PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Graphic novels have spawned a body of literary criticism since their emergence as a specific category in the publishing field, attaining a level of respect and permanence in academia previously held by their counterparts in prose. Salem Press's *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels* series aims to collect the preeminent graphic novels and core comics series that form today's canon for academic coursework and library collection development. The series offers clear, concise, and accessible analysis of not only the historic and current landscape of the interdisciplinary medium and its consumption, but the wide range of genres, themes, devices, and techniques that the graphic novel medium encompasses.

The combination of visual images and text, the emphasis of art over written description, the coupling of mature themes with the comic form—these elements appeal to the graphic novel enthusiast but have yet to be widely accepted to other readers. Designed for both popular and scholarly arenas and collections, the series provides unique insight and analysis into the most influential and widely-read graphic novels with an emphasis on establishing the medium as an important academic discipline. We hope researchers and the common reader alike will gain a deeper understanding of these works, as the literary nature is presented in critical format by leading writers in the field of study.

This second edition of *History, Theme & Technique,* is one of four titles in the *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels* series. Second editions of *Heroes and Superheroes* and *Manga* have been recently published; the second edition of *Independents and Underground Classics,* will be published later this year. *History, Theme & Technique* collects more than eighty essays on the evolution of the graphic novel, from its conceptual beginnings to its gradual acceptance. This volume covers the unique process of creating a product both in art and in word; historical overviews track the complex development of this important art form, while the survey of key themes, genres, and events, albeit far from exhaustive, will help define the major milestones and provide an important foundation for future research.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE
This single-volume second edition includes over eighty essays covering themes and concepts of graphic novels, including genres, time periods, foreign-language traditions, social relevance, and craftsmanship. A wide spectrum of other genres is also presented in critical format, ranging from the nationalistic, such as Japanese manga and African graphic novels, to the traditional, such as Westerns, science fiction, and the archetypal superhero genre and mythos. This set also provides insight into various aspects of the industry, from techniques such a lettering, inking, and illustration, to the production and distribution of graphic novels and the significance of comic book conventions, Issues of readership and literacy, library collection development, and censorship are also covered.

ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT
The essays in *History, Theme & Technique* appear in three topical sections: History, which traces the evolution of the medium before exploring a wealth of cultural and historical topics: Theme, arranged in alphabetical order and covering a wide range of storytelling across genres from the funny animal genre to action and adventure; and Technique, which examines the operations involved in creating and publishing graphic novels. Each essay is three to four pages in length and is divided into the following sections:

- **Definition**—describes the time period, genre, or step in the creation process in two or three sentences;
- **Introduction**—provides a brief overview of the topic before delving into more concentration within the essay;
- **Impact**—covers the theme, genre, or time period and its influence on the medium of graphic novels specifically, and literature in general.
- **Bibliography**—lists secondary print sources for further study and examination. Annotated to assist readers in evaluating focus and usefulness.

APPENDIXES AND OTHER SPECIAL FEATURES
Special features provide tools for further research and points of access to the wealth of information and content contained in *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels*. This includes a listing of major graphic novel awards, a guide to online resources, and a general bibliography. In addition, the glossary includes terms and techniques

pertinent to the study and understanding of graphic novels. A cumulative timeline discusses significant events and influential graphic novel predecessors and spans the ancient world through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the present.

Finally, the comprehensive recommended reading list of over 1,100 titles reflects the complexity and diversity of the graphic novel medium. extending far beyond the preeminent and core series of today's canon. Titles are sorted by three distinct genres: heroes and superheroes; independents and underground classics; and manga, and include author. artist, publisher, and publication date.

This single-volume also features over 100 images, including cover shots and panels from influential and referenced works. A subject and name index is also included.

Ancient Times to 1920: The Evolution of Sequentially Imaged Narratives

Definition

Those who see the graphic novel as the culmination of a long history broadly define the term as a collection of sequential pictorial, symbolic, or other images intended to tell a story, communicate information, or elicit an aesthetic response. Sequentially imaged narratives from a wide range of cultures have been identified as precursors to the graphic novel.

Introduction

Some aficionados of graphic novels point to Will Eisner's *A Contract with God* (1978) as the first such work; in 2003, *Time* magazine published an article entitled "The Graphic Novel Silver Anniversary" that, despite caveats, reinforced this date. Others have pointed out that Richard Kyle used the term in a 1964 newsletter, and as scholars explored the history of comic books, they began to find extended-form precursors published earlier in the century. Cognizant of the wide variety of themes treated by creators under the umbrella term of "graphic novel," some analysts discovered less obvious forerunners created in earlier centuries, and, after in-depth analyses of the intentions and accomplishments of many graphic novelists, some historians have even traced the graphic novel's roots to Paleolithic times.

