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Comics for Children?

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Grk cdgvj 'Uwt dgemEqo leu'hqt 'Ej kf t gpA

Y qtmu'Ekgf

Cmold, Andrew D. "From Ming to Kim." *Time*. Time, 23 Sept. 2005. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1108801,00.html#ixzz1ZCBaWdM8>. This review of Guy Delisle's work notes, as a secondary source, the use of light in *Pyongyang*. It was briefly useful in explaining how tone can be communicated through very simple aesthetic components.

B, David. *L'ascension Du Haut Mal*. Paris: l'Association, 2011. Print. This French graphic novel was a primary source that was used, amongst other things, to demonstrate how characters might hold heroic positions in a story because of their child-like status. Later, I pointed out certain artistic techniques that David B utilized like abstract lines to demonstrate mental activity. His influence as a graphic novel creator was significant to explain Marjane Satrapi's own artistic style in her graphic novels.

Bellefroid, Thierry. "Interview de David B. : L'Ascension du Haut Mal." *BD Paradisio*. N.p., 2000. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <http://www.bdparadisio.com/intervw/davidb/intdavid.htm>. Bellefroid's interview with David B was a useful secondary source to explain David B's process of remembering or not being able to remember his childhood with his family. Where he couldn't use his memory, he used his imagination and that is what be states plainly to Bellefroid.

Bender, Hy. *The Sandman Companion*. New York: Vertigo/DC Comics, 1999. Print. This companion to *the Sandman series*, as a secondary source, was hugely useful to understand Gaiman's workshop-like process of creating comic books and his possible

influences used to create *The Sandman Series*. I used this source to comment on components that made up the characters of Dream and Delirium.

Delisle, Guy. *Pyongyang*. Paris: L'Association, 2002. Print. This French Canadian graphic novel was a primary source that I used specifically for demonstrating how graphic novels and can convey tone visually and also how the lack of color can be used to highlight certain perspectives, conveying tone that way as well.

Eisner, Will. *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*. Tamarac, FL: Poorhouse Press, 1996. Print. This was an instrumental secondary text that did a lot to influence the paper's thesis. It was written as a theoretical piece on the nature of graphic storytelling and the elements involved in that process. Eisner gives important evidence in the introduction that graphic narratives appeal to our most basic types of reception because we naturally develop to respond to visual communication first.

Gaiman, Neil, writer. *Brief Lives*. Ink by Vince Locke and Dick Giordano. Coloring by Daniel Vozzo. Lettered by Todd Klein. Covers and design by Dave McKean. Foreword by Neil Gaiman. Afterword by Peter Straub. New York: Vertigo-DC Comics, 1994. Print. Vol. 7 of *The Sandman Series*. This British graphic novel was used as a primary source for making aesthetic points about *The Sandman Series* because the text was broken up into multiple stories that focuses on key main characters in the series. With every short story, the most significant aesthetic motifs for certain characters were demonstrated more clearly.

Gaiman, Neil, writer. *The Kindly Ones*. Art by Marc Hempel. Coloring by Daniel Vozzo. Separated by Android Images. Lettered by Todd Klein and Kevin Nowlan. Covers and

design by Dave McKean. Introd. by Frank McConnell. New York: Vertigo-DC Comics, 1996. Print. Vol. 9 of *The Sandman Series*. This British graphic novel was used as a primary source that demonstrated character development for Delirium and Dream. This was a clear point in the series where Delirium demonstrates the full child-like state of her perspective on even very serious situations.

Gaiman, Neil, writer. *The Wake*. Art by Michael Zulli, Jon J. Muth, and Charles Vess. Lettered by Todd Klein. Coloring by Daniel Vozzo& Jon J. Muth. Separated by Digital Chameleon. Covers and design by Dave McKean. Title page by Michael Zulli. New York: Vertigo-DC Comics, 1997. Print. Vol. 10 of *The Sandman Series*. Like *The Kindly Ones*, this British graphic novel was used as a primary source to further explore the character development of Delirium and Dream as the story finishes its climax and reaches a conclusion.

