beginning, he keeps a huge secret – and the story develops from the moment which an unpredictable happening in a toy store threatens to expose his secret.

Many studies emphasize the discussion about cinema and art that the books promote, from which we highlight Filipouski's work (2012:161), who associates the book to the formation of readers in non-schooled context, proposing activities to students finishing middle school, since, according to her, the narrative of *The invention of Hugo Cabret*, by alternating verbal and visual texts, is "strongly captivating to the contemporary reader, for it values visual language, which is intimate to the reader, and legitimizes such visual language as communication source."[5] The author also argues that, by disrupting the traditional canon, the book has great appeal to new readers, so she attempts to explore it precisely for "the possibility of discussing an important function of literature: present a social context (the decade of 1930's from the XX century), especially the cultural and scientific aspects of Paris, One of the most important urban centres at that time"[6] (p. 162-3). Therefore, there is an appeal to the circulation of *The invention of Hugo Cabret* in school contexts, since it dialogues with contemporary readers, stimulating reading practice.

3.1 Corpus selection

The book starts with "A Brief Introduction", which presents the narrator as a character and literally locates the reader on both time and space of the story, which "takes place in 1931, under the roofs of Paris" (p. ix). We did a reading selection after the following paragraph: "But before you turn the page, I want you to picture yourself sitting in the darkness, like the beginning of a movie. On screen, the sun will soon rise, and you will find yourself zooming toward a train station in the middle of the city. You will rush through the doors into a crowded lobby.

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[5]"fortemente cativante ao leitor contemporâneo, pois valoriza a linguagem visual, com a qual ele possui intimidade, e legitima-a como fonte de comunicação."

[6]"possibilidade de discutir uma importante função da literatura: dar a conhecer um contexto social (a década de trinta do século XX), especialmente os aspectos culturais e científicos de Paris, um dos mais importantes centros urbanos da época."

You will eventually spot a boy amid the crowd, and he will start to move through the train station. Follow him, because this is Hugo Cabret" (P. ix). One of the elements that draw attention in this passage is the use of verbs in the future, thus we searched on the book the images that relate to such sentences, in order to compare temporal perspectives, present in each narrative mode (verbal and visual). In our analysis we will focus on the visual mode attempting to understand how narrative and dynamism may be construed by the book images. For that, we selected images from the beginning that relate to the passage above. Even though we are focusing on the use of images, we acknowledge that such selection may reinforce a dependence between visual and written texts, which was not the author's intention.

4. Methodological perspectives

Since that, dealing with language, "the study of the object produces the object"[7] (Fabrício, [2006] 2018: 56), this study is aligned to a qualitative interpretativist perspective of research, since interpretativist research considers neutrality as not possible, for researchers are inserted in the world, in a way that their construction of knowledge is ideological (Moita Lopes, 2012). This position matches with the adopted perspective of research as a point of view instead of a scientific truth. Both Moita Lopes (2012) and Haraway (1988) discuss the importance of an embodied science, that is, science that considers the researcher's body, for s/he has their own situated look, which makes them partial.

In order to investigate how time is constituted in a visual narrative, we attempt a structural analysis of the elements that compose some images of the book, since, as said by Ostrower (1983:86), "it is only possible to know what the artist has proposed to do by discerning what he really did"[8]. In other words, it is necessary to understand how visual elements construe a figuration (a representation) of what is possible to be recognized by the spectator. In order to provide such comprehension, Ostrower (1983) presents five basic visual elements, among them, the **line**.

The line sets up a one-dimensional space, so that it may be considered weak and of little substance. The space construed by the line is also directional, wherein the only formal elaboration with such element is the change of direction (vertical, horizontal, diagonal), in a way that any formal elaboration with the line will present rhythmic character. In order to modulate the line movement, it is necessary to introduce pauses, so that it features a dashed aspect, wherein modulating its velocity means modulating the flow of time. Space and time, therefore, relate in the following way: the higher the velocity, the lesser the visual weight; and the lowest the velocity, the bigger the visual weight.

The second element is **surface**. Featured of lines, the surface characterizes two spatial dimensions: height and width. It is a more static than dynamic element, therefore, this reduces visual movement and consequently the flow of time. Thus, movement is introduced by other visual factors, such as:

- size difference;
- irregular and wave contours;
- different geometric or non-geometric, two-dimensional forms;
- and closed surfaces.

The superposition of surfaces orders visual elements in diagonal direction, thus introducing the notion of depth, which is only possible with closed or almost closed surfaces, whose movement establishes itself along the border. Another element is **volume**, which represents a conjunction of plans in diagonal superposition, in which each superposition creates a gap, indicating spatial relations of proximity or distance. When representing depth, horizontal lines are transformed in diagonals because of distance. Volume characterizes a certain space according to the following aspects: superposition, depth and density, wherein, regarding the density aspect, the full/empty relation characterizes a formal development of volume. The more the subdivisions, the more the notion of physical substance is reinforced.