Prehistoric and Ancient Precursors

Archaeologists and other explorers have discovered examples of the earliest art created by *Homo sapiens* in caves and other locations throughout the world. Using a variety of techniques, scientists have determined that these works, largely depicting animals, date to the Upper Paleolithic period (40,000-10,000 B.C.E.). Two of the most famous of these sites are the caves of Lascaux in southwestern France and Altamira in northern Spain.

   Altamira, with its multicolored images of bison, horses, and other animals, has come to be known as the "Sistine Chapel of Paleolithic Art." The images
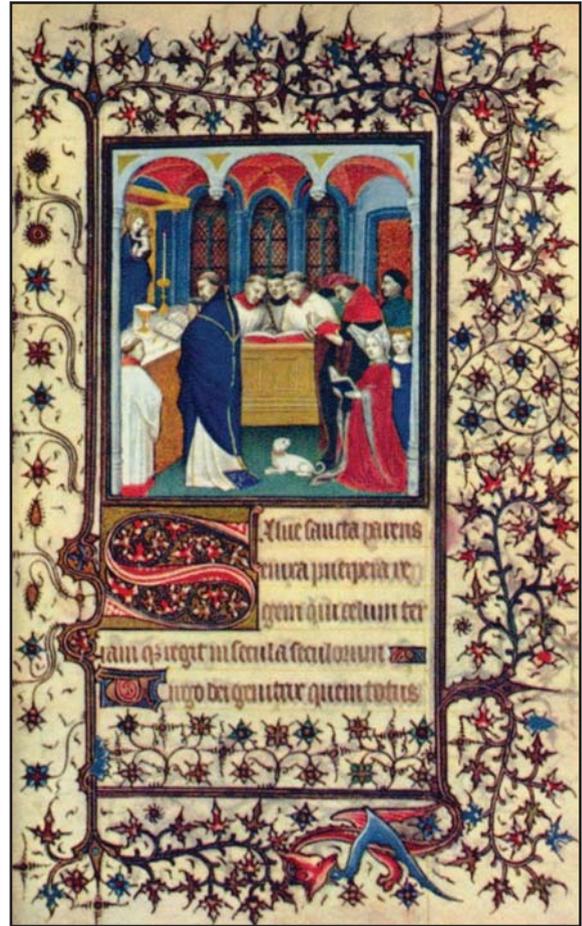
A page from an illuminated book by Meister des Maréchal de Boucicaut. This scene is entitled "Dame während der Messe" or, "Lady during Mass," and was produced between 1410-1415. (The Yorck Project, via Wikimedia Commons)

influenced later artists such as Pablo Picasso, who deeply admired them, and comic book artist Bernet Toledano, who created the *Altamiro de la cueva* series in the 1960's. The nearly two thousand images in the Lascaux caves include animals as well as various abstract symbols. Spiritual, magical, and even astronomical interpretations have been proffered to explain some of the groupings, such as the famous Great Hall

of the Bulls. Others theorize that certain collocations or overlapping of images might represent a hunting narrative.

Works of art from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome have also been cited as precursors to the graphic novel. At first glance, Egyptian hieroglyphs—sequences of images representing animals, humans, jars, water, and so on—would seem to imply some kind of narrative, but these glyphs actually stand for sounds in an ancient Egyptian language. On the other hand, the sequences of paintings found on papyri and tomb walls do tell stories, including how crops were harvested and boats were built. Similarly, the friezes and other decorated parts of Greek buildings sometimes include sculptural or carved depictions of stories from Greek mythology. In the Roman Empire, artists continued this tradition not only in public buildings but also in private homes and businesses. Early Christians adapted some of these methods in re-creating stories from the Old and New Testaments, for example, in panels on the sarcophagi of their dead.

The Middle Ages Through the Early Modern Period

Two new methods sometimes used to tell stories through sequential images came to prominence during the European Middle Ages: tapestries and stained glass. A tapestry is a cloth interwoven with varicolored, symbolic designs for decorative purposes or with biblical or historical scenes to tell a story. The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of the Norman conquest of England in 1066, communicating through several hundred images and many words such important historical events as the Battle of Hastings.

Stained glass, used in medieval cathedrals, served both decorative and narrative purposes. Because many medieval worshipers were illiterate, the panels of stained-glass windows were often used to tell stories from the life of Christ or from the Old Testament. For example, the stained-glass windows of Canterbury Cathedral in England are often called the "poor man's Bible," since the artists used sequential sections to

recount Old Testament stories as well as the birth, public life, passion, and resurrection of Christ as depicted in the Gospels.