Hon, Christine. "Flashforward Democracy: American Exceptionalism And The Atomic Bomb in "Barefoot Gen.." Comparative Literature Studies 46.1 (2009):125-155. Academic Search Complete. Web. Mar. 2012. This secondary source was used for its academic analysis of *Barefoot Gen* in relationship to the policitcal events that surrounded its creation. I used a passage from this work for explaining how works like *Barefoot Gen* act as a "witness," which helps the reader's "inner child" grasp better onto the story's message.

"Jewish Mice, Bubblegum Cards, Comics Art, and Raw Possibilities." *Comics Journal* 65 Aug. (1981): 99. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. This interview occurred about the time of *Maus*'s publishing. As a secondary source, it helped me cite where Art Speigelman's artistic influences came from, backing up the way he conveys tone in his works.

Jochum-Maghsoudnia, Charbanou. "Marjane Satrapi. Persépolis ." *Droit et Cultures*. N.p., 18
    May 2009. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <http://droitcultures.revues.org/741>. This interview with
    Marjane Satrapi was used as a secondary source to give further evidence of how comics
    artists view their own work as a hybrid medium. Here, Satrapi gives a solid quote that
    uses the word, hybrid, to describe her work.

"L'interview!: Marjane Satrapi." *BD Sélection*. N.p., 4 Jan. 2002. Web. 13 Dec. 2011.
    <http://www.bdselection.com/php/?rub=page_dos&id_dossier=51>. This interview with
    Marjane Satrapi helped back up aesthetic observations about Satrapi's work, citing her
    influences, both artistic and cultural that she used to create *Persepolis*.

Masumoto, Taiyo. *Tekkonkinkreet*. Complied by Andrew McKeon. Edited by Elizabeth
    Kawasaki and Jason Thompson. Translated by Lillian Olsen. Designed by Amy Martin.
    VIZ Media, LLC. 2007. Print. This Japanese graphic novel was used specifically for
    discussing the animal stereotypes that can be used in graphic novels to efficiently convey
    information about characters. This work was specifically chosen for its number of clear
    examples and how animal stereotypes can be used in a different number of ways.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Collins, 1994.
    Print. This secondary source, like Eisner's theoretical piece mentioned previously, was an
    important secondary source for the thesis and it, too, is a work focusing on the theoretical
    aspects of graphic narratives. Using the word, "child-like," was poximoly inspired by the
    quotes taken from his work and placed in the paper.

Nakazawa, Keiji. *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima*. Translated by Project Gen.
    Introd.by Art Spiegelman. San Francisco: Prolong Press Ltd., 2004. Print. Vol. 1

Barefoot Gen. This Japanese graphic novel by Keiji Nakazawa was used as a primary text to give examples of how graphic novels can visually convey tone and perspective. This text was also referenced in the beginning of the paper to demonstrate the blunt style of delivery that graphic novels use.

Park, Ed. "Shadowland: An animated account of life under the Kim regime." *The Village Voice*. Village Voice LLC, 16 Aug. 2005. Web. 13 Dec. 2011. <http://www.villagevoice.com/2005-08-16/books/shadowland/>. This review of Delisle's *Pyongyang* was similar to another review of *Pyongyang* (see Arnold) as another reference to visual techniques to convey tone in graphic novels.

Sartrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis*. Milan: Ciboulette, 2009. Print. This French graphic novel was used as a primary text to explore aspects of the paper. These included how characters can posses a child-like perspective to be heroic figures, how comics artists draw from various influences to create the clearest message they can attempt, the advantages of a black and white palette, and how abstract lines can be used to signify mental activities.

Spiegelman, Art. *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon Books- Random, 1997. Print. This American graphic novel was used as a primary source for many points in the thesis. Spiegelman demonstrates a variety of influences as an artist to convey his story, his use of animal stereotypes, and the unique visual advantages a graphic novel has in telling a story, especially in a non-linear fashion, to convey the vulnerability and child-like aspects of characters.

Narrative on the Project

Comic for Children is a graphic novel analysis that acted as my undergraduate thesis for my B.A. in English It evolved greatly over the span of about a year and demanded the assistance of multiple departments in Booth Library. With Dr. Stephen Swords, my thesis advisor's guidance, I set out to analyze graphic novels cross-culturally with the idea that one binding characteristic that they had was a connection to childhood. Naturally, this required seeking out graphic novels in multiple languages. Purchasing these books for many reasons was less desirable than using the skills of the library's staff to find and borrow copies of the books from other universities. Besides the obvious need of the Circulation and Reference departments, the most valuable department and the most valuable group of people to my professor and me for this project was the ILL staff. Due to the complex nature of the paper and its cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural themes, more time was spent in Booth than Coleman to thoroughly cover what I needed to research.

