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Laura Apol

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For the Love of Literature: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

by Laura Apol,
Michigan State University

Our column for this issue focuses on the role of illustrations in literature for children and young adults. In my own work with teachers, I find that most of us are much more comfortable talking about literary elements than we are about artistic or visual elements. Terms like plot, setting, character, theme, and style are second nature to us when we talk about literature, but when we talk about illustrations, we often resort to vague descriptive words like "cute," "beautiful," and "colorful." We're not sure about things like line, shape, texture, white space, full-color, border, double-page… And when it comes to media, we're on even less solid ground. We don't have much practice, for one thing. We're used to reading words, and letting the illustrations serve as accessories—filling in a few gaps or providing visuals of what the written words present. And artistic understanding is often outside what we view as our expertise.

The late children's literature scholar Lawrence Sipe worked for years with children and illustrations, demonstrating time and again that even very young children can engage with illustrations in ways that are thoughtful, challenging, critical, and playful. Teachers can support them in this engagement; as Sipe wrote, "Teachers do not need a degree in art education or fine arts in order to talk with children about artistic media design, and the ways that illustrations convey meaning" (1998, p. 66).

As teachers and teacher educators, we can teach our students the language of illustration. We can explore ways artwork functions in literature, beyond providing entertainment or serving a decorative function. We can listen deeply to what students find, how they use visual cues to interact with a written text, or how they engage with visuals when there are no written words.

We sometimes imagine that the visual aspects of children's and young adult literature is simpler or easier than the written text. We may believe picturebooks are for pre-readers or emerging readers, who can rely on illustrations to keep their attention and to help them understand the written text, and that graphic novels are high-interest and perfect for struggling or resistant readers. However, research shows that working with illustrations can actually be more challenging to a reader. Learning where to look, in what order to build understanding, discerning the relationship between visual and written elements, combining these elements into a whole…these complex tasks require and develop a range of critical thinking, viewing and reading skills.

Our column for this issue is lengthy—there are so many books we wanted to share, both for elementary and for secondary readers. Some may be familiar, but many will likely be new, and maybe surprising. We hope each will contribute to an expanding sense of what is possible when it comes to artwork in children's and young adult (YA) literature.

Lisa Domke, Ashley Johnson, Laura Apol, Jeanne Loh, Tracy Weippert,
(Not pictured: Jackie Kerr)

This column is created by Dr. Laura Apol of Michigan State University, in collaboration with a team of faculty and graduate students who teach children's and adolescent literature in the teacher preparation program, who research issues relevant to the area of children's and adolescent literature, and who have been or are themselves teachers in preK-12 settings.

Children's Literature: Immersion in Illustrations

—Lisa Domke and Tracy Weippert

Welcome to fall! If you're like us you've just spent a whirlwind summer being inundated with images—from billboards and magazines to movies and summer vacation photographs. As we sat down to craft this issue's column, we were energized by the imagery we'd collected over the past few months, and we thought about the ways in which we analyze books in the children's literature classes we teach. In our practice, we've found that visual images hold a special appeal to children. Young readers are captivated by quality illustrations, and they use them to enhance their reading and enjoyment of books. The popularity of the *I Spy* series, the ways in which the images in *Goodnight Moon* get progressively darker as the bunny goes to sleep, and the richness of illustrations in texts such as Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express* and Cynthia Rylant's *The Relatives Came*, speak to the importance of visual imagery for children, particularly as they begin to understand print concepts and learn to read.

Of course, those of us who love literature recognize that the features of picturebooks and illustrations are more than commercial efforts to sell children's books. They are fine art in their own right—after all, illustrations from children's literature are displayed in art museums. For example, the Muskegon Museum of Art has exhibited many illustrators' works, including Kadir Nelson's paintings from *We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* (with one now in their permanent collection), Laurie Keller's artwork (author and illustrator of *The Scrambled States of America*), and Bryan Collier's illustrations (whose works include *Martin's Big Words* and *Rosa*). The Grand Rapids Art Museum has featured works from Maurice Sendak (*Where the Wild Things Are*), Chris Van Allsburg, and others. It is important that these creative works are recognized for their own merit

as well as for their contributions to the story. While children seem naturally drawn to the visual, teachers need to capitalize on that to help students build deeper understandings of the multiple aspects of a children's book.

To help develop deeper understanding, readers must understand that there are three main ways text and pictures interact in picturebooks. They may have a symmetrical, complementary, or contradictory relationship (Hintz & Tribunella, 2013).