The use of stained glass for narrative purposes continued through the Renaissance and into the modern eras. However, new narrative techniques came into prominence during the Renaissance. Several Renaissance artists notably engaged in a competition to depict the biblical story of the sacrifice of Isaac through sequential panels on the bronze doors of the baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence, Italy. Other artists used fresco techniques to tell sequential stories from the Bible. During the High Renaissance, Michelangelo brought the narrative fresco technique to its peak in his Sistine Chapel depiction of the Christian story of salvation, from the creation of the universe to the Last Judgment.

During the Reformation, Protestant artists used the woodcut technique to make multiple prints of sequential stories depicting the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope as the Antichrist. Lutheran artists such as Lucas Cranach told the story of Christ from a Protestant perspective. In the seventeenth century, Roman Catholic artists such as Peter Paul Rubens responded with narrative history pictures in a variety of media and formats, including large frame paintings, ceiling paintings, panels, and even textiles.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the English poet and artist William Blake reinvigorated the medieval illuminated book by creating a revolutionary blend of visual imagery and literary text that he hoped would purify human imaginations and rescue viewers and readers from the corruptions engendered by a soulless industrialized society. In Blake's illuminated books, from *Songs of Innocence* (1789) to *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804-1820), images are often dialectically interrelated to the text and serve as a conduit for the poet's highly personal mythology, reminiscent to modern readers of certain contemporary graphic novelists.

From Short- to Long-Form Comic Books

Although the terms "comics," "comic strips," and "comic books" have been traced to the early twentieth century in the United States, historians have seen these forms as derivative of caricatures and cartoons of earlier centuries. According to several historians of comic books, Rodolphe Töpffer, a Swiss schoolmaster and the creator of *Histoire de M. Vieux Bois* (c. 1839), is the father of this genre. Published in English under the title *The Adventures of Mr. Obadiah Oldbuck* in 1842, Töpffer's work is considered by some to be the United States' first comic book. In forty pages of pictures and captions, the work tells of the amorous adventures of Mr. Oldbuck.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the first widely popular American comic books owed their origins to comic strips that were first published in the Sunday supplements of newspapers. Richard Felton Outcault's *The Yellow Kid*, an exploration of an Irish immigrant youngster and the ethnic tensions he encounters in an urban setting, became a great success for the *New York Journal*. The strips were collected in book form as *The Yellow Kid in McFadden's Flats* (1896).

In the early twentieth century, hundreds of newspapers printed syndicated comic strips such as Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1907), which centers on the dreams of a child from a middle-class family. The styles of the comic-strip artists were sometimes influenced by such movements as Art Nouveau and cubism. Less sophisticated but more popular were the strips focused on family life from a broadly comedic perspective. Rudolph Dirks's *Katzenjammer Kids*, recounting the escapades of mischievous German immigrant children Hans and Fritz, went on to become the longest-running comic in the United States. George McManus's *Bringing Up Father*, which ran from 1913 to 2000, deals with the comedic conflicts between nouveau rich Irish immigrant Jiggs and his shrewish wife, Maggie. The strips were collected into books and also inspired a Broadway play.

Flemish artist Frans Masereel is often cited by graphic novelists as an influence on their work. He began to publish "image novels," composed of expressionistic woodcuts, in Europe in the 1910's. In such works as *Mon livre d'heures* (1919; *Passionate Journey*, 1922), Masereel dissects urban life and the state of the world in the post-World War I period. The German writer Thomas Mann compared the wordless *Passionate Journey* to a black-and-white film and praised the spiritual insights occasioned by the young protagonist's journeys.

Distinctive for having a female protagonist, Russ Westover's *Tillie the Toiler* comic strips began to appear in 1921. The stories concern the trials and tribulations of a young working girl and manifest an early feminist outlook. Tillie is often more clever, more insightful, and wittier than the male characters, though she exhibits the typical penchant of the flapper for fancy dresses and fascinating men. The strips were so popular that they were collected into several books and inspired two films. The comic strip continued to be published through the 1950's.

Impact

The many styles, stories, and viewpoints found in the forerunners of graphic novels have explicit analogues and counterparts in contemporary examples of the form. Many modern graphic novelists have acknowledged their debt to such early works, and they have drawn on several of the works' techniques and themes. Thus, creators have helped to unify the long history of developments that led from cave paintings with collocated images to the complex, often long, and creatively artistic form of the modern graphic novel.