To explain further the nature of my paper, I will give a complete list of the works I included and what my project ultimately pointed out for graphic novels and readers' child-like reception of them. What the paper realized was that the childhood connection amongst graphic novels applies to both content and delivery method in the various examples of the global cannon. The paper included *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a selection from *The Sandman Series* by Neil Gaiman, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *l'Ascension du Haut Mal* by David B. *Barefoot Gen* by Kenji Nakasawa, and *Tekkonkinkreet* by Taiyo Matsumoto. It became a priority to look at graphic novels as exclusively a hybrid form of expression, neither just literature nor just art. First looking at content, I understood that it could be said that content can naturally be child-like. Within the realm of what is essentially children's art, comics artists find themselves in a medium where they

can comfortably display the child part of themselves to the child in their readers. This can be seen in character roles, tone, and perspective. Works that depend on characters acting child roles include *Persepolis* and *Maus*. Works that use a child-like perspective include *Barefoot Gen*. Allowing a glimpse into how these works reveals how deeply child-like graphic narratives are. In looking at delivery of content, I also concluded that not everything makes literary elements in graphic narratives visually child-like and characters do not have to be child-like. They only have to be understood, which is what art for children does for all graphic narratives. The evidence to show the child-like qualities of characters draws from basic graphic narrative elements. Elements that include line, drawing style, and color are components that help make up the visual patterns humans develop in their minds as Will Eisner explains in *Storytelling and Visual Narrative* (1996). The creators of graphic narratives borrow from their surrounding world to use aethetic components that attract children of any age. Specific examples such as how characters appear child-like only give a sample of the messages basic graphic narrative elements can convey.

I have learned from this project and from working on this project using the plethora of resources at Booth that I have so much more to learn and I feel happy about it. I am more or less satisfied with the paper because I have come a long way in my research abilities and writing skills. I also know though that this will remain an ongoing project for me as I move on to graduate school and continue my work in the humanities and library science at the University of Illinois. I feel that I will graduate having had a very special opportunity that made my time as an undergrad productive and that made my diploma all the more valuable to me.

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<div align="center">Comics for Children?</div>

Graphic narratives around the world have found themselves today being read by certain types of readers. Literature scholars focus on elements such as character and plot structure, occupying their minds with what makes literature great and what some graphic narratives share with that great literature. With a similar attitude, art historians focos on style, composition, and other artistic elements in graphic narratives that connect them to the art history timeline that goes back to cave paintings. Another type of audience exists, one that does not consider what graphic narratives are and whether they belong to an existing formal area of study. This type of audience is the reader who naturally reads any graphic narrative like a child. Appropriately, graphic narratives have been intentionally designed for the child-like reader. It makes sense then that this sort of audience can accurately extract the essence of this form of expression. Both comics readers and comics artists understand that graphic narratives do not exclusively belong to either art or literature and that they are meant to be focused on the child and all the forms in which the child appears.

Marjane Satrapi states that the hybrid nature of graphic novels matches no other medium she has encountered, which helped to encourage her to present her life's story as the bande desinnée or French graphic novel, *Persepolis*: "In graphic narratives, as opposed to book

illustrations, the art is a part of the text. The art doesn't accompany a text that is already there, text and art work together. To my knowledge, it is the only medium that works like that"(Jochum-Maghsoudnia). As Satrapi points out, graphic narratives cannot be neatly categorized with just any other seemingly similar medium. They are an ensemble of text and image. Approaching graphic narratives as exclusively art or literature leads to incomplete conclusions about them. We lose sight that they use components that we identify as literature that are delivered to readers through visual art.

In his book, *Understanding Comics*, comics artist and comics theorist, Scott McCloud also sees graphic narratives as a media hybrid, observing that they effectively communicate almost any subject, but in a way that even children understand the content. His consideration of graphic narratives is the basis of how all readers and scholars need to look at them. He says, "When you enter the world of the cartoon—you see yourself. I believe this is the primary cause of our childhood fascination with cartoons ..." (36) (see Figure I). Our abilities to connect to the cartoon form starts in childhood and never goes away, even if we move on to traditional literature or fine art.