Light is also one of the visual elements identified by Ostrower (1983). In order for the element of light to be expressed, it is necessary that the visual movement be developed through bright/dark values, even though tonality is possible regarding this relation.

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[7]"o estudo do objeto produz o objeto"
[8]"só se sabe o que o artista se propôs a fazer, constatando o que ele realmente fez."

As for the perception of light, brightness moves spatially forward, whereas darkness moves backwards; therefore, brightness expands in front of a dark background and darkness contracts in front of a bright background. The phenomenon of forward/backward and expansion/contraction features depth, and even though such depth is not three-dimensional, for it is not possible to perceive height and width dimensions, the disposition of light enables a construct of time. The temporal aspect of light features simultaneous forward/backward rhythms, which may result in a dynamic space. In our research, **colour** will not be a relevant factor, since the book images are black and white.

5. Time and dynamism in the visual narrative of Hugo Cabret

Image 1: "the sun will soon rise" (p. 10-1)
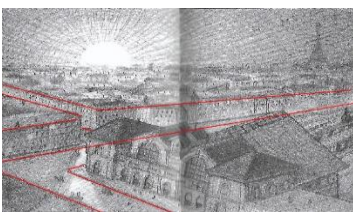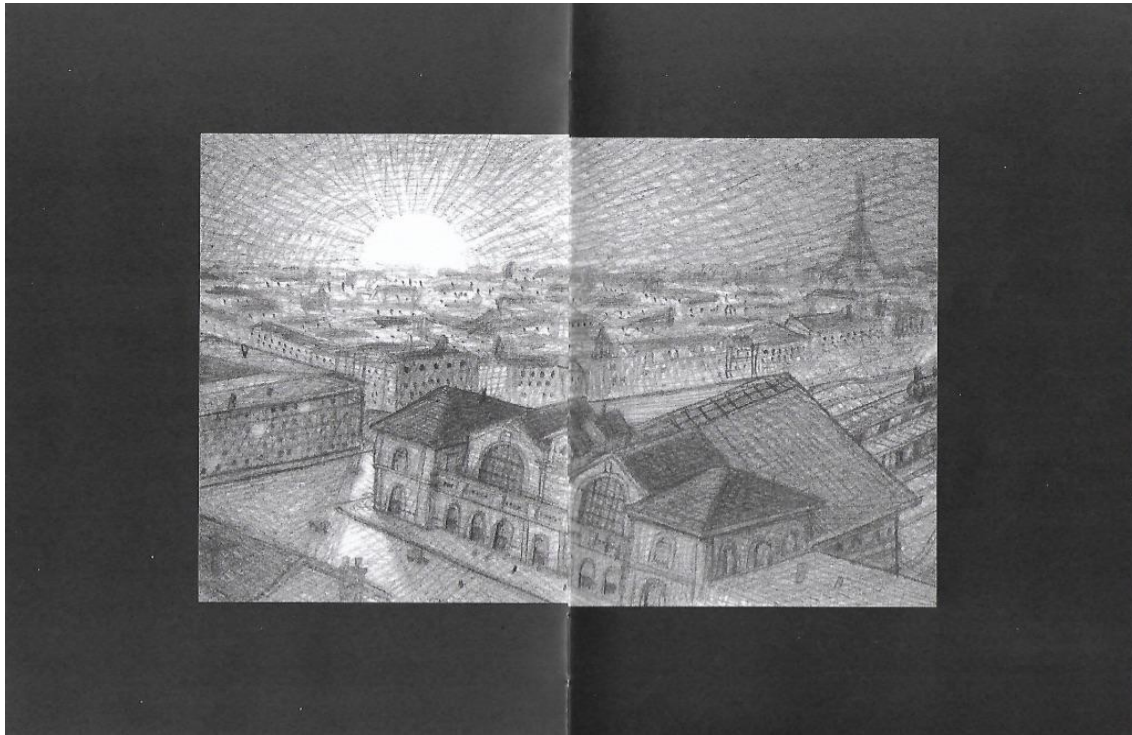
Image1.1

In the image 1.1 there is a predominance of diagonal lines, sustained by the perspective construed with two vanishing points; therefore, the diagonal lines themselves do not follow all the same direction; they feature directional inversions. Even though these lines meet each other in a certain point, such meeting does not occur within the image space, which makes the directional change abrupt – thus, more evident.

The direction change of lines is also evident within the buildings' hatching in the background of the illustration (image 1.2), represented by vertical and diagonal lines that cross each other. The opposition given by this formal elaboration generates a dynamic effect in the image, as well as volume. Here, it is important to resume the idea that formal elaborations with the line tend to characterize rhythmic character, and once such lines are continuous, one of the main effects of this visual element is dynamism, even though it is the representation of a landscape.

Image1.2

The superposition of plans (image 1.3) enables the creation of what we may name a time gap between what comes before and what comes after, which features the mass of buildings that reach the horizon line of the image. Therefore, it reinforces the notion of depth already indicated by the disposition of vertical and diagonal lines.