Robert J. Paradowski

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ACTION AND ADVENTURE: DECLINE OF THE POSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE

Definition

Comic books and graphic novels within the action-adventure genre focus on conflicts, often violent ones, that take place within the "real world" and eschew the fantastic plots, settings, or characters found within action-oriented superhero, fantasy, and science-fiction works. Action-adventure heroes and heroines perform unlikely or impossible derring-do under the tacit claim that such events could really happen.

Introduction

Action-adventure storytelling sets up a conflict that requires some form of violent resolution: a chase, a fight, or some other sort of destruction. The genre is narrow in that it traditionally does not include fantastic plot elements found in many other genres; yet, because it can encompass the whole of human history and all human societies, it can theoretically be used as a platform to tell stories about people and places at any point in the past or present. Thus, Westerns, samurai stories, Viking sagas, and modern-day police dramas may all fall under the action-adventure heading.

Pulp adventure characters such as the bronze giant Doc Savage and the cloaked vigilante the Shadow are not examples of action-adventure characters, as they are outlandish and exaggerated by their very nature and do not fit within the world that action-adventure stories seek to depict—a world like the real one. It is important, however, to note that the purported realism of the genre is itself a stylistic trope. The world of action-adventure stories is very similar to the real world, but such stories do not necessarily represent a one-for-one depiction of life as it is.

The somewhat fantastic realism of the action-adventure genre is particularly evident in the genre's treatment of violence. From comic book adaptations of Alexandre Dumas's novel *The Three Musketeers* (*Les Trois Mousquetaires*, 1844; English translation, 1846)

The Walking Dead is an action and adventure comic. (By William Tung, via Wikimedia Commons)

to action comics pitting cops or spies against "the bad guys," action-adventure stories typically take a breezy approach to violent action. Little more than a token mention is given to the real-world physical effects of violence on the characters, who shrug off gunshots and sprint down streets without becoming winded in the least. In terms of the frequency and nature of violent action, the adventure genre is actually a purer fantasy than fantasy itself—the stories present themselves as narratives that could really happen if one were merely to step outside the bounds of a dull, ordinary life.

Action-adventure stories are not as common in graphic novels and comic books as in other media, particularly film, but they do continue to constitute a small genre. The increasing popularity of more fantastic or speculative genres has lessened the influence of action-adventure, reducing the number of such stories published and raising questions about the fate of the genre. However, because nearly all popular genres include elements of the action-adventure story structure—often mirroring mythologist Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey," a narrative path found within myth,

folklore, and popular media from a variety of disparate cultures, with its "call to adventure"—this change may be viewed more as a transformation than a true extinction.

The Lawless World

A basic assumption of the action-adventure genre is that merely one step beyond the visible or invisible bounds of everyday life waits a world of bold decision, savage action, and highly attenuated experience. The point-of-view character is generally a private investigator (as in Gil Kane's *His Name Is . . . Savage!*), a crime journalist (Michele Petrucci's *Due*), a police investigator (the *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* adaptation from IDW Publishing), or a soldier (M. Zachary Sherman and Fritz Casas's *Bloodlines*). Action-adventure protagonists have one thing in common: They follow the formula of a hero who reacts to what a villain has done. The protagonist enters the world of violence and danger and may even relish it, but he or she is the instrument of its positive resolution. Like the hero of a Western, the action-adventure hero or heroine enters a place and time of chaos and restores order. Therefore, crime graphic novels such as Joshua Fialkov's *Tumor* and John Wagner and Vince Locke's *A History of Violence* are not properly within the purview of action-adventure storytelling, as they follow outlaw characters who play a role in instigating conflict.

Will Jacobs and Gerard Jones's *The Trouble with Girls* directly explores the central idea of the action-adventure genre: The protagonist need only make the slightest misstep for wild goings-on to ensue. Despite the general realism of the genre, such over-the-top events can present a problem for some readers. *The Trouble with Girls* is emblematic of the difficulty graphic novel audiences have in suspending disbelief when reading action-adventure stories. Warren Ellis's *Red* similarly deconstructs the idea of the adventure story in a modern world, taking situations and characters well over the top.

Literature and History

A number of action-adventure comic books and graphic novels have been based on classic works of literature.

The venerable *Classics Illustrated* line of comics, originally published by the Gilberton Company, has been translated successfully to the larger-format graphic novel medium, enabling artists to produce adaptations of such novels as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). It would be impossible to argue that Steven Grant's adaptation of Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (*Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*, 1844-1846; English translation, 1846) is not an action-adventure story. Many comics storytellers writing in other genres, including *300* author Frank Miller, have cited the influence of literary adventure narratives on their works, and the structural crossovers are obvious. However, the *Classics Illustrated* line and similar works from publishers such as Penny-Farthing Press and Stone Arch Books are far from the mainstream of sequential art.