For the sake of this paper, "inner-child" is a simplified way to express readers' more profound systems of reception that begin developing when they are young. The fact that this ability never leaves may be seen as the child in us all. In his theoretical book *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, Will Eisner points out that humans build up whole systems for accessing information. Fundamental to those developing systems are visual patterns and their connection to messages. A frown means someone is upset. Red can mean passion or anger. This information is important to graphic storytelling, says Eisner, because readers will transfer that type of reception to reading graphic narratives (48). Because we develop our visual reception for

meaning from when we are young, we have the ability to understand a lot when it is visually presented.

Art Spiegelman backs up that readers respond naturally to graphic narratives. In his forward of Kenji Nakasawa's American printing of *Barefoot Gen*, Spiegelman writes, "We think in cartoon...The drawing's greatest virtue is its straightforward, blunt sincerity, its conviction and honesty allow you to believe in the unbelievable and impossible things that did indeed happen in Hiroshima." Spiegelman uses Nakasawa's story to say that graphic narratives possess qualities of honesty and candor because they use visual storytelling. Because they tell stories, graphic narratives possess components that literary critics would recognize in literature. Those components are visually presented, however. As Eisner and McCloud maintain, that hybrid nature is why our inner child again is attracted to graphic narratives.

Holding to the argument that graphic narratives use art that appeals to children no matter their age, it can be said that content delivery can naturally become child-like as well as being child friendly. Within the realm of what is essentially children's art, comics artists find themselves in a medium where they can comfortably display the child part of themselves to the child in their readers. This can be seen in character roles, tone, and perspective. Allowing a glimpse into how this works reveals how deeply child-like graphic narratives are.

A significant theme in the character roles of *Maus* is the struggle for preservation. This applies to the preservation of life, but importantly, too, the preservation of a family's story. More so than just searching for Holocaust stories, Spiegelman wants to know his father on a personal level. His quest to connect to his father and the past melds his father's story and his own. Spiegelman does this, for example, when he breaks the fourth wall and reflects about the story to the reader. (see Figure 2) Time loses its traditional sense of sequential action in the face of

Spiegelman's child-like need for a connection to his parent as he tries to make his father's experiences his own. Spiegelman seems to be drawing the way he would if he went through his father's experiences. Will Eisner judges that "the overall 'look' appropriately conveyed the impression that the artwork was created and smuggled out of a concentration camp" (156). As a result, events overlap and Spiegelman makes sense of his perceived role in the Holocaust even though his parents experienced it and he did not. He tries to hold onto their story by creating his graphic narrative, *Maus*, making their story his own as the next generation.

Persepolis captures the Iran Marjane Satrapi knew as a child. That is the role she takes on to create *Persepolis*. She rejects her adult reflections for the simplified look and perspective of her childhood persona. Satrapi explains, "...the most essential part of my work is my memory as I recall the things I did when I was six, ten, or thirteen years old. I find that a lot more interesting than a book created out of my thoughts in the present day that seem a lot like those of a thirty-one-year old woman" (Jochum-Maghsoudnia). Her Uncle Anoosh, the most influential character in the young Satrapi's life, tells her in *Persepolis* that she cannot forget their family's history. He designates her, as the representative of her generation, to continue their memory. In order to stay true to that promise, Satrapi looks to her former objective, child perspective to fulfill it.

Similar to his fellow French comics creator, David Beauchard presents himself in the role as the keeper of "la mythologie familliale" in his autobiographical graphic narrative, *l'Ascension du haut mal*. His perspective when he was a child is the truest perspective he can use. In a French interview, he explains that the first volumes of *l'Ascention du haut mal* were a collaborative effort between his family and himself. Even collaboration, however, made Beauchard's desire to be authentic difficult. Memories that the family shared together modified with every retelling and, as a result, Beauchard depends upon the imaginary figures that he remembers from

childhood to move along the story over the gaps. He says in a French interview, "And so I attempted to present, at the same time, the structure of my imagination and the influence of everything that I experienced according to this imagination" (Bellefroid). Even if he can't tell his story completely through reality, Beauchard turns to his child-like imagination to recapture events. Childhood fantasy, for Beauchard, is more often truthful than memories of concrete events.