Image1.3

Even though vertical lines interrupt the flow of diagonals, they enable the formation of contours, thus creating the visual illusion that constitutes the diverse plans of the landscape. Once such element is considered more static, movement is given, in the image, through different dispositions of the bordered forms: small and big sizes (image 1.4), as well as the inclusion of the sun in the background, which provides a dimension of movement that embraces the foreground. Even though surface and line are two-dimensional elements, once volume is present, the small/big-sized forms receive a three-dimensional aspect, so that they take on an even more dynamic character.
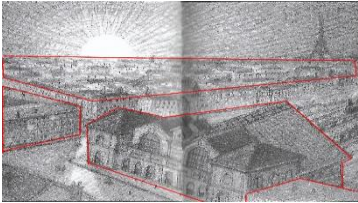
Image1.4

Image 2: "and you will find yourself zooming toward a train station in the middle of the city" (p. 12-3)
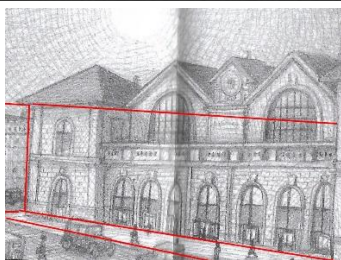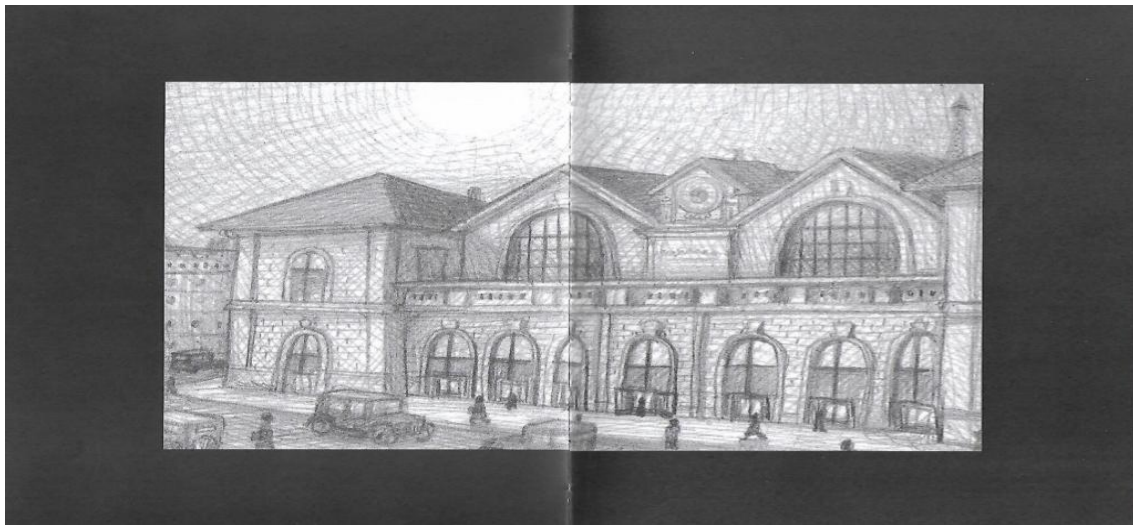
Image 2.1
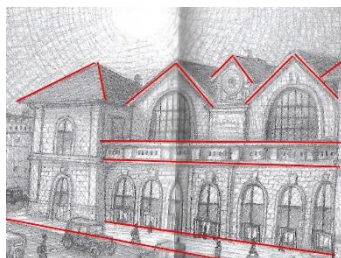
Image2.2

Dynamism is also present in the image above. Even though the perspective is not as fluid here as it is in the previous image, especially if we account for the vanishing points that drop from two to one (image 2.1), the image above still produces a dynamic effect, which is reinforced by other visual elements, such as the representation of the sun on the upper side and people and vehicles on the lower side.

In view of the two-dimensional aspect of lines, they can be considered an element that tends to hold a static character. Their formal elaboration, however, take on a dynamic character, for they rearrange themselves diagonally through the directional inversion (image 2.2). Besides, the hatching (image 2.3) indicates density, and also attributes a dynamic effect to the figure, while depth is attributed by the element of light – spaced hatching composes brightness (image 2.4) while closer hatching composes darkness (image 2.5), so that such contrast indicates a three-dimensional notion as well as expansion, since the background is predominantly dark.
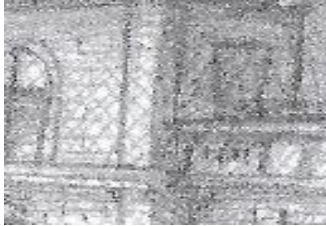
Image2.3

Image2.4

Image2.5

In this image, surface is also present through smaller and bigger contours. The diagonal plans of depth contribute for the creation of more figures, that is, the façade's second floor is subdivided into many ways through a combination of superposition and the element of light, which results in a contrast characterized not only by brightness/darkness (image 2.6), but also by the perception of front/backward, in which all of these aspects provide movement to the image.