In keeping with the ability of the action-adventure genre to transcend boundaries of time and place, several significant works in the genre have been retellings or fictionalizations of historical events. Warren Ellis's *Crécy* presents a short, well-researched historical narrative concerning the fourteenth century Battle of Crécy, a major battle in the Hundred Years' War. *Age of Bronze*, by Eric Shanower, chronicles the legendary Trojan War and draws on both literary sources such as Homer's *Odyssey* and historical and archaeological evidence.

Evolution of the Genre

American and international consumer tastes have largely moved away from traditional action-adventure stories and toward fantastic genres in most areas. Non-real-world settings, situations, and characters are commercially popular and offer comics writers additional creative freedom, and publishing trends have reflected these factors. Stories with common action-adventure protagonists such as military personnel or police officers, for instance, are often set in fantastic or science-fictional worlds; non-real-world comics that display action-adventure characteristics include the *Alien Legion* military series, created by Carl Potts, Alan Zelenetz, and Frank Cirocco, and Alan Moore's superhero police drama *Top 10*.

In addition to changing industry trends, the decrease in the number of action-adventure comics and graphic novels available is due in part to the narrow bounds of the genre. In a modern, industrialized setting, a wild series of adventures that are resolved through "action" would be illegal or, at best, the province of a national government's military, intelligence, or police agencies; therefore, many classic action-adventure protagonists would be considered dangerous or even criminal. Since one of the differences between the crime and action-adventure genres is that career criminals are antagonists rather than protagonists in action-adventure stories, comics featuring protagonists who work in opposition to the law do not fit the strict definition of action-adventure. Similarly, certain categories of stories, such as Westerns and pirate tales, have become subgenres unto themselves and are thus excluded from the action-adventure genre. This process of elimination leaves very few straightforward action-adventure comics and graphic novels.

The most successful action-adventure narratives of the Modern Age of comics appear to be those that mix traditional action-adventure concepts with fantasy, science-fiction, or superhero elements—titles such as *G. I. Joe*, a nonrealistic military series; *The Walking Dead* and *Y: The Last Man*, series featuring apocalyptic events that only vaguely resemble real disaster situations; and *Jonah Hex*, a rather hallucinatory approach to the American frontier of the nineteenth century. Even works such as Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, which brings together characters from a variety of literary sources, rely more upon the "sense of wonder" characters such as H. G. Wells's Invisible Man than "realistic" literary figures such as Kate Douglas Wiggin's Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.

Impact

The action-adventure genre has significantly influenced the comics industry, serving to inspire later publications that build on the classic tropes, situations, and character types of the genre. Although the popularity of traditional action-adventure comics has declined in favor of more fantastic or speculative stories, such popular fantasy, science-fiction, and superhero narratives are typically based on an action-adventure foundation, making them all subsets of the action-adventure story model. Audiences continue to seek the escape of freewheeling, fast-moving adventure and the catharsis of problems resolved through violent action, and the genre has shifted and transformed to meet its readers' needs.

Richard A. Becker

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The Art of Designing the Graphic Novel

Definition

Design determines the rhythm of a graphic novel, creating a synthesized narrative that combines visual and written modes of storytelling. The design similarly determines the pacing and mood of the work and provides the reader with a powerful reading experience not available through other media.

Introduction

Design is a key factor in the creation of a graphic novel. A comprehensive design permits the seamless blend of written and visual narrative characteristic of sequential art. Creating an experience for the reader that is unlike those of purely written or visual media, graphic novel design also has the ability to dictate the mood of the work through its unity of text and visual components. In many ways, the design of each graphic novel is customized to the needs of its narrative and builds upon the strengths of its illustrator and writer. Without a design customized to suit the artistic of vision of the creators, it is unlikely that a graphic novel would be fully appreciated by its audience.

Designing a graphic novel is a complex process that ultimately adds to the language each graphic novel embodies, creating a unique literary experience. There are several components that make up the overall design language, including paneling, spacing, and timing. Such factors determine the mood and pace of the piece. The comprehensive sense of time dictated by the spacing in a graphic novel allows for a new layer of emotional development, while spacing between and in panels adds to the drama of the narrative. These elements must function together to create an effective graphic novel.