Neil Gaiman's *Sandman Series* gives another example of how a character holds the child-like role of preserver, but not through the act of recounting events. Dream cannot change his role as the ruler of the Dreaming because he is so burdened by his past. He finds a solution in Daniel, a former mortal baby boy, who will take over the Dreaming when the Sandman must finally die. Dream's move seems almost necessary in *The Wake* because, as Lucien, his former servant points out, "...one must change or die. And, in the end, there were, perhaps, limits to how much he could let himself change (59)." Under the new Dream without the same flaws as the original, the Dreaming is able to rejuvenate. Rather than holding on to the events of the past for preservation, Daniel has to erase it to save the Dreaming.

Tone, as another storytelling element in graphic narratives, takes on the characteristics of a threatened child in Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang*. Delisle makes his thoughts of his trip to North Korea evident in his composition. He uses size ratio to make his surrounding world dark and huge to his vulnerable smallness. He draws himself as diminutive by comparison to the imposing government buildings (see Figure 3) and the segregated treatment he receives for being a foreigner (see Figure 4). In a review for the graphic narrative, the *Village Voice* notes Delisle's deliberate attempts to create a foreboding atmosphere in North Korea: "In a particularly fine detail, Delisle notes that the portraits of the Kims, which hang in every room in the country,

"have a wider edge above than below"—thus appearing to loom over the viewer while keeping free of glare. Big Brothers are watching him" (Park). The reviewer doesn't have to quote anything to know what Delisle is trying to say. Without words, but still with language Delisle shows what he sees as an oppressive place: that makes anyone who enters its borders a vulnerable child.

Kenji Nakasawa uses perspective in *Barefoot Gen* to convey the danger of a larger, more adult and powerful world that threatens his characters. Using perspective of his main character, Gen, readers become witnesses, seeing panels engulfed with fire and corpses caused by the destruction of the atomic bomb (see Figure 5). This act of becoming the witness through perspective reflects back on Art Spiegelman's introduction of the English translation of the manga where he describes comics as " the inexorable art of the witness." In one of her articles, "Flashforward Democracy: American Exceptionalism and the Atomic Bomb in *Barefoot Gen*," Christine Hong says Gen's appearance within the panels "attests to his presence as historical witness (152)" and describes this phenomenon within readers minds, saying, "Never explicitly depicted, the reader is effectively embedded as a border-crosser into Nakazawa's Hiroshima, afforded a moment-by-moment, zoomed-in vantage not retrievable from the limited photographic record" (Hong, 148). Nakazawa's use of geographic space and what fills it reminds us that this is a child's world. Readers always look up and out, directed by Gen's gaze. The details of World War II are not explored or any other elements that complicated using the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. The child's perspective narrows renders' gazes to the story's purpose of showing the horrors of war against the innocent.

The child-like perspective is used again through Delirium as one of her roles in the *Sandman Series*. She is the voice of truth during certain instances as she tries to warn the readers

and the other characters that Dream is in danger. Her relationships with other characters make her an outsider to her more mature siblings that make up the Endless. Her outsider status, however, makes her perception of Dream's end clearer than others, too. To Gaiman, Dream and Delirium play each other's opposite. However, Delirium retains more wisdom than Dream because she does not cut herself off from others even though her personality sets her apart from them. She always seeks connection and Dream refuses to leave his self-created solitude. Delirium understands his situation more than he does as a result (Sandman Companion, The 208). Gaiman makes it purposefully difficult to foresee Dream's fate until the end if one looks at the story through Dream's perceptive. However, he uses using Delirium to warn others, including Dream, of the oncoming end. Dream insists in volume nine that he cannot leave the Dreaming because of his responsibilities, retreating back to his self-isolating tendencies. Delirium argues back that Dream's perceptive of responsibility has always been wrong. His actions affect things beyond the Dreaming, implying the doom he is approaching but he ignores her (see Figure 6). After the scene, Delirium meets Nuala who asks if Dream may be in trouble. Delirium begins to cry out of helplessness. She cannot make the personal connection she needs to with Dream and she knows that his refusal to accept her attempt to reach out to him dooms him (see Figure 7). Delirium is helpless to act, revealing her vulnerability to the danger she knows is coming.

