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***Imbattable* Vol.1 (2017): An Inspiration for Comics Studies**

This conference paper recounts my early discovery of comics as a complex and intellectually rich medium, by highlighting French artist Pascal Jusselin's *Imbattable* as a turning point. The comic features a superhero whose power lies in manipulating the comic's layout, offering a unique and insightful case study into the formal potential of the comics medium.

The central inquiry of this presentation explores how *Imbattable* leverages the structural elements of comics as narrative tools and what this reveals about the artistic and thematic capabilities of the medium.

Key Points of Analysis

1. The Medium as Superpower

Drawing on Thierry Groensteen's concept of "iconic solidarity" and Scott McCloud's comparison of space in comics to time in film, the talk argues that *Imbattable* literalizes these theories. The protagonist breaks narrative conventions by interacting with panels non-linearly, embodying metanarrative awareness. This transforms the mechanics of comics: space, sequence, and layout, into the character's actual powers.

2. Expanded Cast, Expanded Metafiction

Jusselin introduces other characters whose powers also depend on manipulating formal comic elements:

- **Cochonnet** distorts language as a visual object.
- **Two-D** controls the 2D space of the comic itself.
- **Le Plaisantin** disrupts narrative continuity by leaping between pages.

These powers challenge narrative norms and emphasize the medium's formal malleability.

3. Comics as an Intermedial Medium

By referencing Irina Rajewsky's theory of intermediality, I underscore how *Imbattable* blurs boundaries between the different media. The comic integrates elements from cinema (visual gags), poetry (typographic play), and video games (non-linear progression). Furthermore, intertextual allusions, such as Le Plaisantin's resemblance to the Joker, link the work to the broader global mythology of superheroes.

Conclusion

Imbattable demonstrates that in comics, form and content are inseparable. Its use of structural play as a narrative device not only entertains but also calls for a serious academic reading of comics.

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