The Function of Sequential Art

Graphic novels offer the reader the combined experience of a visual and a literary medium. The sequential nature of the art is key to the creation of a successful graphic novel. The images within the novel must not be static illustrations; rather, they must flow with the narrative. This provides continuity in the narrative and ul-
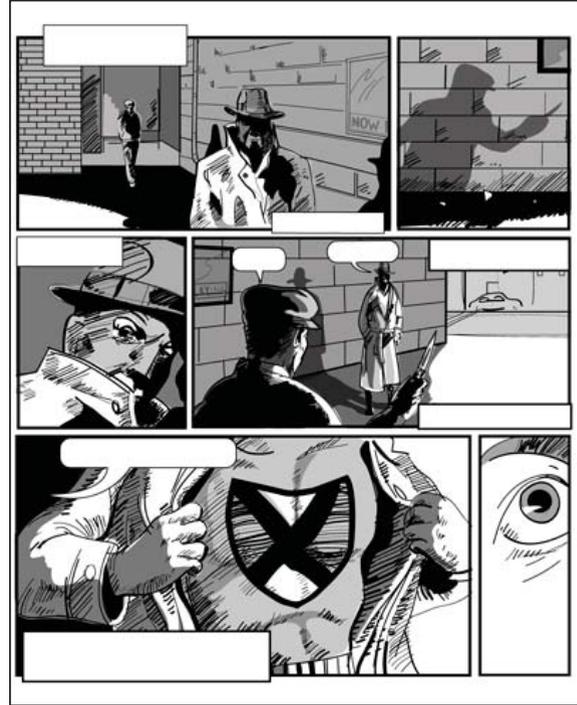
Drawing Words & Writing Pictures offers a concise and illustrated look at the conceptualization and construction of graphic novels, examples from which have been provided to help guide readers. (Courtesy of First Second Books)

timately the entire novel. Even though the illustrations on their own are simply static images, the fact that they are followed by images that advance the narrative makes it possible for them to appear fluid. The spacing that exists in between the frames, which is called the gutter, helps to create this flow. These in-between spaces activate the reader, increasing his or her emotional investment in the work. To maintain the flow of the work and provide a full sensory experience, the novel's creators must weave the sequence of images and narrative together.

The creation of any graphic novel involves interweaving the talents of the creators as well. In the case of graphic novels for which the text and art are created by different people, design must merge not only two

modes of storytelling but also two creative styles. Design utilizes the strengths of both written and visual media to create a cohesive work that effectively conveys a coherent narrative. The creation of time in motion is a difficult feat to achieve, and the sequence of the images is essential to this process.

Framing and Panels

Framing allows the creators of a graphic novel to capture particular moments for the reader, permitting them to dictate the importance of any given scene in a narrative. Single moments can be given more weight when they are depicted within a stand-alone frame, which forces the reader to contemplate only the words and image within that single frame. At times, the dialogue of the novel is suspended in such frames to reinforce the action that occurs within the specific moment. Conversely, panels function to set the pace of the narrative. A series of panels in a graphic novel develop a smooth transition from one idea to the next. This fosters a sense of movement throughout the still images that aids in creating a narrative pace and mood in the work as a whole.

The creators' framing choices inform the reader of what is important in the narrative. For instance, if the illustrator captures small moment-to-moment actions, such as a panel-by-panel zoom in, the framing builds anticipation for the reader. If the illustrator chooses to display the narrative through active frames that depict action scenes, the work takes on a different pace, and those moments become more important.

Some graphic novels feature a unique design that changes the mood of the work. Joe Kubert's *Dong Xoai, Vietnam 1965* (2010) abandons the typical design structure of contained, framed panels. Instead, Kubert uses powerful line work and a strong narrative to direct the reader from illustration to illustration. In this case, the lack of framing allows the reader to feel a lack of security akin to that felt by the soldiers in the narrative. By not including a clearly defined direction through paneling and framing, Kubert's design has a powerful and lasting emotional impact on the reader.

Timing and Spacing

Designing a work of sequential art requires the careful use of spacing, which allows the work to develop a mood and timing that synchronize with the narrative. The timing dictates the buildup and release of tension within the graphic novel. It permits the images to become energetic, losing the stagnant feel that still images inherently possess. In many ways, the development of a sense of time within a work infuses the narrative with reality. Time is real for the audience, and seeing its passage in a graphic novel fuses the reading experience with all the human emotions that are attached to the concept of time. Once the concept of time has been established in a novel, the reader is able to travel with the protagonist through memories and dreams with little confusion.

Unlike other narrative art forms such as literature and cinematography, graphic novels have the ability to mold the time that elapses. The form permits the creator to interact with the reader by creating emotional stress between and within panels and frames. That emotional buildup creates a richer narrative experience because the reader develops a personal emotional response unique to his or her own experience with the work, becoming invested in the story line of the graphic novel.