Until now, we have highlighted the dynamism of the images, which characterizes their reading as fast; however, this is not the only aspect that accelerates the time of the image. Let us take for example the image below:

Image2.6: "You will rush through the doors into a crowded lobby" (p. 14-5)
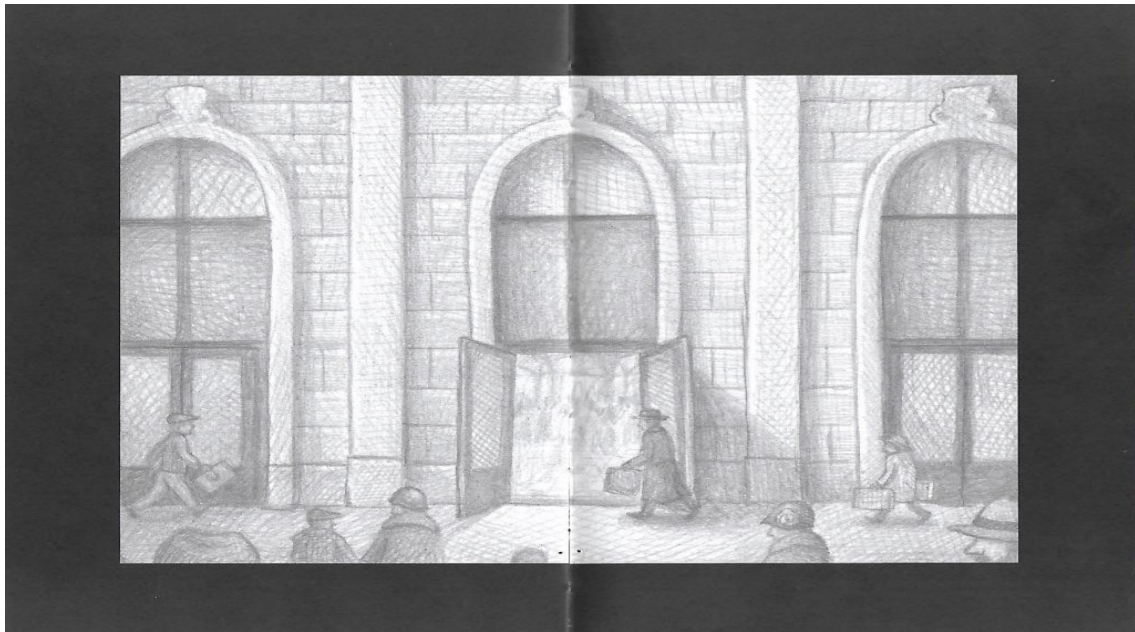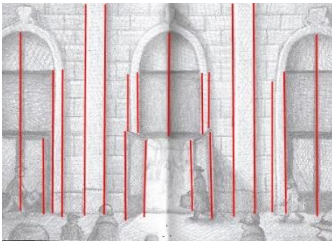
Image3.1
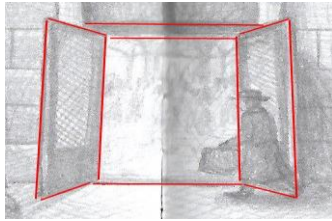
Image3.2

Image3.3

Image3.4

Here, we have a considerably more static image. If, in the previous images, the representation of volume was predominant, in this one it is the line that receives more relevance (image 3.1). However, even though this image is more static when compared to the others, that does not mean that the image does not have movement. The continuous lines flow freely, which means that they are not modulated in time gaps, thus they tend to be read in a dynamic way. The people on the lower side of the image also contribute to the reading of an image in movement.

