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## Which is Frank's favorite post by Roy?

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# Which is Frank's favorite post by Roy?

For my part in the retrospective, I have the pleasure of revisiting Roy's questions to choose my favorite from. One of my top three is '[Does the Joker Have Six-Inch Teeth?](https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2011/12/01/does-the-joker-have-six-inch-teeth/)' (<https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2011/12/01/does-the-joker-have-six-inch-teeth/>), and another is '[What the \\$#@& is Happening to 1986?](https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/what-the-is-happening-to-1986/)' (<https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/what-the-is-happening-to-1986/>)' The post about the Joker's dentition is a great example of Roy's thinking about the characteristics and conventions, the very nature of comics. On the other hand, the post about 1986 dwells centrally on the relationship that comics have with audiences and, especially, the...uhm...business practices that for good and for ill run alongside.

But for my favorite, I settled on '[How Should We Feel About "Good Girl Art"?](https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2012/04/19/how-should-we-feel-about-good-girl-art/)' (<https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/2012/04/19/how-should-we-feel-about-good-girl-art/>)' Part of my choice reflects a moderately selfish motivation: most of my own research and teaching activities revolve around the social and linguistic construction of identity. Roy's post delves into (1) formal conventions in comics; (2) issues of reading practices and reader identity; (3) the powerful and lasting role of sexism in the creation of comics as well as the reading of comics; and (4) broad questions regarding gender and sexuality.

Roy's post also gets at the conflicted feelings that many people may have when reading comics in which the female form is (overly) sexualized. As he points out, much of this art is technically impressive: lines and colors and composition, among other elements. At the same time, some readers find additional reasons to like the art. In Roy's words, it's 'just darn nice!'

Theamat has made a statement in her artwork about representations of gender. The image below is titled, 'If I don't get pants, nobody gets pants.' Go [here](http://theamat.deviantart.com/art/If-I-don-t-get-pants-nobody-gets-pants-288025199) (<http://theamat.deviantart.com/art/If-I-don-t-get-pants-nobody-gets-pants-288025199>) to see the web site.



[https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/?attachment\\_id=1693](https://pencilpanelpage.wordpress.com/?attachment_id=1693)

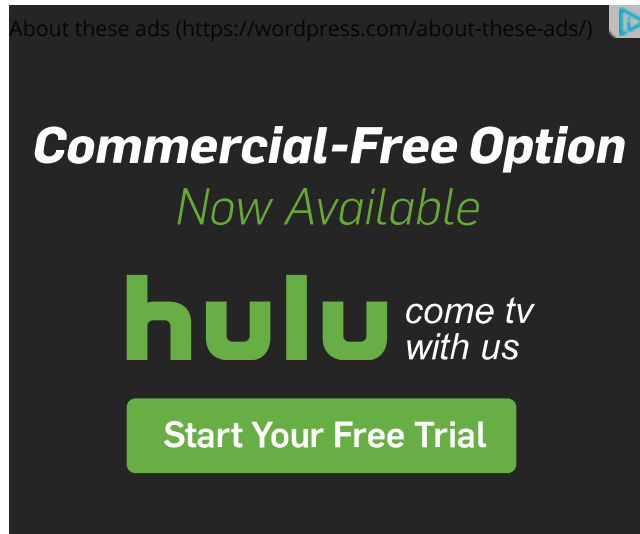
Pantsed!

According to Roy's definition, this may qualify as 'Good Girl Art.' The reader's vantage point is reminiscent of Good Girl Art in that Wonder Woman's physical attributes are emphasized. We don't see her face, of course, but we read this image as Wonder Woman because of the costume: the boots, the red, white and blue body suit, the lasso, the hair, etc. The image reveals the potential objectification of Wonder Woman at the same time that it overturns it and demands that the reader hold men to the same standard that they hold women to. However, Wonder Woman is clearly in charge, not through her sexuality but through her power and authority as a hero. Further, her decision that all the men dress as she has to makes a clear impact on the men's appearance and, just as important, how the men seem to FEEL about the way they are (un-)dressed. (In December 2012, Theamat posted a follow-up called '[If I Don't Get Pants 2: The Holiday Edition](http://theamat.deviantart.com/art/If-I-Don-t-Get-Pants-2-Holiday-Edition-344027653)'.)

Another attempt at visually depicting sexist standards can be found in a satiric revision of an Avengers movie poster. <http://kevinbolck.tumblr.com/post/13332046686/as-promised-heres-the-avengers-parody-namely-of> (<http://kevinbolck.tumblr.com/post/13332046686/as-promised-heres-the-avengers-parody-namely-of>)

In the book *Comics & Sequential Art*, Will Eisner wrote that comics images are 'the result of exaggeration and simplification' and that they are 'a form of impressionism.' Both Good Girl Art and, as Roy pointed out, Bad Girl Art are known because of the way that artists represent women. Comics artists exaggerate and simplify, but it seems that the problem arises with the way that the exaggeration and simplification become embodied. On the one hand, it may not be reasonable to expect characters who have superpowers to be drawn with realistic physical attributes (this is a kind of exaggeration). On the other hand, what is most salient in representations of the 'Good Girls' is the potential for sexuality and sex rather than other characteristics (this is a kind of simplification).

For me, Roy's post captures the academic interest that all of us at Pencil Panel Page have in our subjects, but at the same time, it's a wonderful reminder that we read comics because of the joy we find in reading them, a joy that is tempered at times with the realization that what we choose to read is serious business.



Posted by [Frank Bramlett](#) on [January 3, 2013](#) in [Uncategorized](#).

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## About Frank Bramlett

Until June 2014, I am a visiting lecturer in the English Department at Stockholm University, where I offer seminars in Sociolinguistics; Language and Gender; and Language and Comics; among others. For Fall 2014, I will return to the English Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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