Not everything makes literary elements in graphic narratives visually child-like, however, and characters do not have to be child-like. They only have to be understood, which is what art for children does for all graphic narratives. The evidence to show the child-like qualities of characters draws from basic graphic narrative elements. Elements that include line, drawing style, and color are components that help make up the visual patterns humans develop in their

minds as Eisner described earlier. The creators of graphic narratives borrow from their surrounding world to use aesthetic components that attract children of any age. Specific examples such as how characters appear child-like only give a sample of the messages basic graphic narrative elements can convey.

Drawing techniques can come from various sources throughout comics artists' lives. They each have specific aims in mind, often taking from techniques that already exist because they have been proven effective already to convey messages to any audience, even an extremely young one.

Spiegelman's style in *Maus* seems to change slightly throughout the story, sometimes giving the impression of woodcuts from children's books and sometimes of political cartoons. Art Spiegelman says in a *Comics Journal* interview that he was looking at Eastern European children's books for inspiration while working on aesthetics in *Maus*. His experimentation, however, led to Spiegelman feeling some wariness that he risked making his work still appear to be a political cartoon, a message he wanted to avoid ("Jewish Mice"). Spiegelman knows the sensitive nature of his subject and his great concern for how it is visually portrayed. If a style seems to refer more to a political cartoon or a child's book illustration, it will greatly affect a reader's reaction because both are highly recognizable and commonly target an audience with little time to reflect.

Marjane Satrapi's style is consistently simple and idealistic as it lacks details that one expects of the violence she witnessed in life. Iran has no dirt and blood in her child-like presentation. That minimalist style, however, makes readers instead pay attention to the emotions and inner terror of her life. David Beauchard was Satrapi's major artistic influence to use this

style. Even though their respective graphic narratives seem almost the same in style in many ways, Satrapi insists that their storytelling techniques differ greatly. Satrapi explains in a French interview after the publication of *Persepolis*, "Before meeting David, I had my own style. However, I have to tell you that the first graphic novel that really made me want to make one was *L'Ascension du haut mal*: I told myself that if I was going to write a graphic novel, frankly, it was going to be a graphic novel that looked like this" (*L'interview!*). By this time in Beauchard's career, his work was already successful and his art was considered highly moving as a storytelling style. Satrapi took on a style that was both successful and accessible, making it her own.

The presence or absence of color will strongly influence a reader's inner-child's interpretation because color and its meaning are everywhere in everyday life. Colors associate with emotions and states of being. White clouds that are "happy" because they mean good weather are not the same as dark clouds that are "angry" because they mean bad weather. A red face is impassioned compared to a pale face that is scared. In a chapter on color of *Understanding Comics*, McCloud explains that black and white, in contrast, makes art more "direct." Forms, rather than emotions, become the focus (192). A black and white palette creates the most extreme contrasts for readers to differentiate the forms they see. It is simplistic and straightforward for stories that cannot afford embellishments. The addition of color brings in further layers to a story's message and gives characters and settings more distinct personalities.

Though a black and white palette is the simplest kind of palette, it is that simplicity that makes Satrapi's work more children friendly in understanding her key motifs. Using black and white breaks them down into plainly shown forms. She explains, "An important reason for why I chose black and white because my stories are often very complex, and if the art is also complex,

that could be too much. I try to achieve a harmony, as I put it" (Jochum-Maghsoudnia). Too much language in the form of color can lose the reader in Satrapi's complex story. Rather than going into detail about the degree in which Iranian women are hidden under the veil, Satrapi draws floating black masses with simple faces. The emphasis of forms makes the men's obligatory beards difficult to miss and other forms that symbolize Iran growing conservative culture. Because we are forced to focus on the forms, we take in those symbols more so than if they were combined with color. While color would give Satrapi a new level to add to her story that is not the point she tries to make.