Impact

A seamless design is necessary in unifying the written narrative of the author and the aesthetic vision of the artist to create a graphic novel. Both components serve each other, making it possible for the graphic novel medium to exist. Creators must combine several design elements with the narrative to create the illusion of movement, time, and space. Will Eisner's series *The Spirit*, originally published throughout the 1940's and early 1950's, serves as an early example of creative design in sequential art, rejecting the typical style of page composition that had existed previously. This series forever changed the way artists and writers understood their medium; the page was no longer stagnant, and the rigid confines of page structure were beginning to bend.

Such innovations from the Golden and Silver Ages of comics made it possible for Modern Age works such as John Layman's *Chew* (2009-   ) and Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* (1989-1996) to include creative use of design. Changing the design structure by breaking, merging, and bending the panels creates a new sense of movement that the rigidity of square panels could not offer. Design has evolved within the pages of graphic novels to serve the narratives as they transform with their content.

<div align="right">*Jessica Gamache*</div>

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BASIC VISUAL TRENDS IN COMICS, MANGA, AND GRAPHIC NOVELS

Definition

A wide variety of illustration styles is discernible in graphic novels. Although many are adaptations or modifications of the visual styles associated with comic books and strips, techniques proximal to the fine arts, such as painting and mixed-media collages, are also used. Graphic novels from countries such as Japan and Belgium have also influenced the styles of US artists.

Introduction

There is no single graphic novel illustration style. On the contrary, graphic novels display a variety of styles, ranging from the linearity of Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan* (2000) to the painterly realism of Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross's *Marvels* (2003). While many artists underscore the individuality of their style, others prefer to adhere to the conventions of visual narratives.

However, individual traces within each conventional style are usually perceptible. The difference in the visual styles of graphic novels lies in their frequent emphasis on artistic individuality and enhancement of the story told: The stringent geometricality of *Jimmy Corrigan* is recognized as Ware's trademark style and also alludes to the ordinariness of the protagonist's life. While appearance is usually indicative of genre in many comic books, the multifarious means of visualization in graphic novels are accompanied by a greater degree of narrative relevance, as with the symbol-laden animal metaphors in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986, 1991).

Given the proximity of graphic novels and comics, the most prominent visual trends in comics through the twentieth century provide an appropriate background for the styles used in graphic novels. Prominent comics styles were fostered by magazines, affecting both the creation and influence of the stories and artwork. Similarly dependent on publication contexts, the greater visual innovation in graphic novels has been propelled in part by an increasing demand for graphic novels and

the consequently higher publication budgets, which enable the printing of high-quality images and sometimes even unusual formats.

The range of illustration styles for word-image narration has been singularly mapped by comics theorist Scott McCloud through his "Big Triangle" in *Understanding Comics*. This triangle is based on a horizontal axis of realism extending from the photorealistic to the iconic, with the vertex representing the greatest degree of conceptual abstraction. The somewhat problematic distinction between iconic and abstract styles in the diagram is symptomatic of any generalized chart for visual styles, since individualistic variations persist even among artists of the same movement.

Realistic and Cute Styles in American Comics

Illustration styles for all kinds of word-image narratives generally hover between the poles of realism and iconicity. Since narratives with visual material often target children, the legacy of a cartoonlike "cute" style deemed appealing to younger readers remains discernible in many works and overlaps with the caricatural and reductive tendencies in comics inherited from satirical newspaper cartoons or broadsheets. This stylistic trend also corresponds to the predominance of young or animal protagonists, as in early American comics such as *The Yellow Kid* (1895-1898) and *Krazy Kat* (1913-1944), which nonetheless targeted older readers.

From the 1930's onwards, caricatural exaggeration was superseded by the dramatic realism employed in the increasing numbers of superhero, horror, and crime comics. Fantasy and science-fiction works also rely on a considerably realistic visual mode. Just as the more caricatural or cute style is often proximal to animation, realism shares commonalities with certain genres of live-action films—film noir, for example, had a major influence on Will Eisner's *The Spirit* and Frank Miller's *Sin City*. Yet while realism persists as the preferred visual style for graphic novels targeting adults and has

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND TECHNIQUES

Airbrush: In this illustration technique an air-operated "gun" is utilized to spray paint onto a page from a short distance. While airbrush techniques date back to the nineteenth century, their use in comics emerged in the 1980's when changing printing technologies enabled greater levels of fidelity and clarity. Airbrushing is commonly used to create highly realistic representations in comics, and is closely tied to the development of science fiction and fantasy magazine illustration styles. With the rise of digital image processing programs, traditional airbrushing has been replaced to a large degree by computer-created effects.