Text-Picture Relationship	Definition	Examples (see reviews for descriptions)
Symmetrical	The pictures match / reinforce the text's ideas	*A Rock Is Lively* by Dianna Hutts Aston
Complementary	The pictures advance the story and include more information than the text describes	*Who's There?* by Alain Crozon
Contradictory	The pictures tell a different story from the words, possibly creating a sense of irony	*Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins

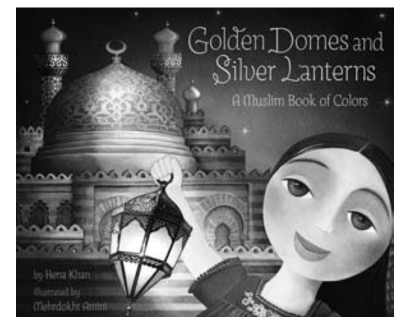
In the following sections, we review additional picturebooks that reflect symmetrical, complementary, and contradictory interactions between text and illustrations, and we provide descriptions of some of the ways that illustrators use color, size, line, and media to interact with and enhance the text's plot.

Symmetrical Relationship

When text and pictures have a symmetrical relationship, the illustrations reinforce the text; however, they still should be visually compelling. A perfect example is ***A Rock Is Lively*** by Dianna Hutts Aston and illustrated by Sylvia Long (2012),

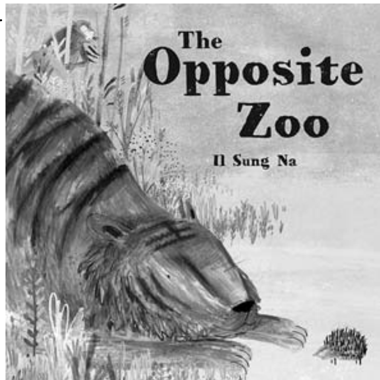
which we featured in our Winter 2015 column about informational texts. Long's paintings show what the words describe—such as otters using rocks to crack open shells, and the colorful layers of volcanic agate rocks. However, the close-ups Long provides of rocks' patterns, the vibrant colors she uses, and the level of detail in her watercolor illustrations not only embody the title (that rocks are lively), but they are also breathtakingly beautiful in their own right.

Mehrdokht Amini's illustrations for ***Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors*** by Hena Khan (2012) make the described



color the focal point of each two-page spread. For

example, on the page about Mom's blue hijab that she wears to cover her hair, not only is the mother's hijab bright blue, but the surrounding buildings are a bluish gray and the awning on the building is striped light blue and white. When the book describes the gold of the mosque's dome, Amini made the mosque spread across two pages with bright gold domes and golden brown stripes across the rest of the building.



Il Sung Na's picturebook ***The Opposite Zoo*** (2016) also fits into the category of symmetrical books. The story narrates an evening at the zoo after closing time in which the monkey opens the door to his enclosure and visits other animals. He notices that the owl is awake while the panda is asleep; the lion is hairy while the hippopotamus is bald, and so on throughout the zoo. It is only when the sun comes up that the monkey returns to his enclosure, closes the door, and the zoo opens once again. The watercolor illustrations in this book offer readers detailed examples of the differences between tall and short, fast and slow, black and white, and soft and prickly, among others. While the illustrations do not offer information outside of that provided by the text, they are still compelling to look at due to their use of line, shape, and color, all of which help to give definition and dynamism to the animals portrayed in the text.

The book ***Tree: A Peek-Through Picturebook*** by Patricia Hegarty (2015) and illustrated by Britta Teckentrup employs the use of cut-outs to add a layer of complexity to the illustrations. Hegarty's rhyming text describes what happens to a tree as the seasons pass. Through an actual hole in the page, Teckentrup introduces readers to the owl that watches the happenings. As it turns to spring and summer, new animals revealed by cut-outs join owl in the tree to play and explore. As the seasons turn to fall and winter, the cut-outs diminish until only the owl is left before it too hibernates to peek out next spring.

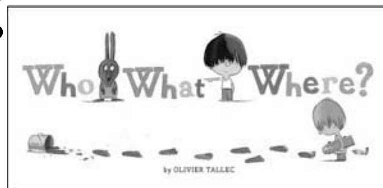
Finally, ***Prairie Dog Song: The Key to Saving North America's Grasslands*** by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore (2016) uses a unique media to depict the grasslands. To the tune of "The Green Grass Grows All Around," the book describes the grassland ecosystem and the steps scientists and conservationists took to save it. To portray the story, Roth created mixed-media collages that beg the reader to touch the pages because of the visible textures of the papers and materials she used. On the book's jacket, Roth says that she cut each blade of grass in the illustrations separately. Her meticulous artistry is evident on each page.

Complementary Relationship

Who's There? by Alain Crozon exhibits a complementary relationship between text and images. The simple text engages children through the manipulation of pages, offering just a few words per page (20 words maximum) and asking children to make predictions, which they can test by

raising flaps to reveal answers to riddles. Therefore, young readers must examine the illustrations, both above and below the flaps, in order to gain all of the information necessary to construct an understanding. Additionally, we like this book because it represents animals and objects in unique ways – under the flap on the “fearless fish” page, readers discover that the fish has eaten a hook; a page depicting a banana describes the “pesky peel” and shows that it is not new and ripe as would be typical in most books, but instead has black spots. The illustrations remain simple in terms of line, shape and color, but are unique in what they choose to portray and allow young children to realize that even in books and illustrations bananas can have spots and fish might eat hooks.