Delisle's goal for using black and white is similar to Satrapi's goal in that both want to highlight the important motifs in their complex works. Delisle conveys to readers the dynamics he encountered in North Korea, by highlighting what was made obviously to him by the North Koreans and what he had to realize for himself. What is darkened is insignificant or hidden away. What is highlighted is considered important and worthy of showing by the culture. Delisle twists those perceptions by visually showing how only the country's government is spotlighted, leaving himself and the people of North Korea in the dark. This act of lightening and darkening isn't necessarily all Delisle's imagination. He shows in the graphic narrative that the country saves the majority of the electricity not for the citizens but for the communist dynasty's state monuments. "This lack of illumination, except for the dear leaders' visage, becomes Delisle's natural running metaphor for the country's blinkered culture," as noted by a review done by *Time* magazine (Arnold). Though a black and white palette is the simplest kind of palette, it is that simplicity that lets Delisle come off so strongly, knowing how his readers have developed they sense of perceiving light and dark is common enough for the connections to even be instantly picked up by children.

Gaiman, as a comics creator who often uses color, makes full use of the associations between color and emotion that readers have developed since they were young. He also stands out from the previously mentioned comics creators because his choice of color, and all other aspects of presenting his work is based on the collaborative work of artists, colorists, and others who Gaiman depends upon to present the *Sandman series*. As an example of his use of color, *Endless Nights* from the *Sandman series* demonstrates how each of the Endless are assigned colors by Gaiman to express their personalities. Destruction is associated with the red colors (see Figure 8). Desire is associated with yellows (see Figure 9). Delirium is associated with a rainbow of colors (see Figure 10). We can match these colors to other things that possess the same colors to understand the personalities of each of these characters though color interpretation in a larger context is highly subjective. Red is the color of blood so that can connect back to violence and destruction, especially of flesh. Yellow is the color of gold, an object of often-craved desire. A rainbow can be happy in that a rainbow appears when the weather becomes calm. A rainbow can also represent colors in chaos as found in tie-dye or the northern lights. These connections that Gaiman uses make sense because they are used in real life.

Forms made by lines are as effective in conveying meaning, animal forms being a recognizable example. Animal symbolism is one of the most familiar forms in art made with children in mind. From Grimm's Fairy Tales to Disney, animal stereotypes are everywhere and comics artists join in on using them. Will Eisner explains that this is because animal characteristic stereotypes are highly effective in encouraging character recognition because of this standard use:

> In graphic storytelling, there is little time or space for character development. The use of these animal-based stereotypes speeds the reader into the plot and gives the

teller reader-acceptance for the action of his characters. By employing characters who resemble animals, the graphic storyteller capitalizes on a residue of human primordial experience to personify actors quickly (20).

Animal stereotypes are among the most recognizable of forms. This is part of why Spiegelman's use of animal heads is among the strongest aesthetic elements that he has to offer in *Maus*. Using mice to represent Jews, Americans as dogs, and Germans as cats give readers no doubt of Spiegelman's intentions. He does this to shock and prove a point. This intention to create an intense delivery derives from Spiegelman's background in the 1960s underground comix movement. This movement used animal stereotypes, among other tropes in kid-friendly comics, to juxtapose with adult content, creating satirical and shocking work.

Tekkonkinreet is also strongly dependant on animal symbolism because of the animal stereotypes association process that Eisner mentioned. Animals appear in many forms in this graphic narrative. A real animal populace lives in the setting of *Tekkonkinreet*, unbothered on the streets and coexisting with the citizens. Some of the citizens in turn display connections to those animals that share their characteristics. A black cat and a white cat are associated with Black and White respectfully who are both referred to us "cats" (see Figure 11). When Rat appears, his fellow rodents appear as well (see Figure 12). Animal associations also reflect a character's visual appearance and plot role. Two such characters who demonstrate this plainly are Rat and Snake. Rat is drawn with a narrowed face and an extended snout-like nose (see Figure 13). Snake visually possesses serpent-like narrow eyes and a long, sleekly pointed face (see Figure 14). From the beginning, Rat is Snake's enemy. Naturally, he becomes Snake's victim. They imitate their wild namesakes in both name and action. The story is purposefully designed knowing that readers will pick up on these connections, even if they don't do so on purpose. The process is so

natural that they have been doing such things since their first exposure to cartoons and other media for children as Eisner pointed out.