The front view, which contributes to the static character of the image, implies the position of the spectator: facing the doors, which are centred, a privileged position that renders them rational weight. The contour of the doors is not composed of only vertical lines, but also of diagonals, in which such formal elaboration of lines confers movement and dynamism to the image (image 3.2). Besides that, as previously observed, the representation of people in movement emphasizes the dynamism of the image, in which the representation of people's legs in movement (images 3.3 and 3.4) is an important detail of this visual-narrative construct.
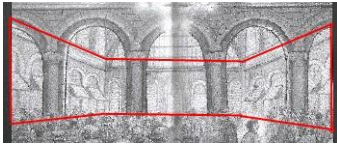
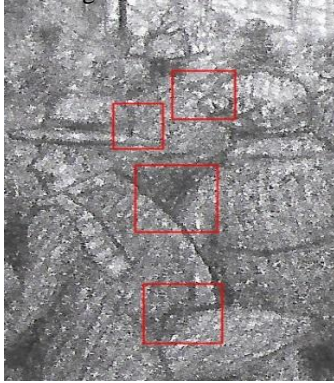**Image 4: "You will eventually spot a boy amid the crowd" (p. 16-7)**
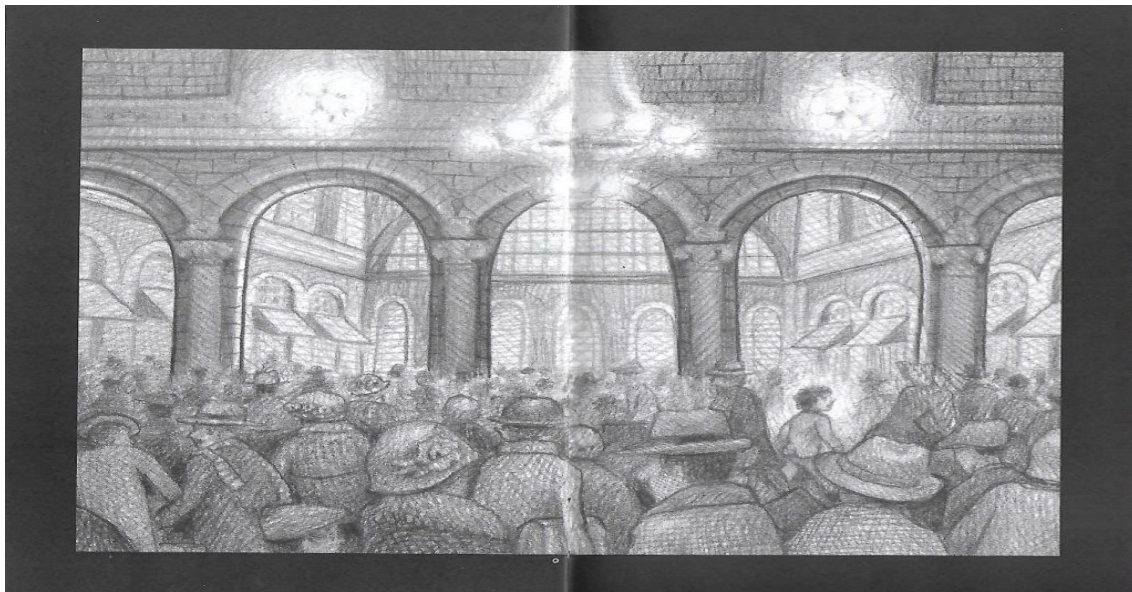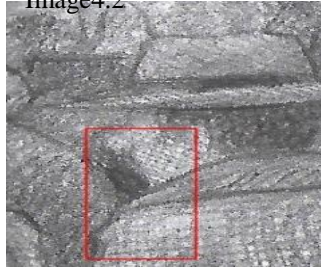
Image4.1

Image4.2

Image 4.3

Image 4.4

In image 4, the front view is once again present, though this is not as static as the previous image: here, there is perspective (and its diagonal plans) for the background (image 4.1), so that the columns, which are more static figures, function as superposition, thus indicating the notion of depth.

The visual element of volume, therefore, is more present in this image than the previous one (image 3), especially if we take into account the mass of people, represented through superposition (image 4.2) and the three-dimensional representation through tonality (image 4.3). Besides that, the drawing representing the mass of people does not find an ending; on the contrary, it bestows a characteristic of amplitude to the narrative, in which the crowd merges with the background, reinforcing the idea of unit of the landscape.

In the image 4, an important visual element is the representation of light. It is not only present figuratively, such as the candleholders, but also to distinguish the mass of people (darkest part of the image) from the background (brightest part). Light is also used to highlight the main character of the narrative. Hugo is the only represented person whose surroundings are luminous (image4.4): there is space between the hatching, which invokes the candleholders as a parallel dimension. Therefore, we can say that regarding the boy, light functions as a spotlight, differently from the representation of other people. Such particular use of light directs our attention towards the boy. This characterizes our reading of the image as dynamic, since orienting the reader in order to locate Hugo seems to be a serious concern of this narrative unit. In that way, our reading is extremely oriented by the narrator of the image.

It is important to observe that besides the use of light, the narrator uses the line in a way that it engages itself dynamically on the disposition of the image. This paradigm is also present in the subsequent images:

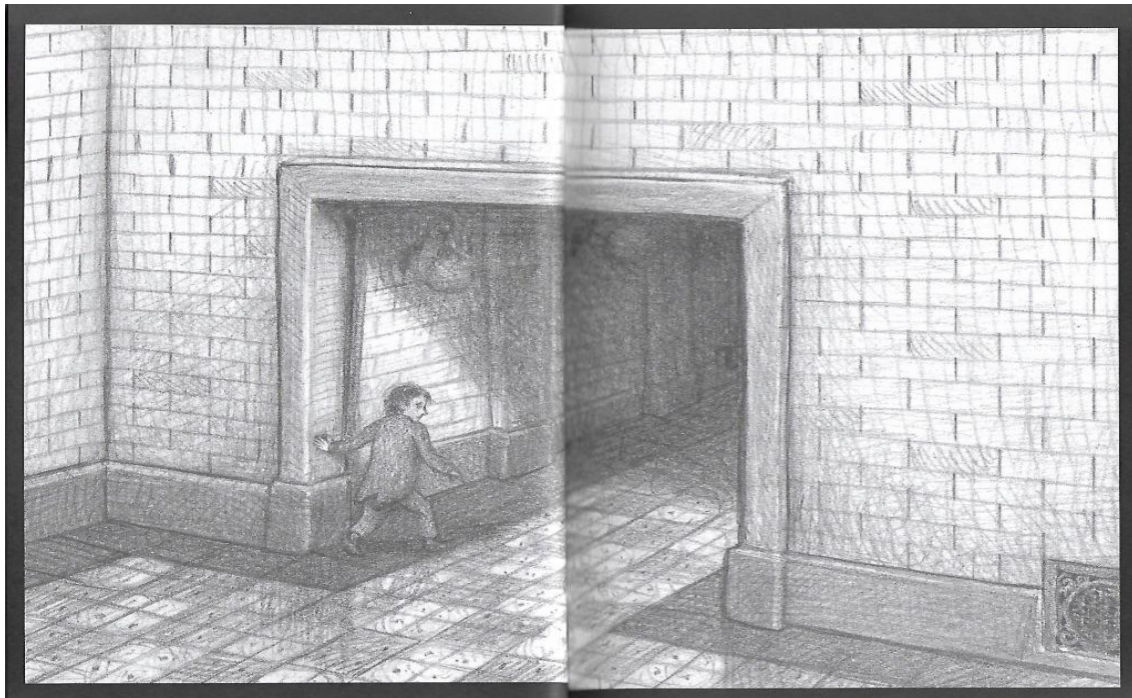**Images 5, 6, 7: "and he will start to move through the train station" (p. 20-5)**
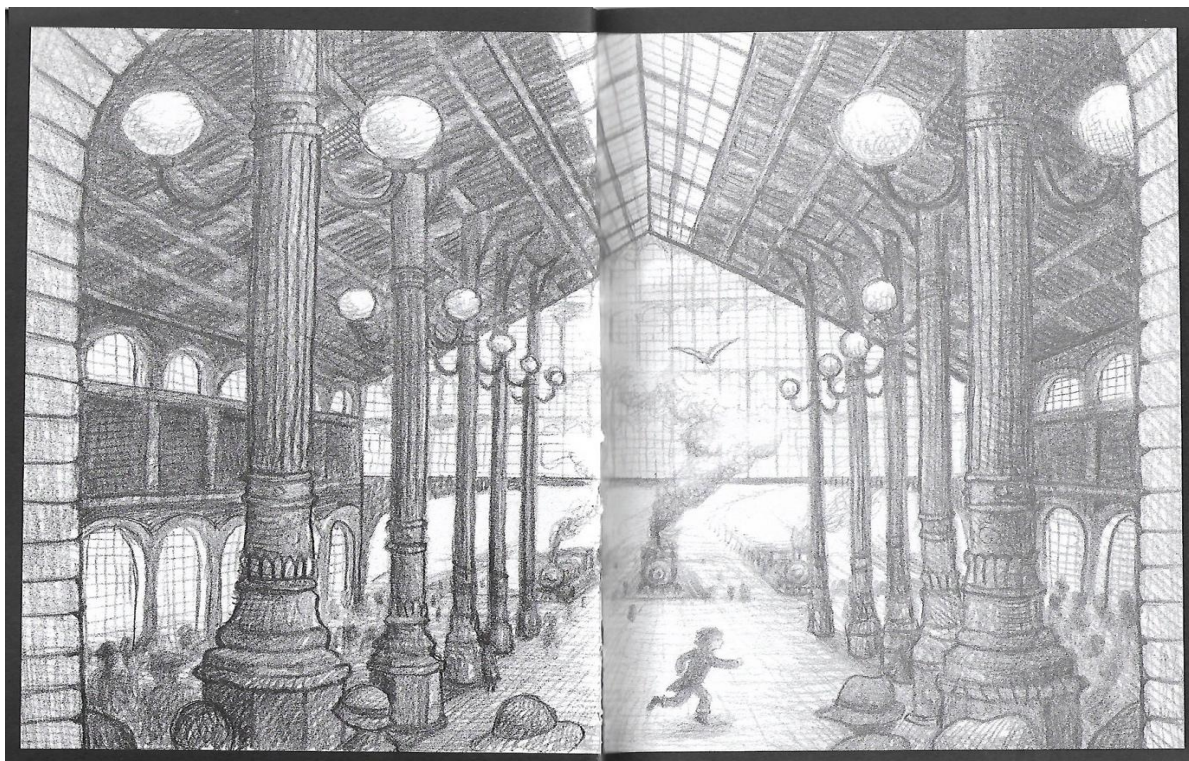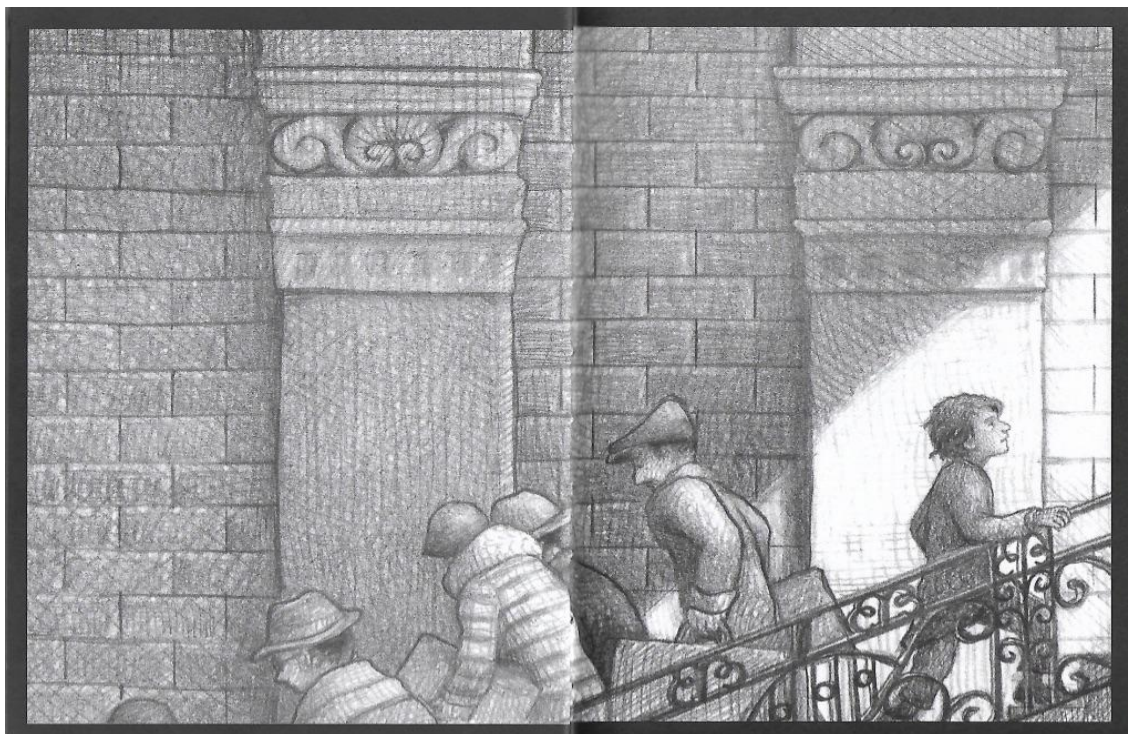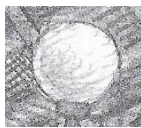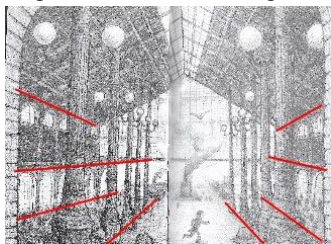
Image 5.1   Image 6.1
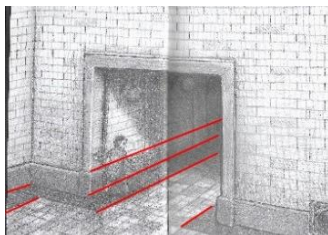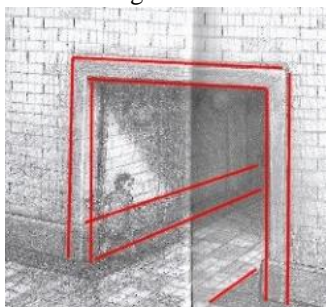

