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Sound in *The Flashpoint Paradox*

Sounds in movies help immerse the audience in the experience. Sounds, like music and sound effects can set the mood of the audience to how the director wants them to feel. This is no exception in movies that are based on comic books. When reading a comic book, the reader gets to set the mood and determine how the characters speak. Depending how engaged the reader is with the material, it can be a good thing or a hindrance. Sound in the *Flashpoint* movie helps the audience overall by setting the mood, and at times, making the movie more real and not just a drawing. With the multiple elements of sound that the movie brings to the comic book story, the story that is being told to the audience becomes more realistic. Sound can impact how the viewer feels and incite their emotions.

The *Flashpoint* story follows Barry Allen, a man whose life took a major turning point when his mother was murdered. Barry is a speedster who taps into the Speed Force and is the fastest man alive because of this. By tapping into the Speed Force, Barry becomes a crimson colored crime-fighter known as the Flash. One day, Barry wakes up, and after hearing a report about super villains on the streets, he springs into action only to discover that he no longer has his power. Barry learns that not only has he lost his powers, but other things changed as well, like Superman never being raised by the Clarks and Bruce Wayne being killed instead of his parents. In this timeline, Barry works with Dr. Thomas Wayne, who now assumes the role of Batman, and other heroes to stop a war and turn back time to restore the original timeline.

Perhaps the biggest thing in a movie that help set a mood for the audience is the music. When reading the *Flashpoint* comic books, the reader must set the mood themselves, and depending if the reader is listening to music as they read, the mood can become skewed. If the reader of the comic book was to listen to a heavy metal song while reading the final scene in the comic book story where Flash gives Bruce a letter from his father, the reader will not fully realize how heartfelt that moment was and how Bruce felt. If the reader does not have any music, that same scene in the comic book can seem to drag on forever. In this exert from the comic book, there is no noise and no background noise from Batman's computer. When looking at each panel, when it switches from Flash to Batman, the tension between the two seems to increase with the lack of noise and the switching



panels. The reader is unsure of how Batman feels about the letter in the comic book, and the reader gets no indication from Batman himself as he still wears his cowl. In the movie however, there is music that makes the audience feel like this is a heartfelt moment coming up. The music acts like an audio cue for the audience of what will happen and how they should feel. The music also takes away the tension between the characters as the music assures the audience that Batman will appreciate this act.

While music can set the mood of a scene, it can also act as a way to include the audience in what is happening. The music incites emotions from the viewer, and for a touching moment, the audience can have sympathy for the characters. In a way, it plays to human nature and

encourages the viewer to have sympathy for something or someone else. Depending how immersed the reader of the comic book is, the music can act as a bridge between by making the audience feel more included with the experience. If the reader casually reads the comic book, they will not be as connected to the characters and what is happening to them. Whereas, if the reader is totally focused and immersed in the comic book world, they might be able to feel more



included in the story.

When Barry is reunited with his mother, in this panel to the left, the reader

knows that this is a touching scene. However, there is a sense of being an outsider, like the police officer who is looking back at them, seeing a boy run into his mother that he has not seen for months. In the movie, a very soft music is playing, this sets up the audience that it is a moving moment for Barry, and makes the audience feel what he is feeling.

Voice acting in movies helps the audience know how a character really feels. It can take a monotone scene and give it life. When a reader looks at the words a character is saying, it can be said with little to no emotion, and can be read like Ferris Buller's economic teacher. The words are read to just be read and further the plot. Rather than just reading the words off the page, with no emotion, voice acting in movies helps give the characters' personalities and even makes them seem more human. Voice acting can also make a fictional character seem real, and the more real a character seems to us, the more we can connect to them, and feel what they feel like, pain, loss of hope, and happiness. This plays more to the hero of the story than a villain, as the audience wants to feel what a hero feels but not what a villain does. However, the audience

expects certain villains to have a certain personality, even if they are not important to the story.

This is proven in this scene where Batman is chasing Yo-Yo, he captures her and interrogates her to find out the location of the Joker. In the movie, the audience can hear the sarcasm in her voice

and can tell

that she has no

intention of

telling Batman

where the

Joker is. This

behavior is

expected of a



follower of the Joker. The voice acting successfully portrays her feelings and intentions while giving her the personality the audience expects. However, in the comic book, since it is difficult to write sarcasm, it can seem as if Yo-Yo really intends to tell Batman where the Joker is. The lack of voice acting changes how the reader sees Yo-Yo. She changes from a loyal Joker follower with an attitude, to a petty criminal who wants to save their own life. If Yo-Yo was to be interpreted as a loyal Joker follower, she falls short in the comic book as she is lacking a spunky attitude the audience expects from a follower of the Joker. This attitude was easily portrayed in the movie with the sarcasm the voice actor portrayed.

Sound effects have an important part in movies that help the audience feel like they are there. The addition of sound effects makes the scene more real. While the viewer can have a background and observe it, it can seem fake unless there are actual noises happening. An everyday example of this is someone sitting at a computer in a movie. Without the sound of

tapping at a keyboard, it may just seem like a person is just sitting there. With the sound it is like they are working and makes the scene seem more realistic. Sound effects can also help establish the mood the director wants the audience to feel. If a lone wolf howled, the scene could be seen as lonely, or a dog barking and growling would make the scene become dangerous and scary. Sound effects help the audience make the fake scene a reality and establish how they should be feeling. In *Flashpoint* Barry enters the Batcave in search for Bruce and his help, he enters an abandoned estate. In the movie, while cliché, bats appear and make noises. This helps the audience know that they are in the Batcave and that it has little to know one in there. It also makes it more creepy as Barry walks further in, not knowing what is around the corner. In the corresponding scene in the comic book, while there are bats, they do not make a noise. The bats making noise add to the ambiance of the scene, and sets it up so that the viewer should be weary of the area.

Even though the audience may be at the mercy of what a director wants, it can often be very beneficial to the viewer, especially if the essence of the comic book is captured in the movie like it was in *Flashpoint*. Sounds like background music and sound effects help the audience feel a certain mood. It also helps establish relationships between characters, especially with voice acting. Where as in a comic book, the reader gets to establish the mood and relationships between characters. Sounds help the audience be an active part of the experience, by engaging two senses (sight and hearing) rather than just one. Movies based on comic books can help the audience be more engaged with the material and be more understanding with the characters. It can help bring the characters and situation into reality, which for some, like children, may have an everlasting impact on them. This impact can encourage them to read the comics, or become a bigger fan of the character and what they stand for.

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