Lines may seem too simple to be noticed and analyzed in graphic narratives, but the truth is that they send messages that readers pick up from childhood as well as color and drawing styles, especially if those lines are made into forms. Again, this is part of the system of visual language patterns that humans develop. In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud explains that readers will interestingly associate seemingly nondescript lines with the character or characters that they are viewing in the same panel: "When a story hinges more on characterization than cold plot, there may not be a lot to show externally—but the landscape of the characters' minds can be quite a sight (132)!" Whatever lines convey does not have to be explained to readers because they already know what the lines instantly mean. *Persepolis* offers several examples where we know that she is a process dreaming or remembering because of the presence of lines. Lines circle around themselves in no particular pattern while Satrapi daydreams about her grandfather (see Figure 15). They create a similar design while she recalls a trip to Europe with her parents (see Figure 16). In *l'Ascention du haut mal*, David Beauchard uses lines to mark the presence of high mental activity, too, but in more serious instances such as when his brother's mental condition becomes severe (see Figure 17). Lines also show the imagined transference of energy during the alternative medical treatments his brother recieves (see Figure 18). What comics artists are ultimately doing in these cases is taking advantage of the most abstract symbols that are processed in the human mind as described by McCloud and that process is possible because of our development since childhood as explained by Eisner.

The child-like qualities of graphic narratives and the format of graphic narratives that speaks to readers' inner-child goes against the stance that says graphic narratives have grown

into sophistication. They have, this entire time, always remained what they were originally designed to do and that is act as art for children. Calling graphic narratives art for children as this paper has done sparks questions, but they are familiar questions in the humanities. The two questions in particular that concern this paper the most are where do graphic narratives belong in academia and how should academics regard them. These are questions that can be applied to almost any subject that falls in the humanities.

It is clear according to scholars in art history and literature that graphic narratives are worth our time. The amount of research done so far has proven that. However, where does it belong in the realm of literature and art? Both areas of study conduct classes focusing on graphic narratives and both areas of study neglect the other half's involvement in the subject. If there was ever a subject that needs to be seen as interdisciplinary, it is graphic narratives. Where we place them, though, is confusing. A literature scholar looks for narrative. An art history scholar looks for aesthetics. Yet *Persepolis* cannot be shelved with *The Diary of Anne Frank* and it can't be displayed with classic Persian miniatures either. They are related but they do not belong together. It is possible as more colleges promote the development of interdisciplinary classes, graphic narratives can be examined as a whole for the multi-faceted subject they are.

Yet at the same time, just because graphic narratives are worthy of study, the fact that they are made up of elements designed to be accessible to all types of readers, especially children, keeps them from being a sophisticated form of expression. That is not to say that *Maus* is meant for children or that the subject is not sophisticated. The subject of a work and the delivery of that work are two different elements. The content explored in *Maus* and the other graphic narratives in this paper is complex. Their form of delivery purposefully uses elements of visual communication that have originally appeared directed at children. This child-like quality

in the delivery of graphic narratives speaks to the inner child in all readers and invites comics artists to insert more child-like qualities into their work to further simplify their conveyance of complex ideas and emotions. As implied by the cannon used in this paper, this phenomenon is not exclusive to any one culture. It is a global characteristic. Looking at graphic narratives as child-like reveals a sense of openness and honesty in the stories they tell, which recalls what Spiegelman said at the beginning of this paper for his forward to *Barefoot Gen*. Graphic narratives are like the child with whom they attempt to communicate. Their vulnerability makes them some of the strongest messengers in the humanities.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3
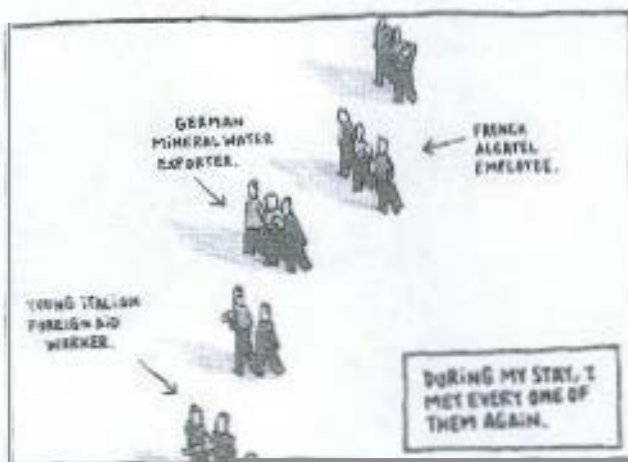

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

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