Image 6.2

Image 7.1

Image 7.2

In images 5, 6 and 7, which comprise the trajectory of the character through the train station, the representation of light is an important visual element, for it confers dynamism to the figure of the character as well as to the space itself that surrounds him. Besides dynamism, the representation of light is also used in the disposition of volume, which is the case for images 5 and 6 (check details in 5.1 and 6.1). In images 6 and 7, the diagonal plans of the perspective also contribute to bestow volume and the perception of depth (6.2 and 7.1). In image 7, there is also the static-dynamic disposition of lines (image 7.2), which comprises a rhythmic and dynamic character, taking into account that the lines are continuous. Despite image 5 being a front view image, the diagonal of the stairs (see image 5.2) helps to create the perception of movement, thus it confers dynamism to its content, which also creates the impression of speed.

It is always important the use that the artist/narrator gives to light in order to orient the attention of the reader to the character at the centre of the narrative. This may be observed in image 6, the one with the boy running in the centre, which is entirely luminous, and contrasts to the darkness of image 4; it is also observed on images 5 and 7, where the highest light focus is diagonally elaborated (5.3 and 7.3) by following the boy, thus orienting the reader's look. This intention is indeed textually indicated in the book: "Follow him" (p. ix). Therefore, since the light follows him, his figure becomes the centre of the visual narrative. The light resource here (and in other moments of the book) confers dynamism to the image.