Archetype: Often assumed to be universally understood, this figure or symbol is an exemplar upon which variations are patterned. In superhero comic books and graphic novels, many of the earliest heroes (like Superman) are archetypal, with more recently developed heroes being notable as variations or permutations of this original prototype. As graphic novels frequently rely on visual stereotypes as a form of shorthand, archetypes are widely used. The term is also used broadly in literary criticism to refer to recurrent character types, motifs, images, symbols, and plot patterns.

Bronze Age: The period in the production of American superhero comic books that ranges from approximately 1970 to approximately 1985. The period is frequently characterized by an increased focus on social relevance within the generic framework of superhero comics, and increasing levels of cross-title continuity. Bronze Age superhero comic books were typically produced by writers and artists who had grown up reading earlier superhero titles. This generation of creators was intensely concerned with pushing the limits of superhero comics.

Brushwork: The quality or style of the finished line created by an artist. Technically denoting the effects created by a brush but often used to describe marks made by a pen, in graphic novels there is a considerable variation in brushwork. Brushwork can be tight or loose, and lines can be long or short, among many other variations. Brushwork is unique to specific artists, and is one of the elements by which cartoonists are differentiated from each other in visual terms.

Captions: The text portions usually situated at the top of comic book panels and which are not attributed to a character by way of a scalloped tail. Captions are most frequently used to give voice to a narrator, whether in first- or third-person address.

Cartoon: In the context of graphic novels, a cartoon is a single-panel drawing with text included either in the image, or below it. Cartoons are the non-sequential form of comics. Editorial cartoons and gag cartoons have their own history dating back hundreds of years, and the style and format have strongly influenced the development of aesthetics in the comic strip, comic book, and graphic novel.

Chiaroscuro: An Italian term meaning "light-dark," chiaroscuro has its origins in the Renaissance and refers to the tonal contrasts that are used to suggest the volume of an object. In the practice of drawing, chiaroscuro refers to the way objects are rendered three-dimensional by varying the gradations of color or through the use of shading. The term can also be used to designate high contrast lighting effects.

Close-ups: A visual technique in which a figure or item is shown in great detail. A character can be said to be drawn in close-up when only a small portion of their body (such as the face) is depicted. Close-ups are frequently used to draw attention to important details, whether related to the action or to the psychology of the characters.

Collage: An arrangement of different forms is brought to together in a single work. In comics, this technique was not widely used before the 1960's, when artists began responding to innovations in the world of fine arts by creating multimedia works. In comics, the most commonly used elements in collage are photos and drawings, but some artists have used elements that include tape, cloth, and string to add dimensionality to their work.

Conflict: The struggle that develops as a result of the opposition between the protagonist and another person, the natural world, society, or some force within the self. In short fiction, the conflict is most often between the protagonist and some strong force either within the protagonist or within the given state of the human condition.

Recommended Readings: Heroes

Title	Author	Artist	Publisher	Year
*100%	Pope, Paul	Pope, Paul	DC Comics	2005
*100 Bullets	Azzarello, Brian	Risso, Eduardo	DC Comics	2000-2009
A Disease of Language	Moore, Alan, and Campbell, Eddie		Knockabout Comics	-2010
A God Somewhere	Arcudi, John, et al	Snejbjerg, Peter	WildStorm	-2010
A. K. A. Goldfish	Bendis, Brian Michael	Bendis, Brian Michael	Caliber Comics, Image Comics	
Absolute Batman: The Long Halloween	Loeb, Jeph	Sale, Tim	DC Comics	New York: DC Comics, 2007
Acts of Vengeance Omnibus	Chris Claremont; Jim Lee; Layton, Bob; Mark Gurenwald; John Byrne; Howard Mackie; Terry Austin; Michelinie, David	Herb Trimpe; Paul Ryan	Marvel	2011
Adam Strange: Planet Heist	Diggle, Andy,	Ferry, Pasqual	San Val	-2005
*Alias	Bendis, Brian Michael	Gaydos, Michael	Marvel Comics	2003-2004
*All-Star Batman and Robin, the Boy Wonder	Miller, Frank	Lee, Jim	DC Comics	2008
*All-Star Superman	Morrison, Grant	Quitely, Frank	DC Comics	2007, 2009
Almuric	Thomas, Roy	Conrad, Tim	Dark Horse	-1991
Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay, The	Chabon, Michael	Rayn, Jay	Random House	New York: Picador, 2000