Considering the visual game, our reading tends to be fluid, once the use given to the illustrations explore its images in order to create a narrative, whose temporal perception is parallel to the one adopted by the cinema. Thus, the illustrations become temporalized images with a sense of movement, whose objective is not to catch the attention of the reader, but to move her/him forward. Therefore, the narrative of the book develops through the construction of narrative time as proposed by Labov (1972), that is, the narrative is aligned to the chronological principle, in which its units are related in order to create a coherent full narrative. In the case of this research, it is possible to observe that the sequence of images enables us to interpret them chronologically.
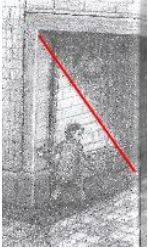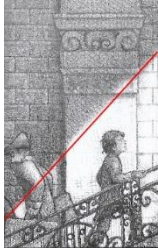
Image 5.2

Image 5.3   Image 7.3

However, chronological time is not the only temporal perception that may be observed in the visual narrative. Narrated time also takes into consideration the time of the events, such as the boy running through the train station, wherein, according to Ricoeur (1984), narrated time is not independent to the narrating time.

The use of images in a narrative work may need to access the reader's background knowledge in many moments. This happens, in the case of the images here analysed, when the author inserts, in image 1, the representation of the Eiffel Tower, an architectural symbol of Paris, which enables the spectator to identify the city regarding her/his background knowledge. That is, the narrator tells the story counting on the knowledge of the reader and with the perspective of an ending, as posed by Mishler (2002).

Here, we associate experiential time to the form construct by visual elements such as line, surface, volume, and light. By narrating the boy in action through images, the author evaluates what is important to emphasize in them, which is only possible after a comprehension of what is being narrated, that is, a look from the present over what already happened. This argument is reinforced by the author's ideological choice of not using colours. It is likely that such choice has a relationship to the fact that the story takes place in Paris, in 1931, a time and place where cinema was in full development and its images were in black and white. Such parallelism is given throughout the book, which enables us to reinforce the comparison of the illustrations in *The invention of Hugo Cabret* with cinema's images produced in the first half of the 20th century. This choice is also related to the capacity of the narrative of reporting to the past, both Hugo Cabret's and our perception of what would be the world at that time and place.

Going after the process of recognition through figuration matches to how we may relate comprehensions of the world today, so that we are able to produce meaning according to performances socially established that were redeemed in the images. Thus, one of the possible readings would be to consider the time of the spectator and also the time of the author – who composes the narrating time.

Here, we have privileged the visual narrative of the book, but the question of narrated time and sense of an ending may also be found in the book's written text. The "A Brief Introduction" written by professor Alcofrisbas, who would be the narrator of Hugo Cabret's story, may corroborate this, for he addresses the reader using the future tense to expose the experiences s/he will go by engaging with the narrative. On the other hand, the narrator already announces that this is a story that takes place in the past, a discursive strategy that positions the narrator as someone that already knows how the story ends, but that, at the same time, transforms this experience into something new for the readers. In that moment, the narrator positions himself in a different time in the narrating time, in which such time somewhat encompasses a future, which makes the beginning of Hugo Cabret's story something that goes through past and future dimensions. The temporal movement comprised by the visual narrative of Hugo Cabret enables an intertwinement of different temporal perspectives, which are not given linearly, but are overlapping and interdependent.

6. Final considerations

In this research, we have investigated a selection of the visual narrative of the book *The invention of Hugo Cabret*, in order to better understand how the construction of images may be carrier of a narrative upon the use of various elements inherent to artistic representation, such as the use of line, form, representation of light, and spatial configuration, among others. The narrative configuration through the visual form imposes a temporal perspective on its multiple horizons, in which time is inserted as a semiotic resource in the composition of the image.

Considering the analysis of visual elements such as line layout, representation of surface, volume and light, we argue that the images from the book function as a way of creating a narrative through which it is possible to recapitulate the action of characters depicted as chronological. The narrative enabled by the images expresses a dynamism that brings the illustration image closer to the cinematographic image. Therefore, the image takes on an inherent chronological character and, also, in relation to the other images, it renders materiality regarding the full narrative.

The totality of this narrative is the represented time, which combines another type of time, the narrating time, from which branches both experiential time and time of the spectator. The former, would be an evaluation by the author regarding the told story. The latter would take into consideration the act of recognizing part of the world, which implies in an evaluation by the spectator regarding the social represented world. At last, we should like consider that the choice of the visual elements that form the book narrative goes through ideological filters. In our analysis, the pairing between illustration and cinematographic language is always present. Such parity, however, is not exempt of tensions and, once the book narrative was adapted to movie theatres, it is possible to delineate, in future research, comparisons between both medias, focusing on the relationship between their narratives and the spectator.

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