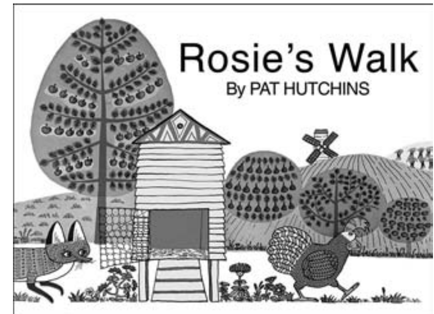
Olivier Tallec’s book ***Who Done It?*** (2015) follows a similar pattern of posing questions and allowing the illustrations to serve as answers. Each page in this book with a hard board cover (which opens top to bottom rather than left to right) poses a question such as “Who didn’t get enough sleep?” or “Who forgot a swimsuit?” along with eight to ten characters dressed in various costumes. At least one of the characters matches the question posed at the top of the page, allowing readers to study the illustrations and decide for themselves which character is the answer to the question posed. Tallec’s latest book ***Who What Where?*** (2015) continues to challenge childrens (and adults) visual discrimination and inference skills.



Another book for which the illustrations convey a critical part of the story is ***We March*** by Shane W. Evans (2012). Evans’s limited text describes how people come from everywhere to walk, sing, follow the leaders, and march for justice. The

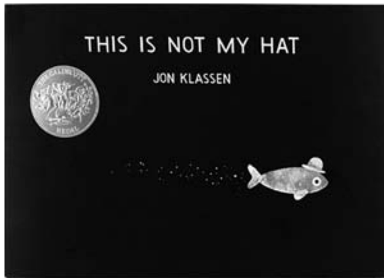
illustrations provide the context showcasing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Washington Monument, thus situating the story in the 1963 March on Washington. Evans’s clear illustrations of paint and pencil show readers the march through one family’s eyes.

Contradictory Relationship

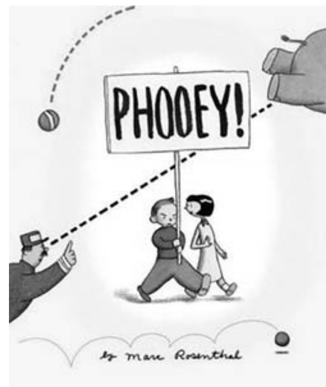


Picturebooks with a contradictory relationship between the text and illustrations are not as abundant as picturebooks reflecting the other relationships. However, the irony created between the text and illustrations makes these books especially entertaining. Two classic examples of the contradictory relationship are ***Rosie’s Walk*** by Pat Hutchins (1967) and ***A Friend for Minerva Louise*** by Janet Morgan Stoeke (1997). In *Rosie’s Walk*, Rosie the hen goes for a walk while the illustrations show her being followed by a hungry fox who is foiled at every turn. In *A Friend for Minerva Louise*, the hen Minerva Louise thinks the farmer and his family have a new bunny because she sees a wheelbarrow in the yard and a fence and rabbit hutch in the house. However, the illustrations reveal that the wheelbarrow is a

stroller/baby buggy, the fence is a baby gate, and the hutch is a crib.



A more recent example of contradictory illustrations is ***This Is Not My Hat*** by Jon Klassen (2012). In it, a little fish steals a large fish's hat while he sleeps, but thinks the big fish will never notice, and if he does, the crab will never show where the little fish went. However, the illustrations depict the big fish opening his eyes, squinting them in frustration, and following the crab's pointing claws to pursue his hat.



The book ***Phooey!*** by Marc Rosenthal (2007) shows a frustrated boy complaining that nothing ever happens, while behind him one catastrophe causes another. The can the boy kicked knocks a cat out of a tree, and while the cat is chased by a dog, they run into a zoo, scaring an elephant that escapes down the street and knocks over a man pushing a barrel that rolls away and causes more problems. All the while, the boy stomps around oblivious to what happens behind him.

Finally, ***A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*** by Marla Frazee (2008) tells the story of James who joins his friend Eamon and Eamon's grandparents for a week of nature camp. This book contains some contradictory illustrations scattered throughout that add humor to the book. For example, the text says that James brings "just a couple of his belongings," while the illustrations show James arriving with five large overflowing boxes of belongings plus other bags, and Frazee describes James as "very sad when his mother drove away," while the illustration depicts him with a huge smile on his face, waving and yelling "BYE!" Adults and children will enjoy the irony created by the contradictions.

Wordless Picturebooks

While we have provided examples of the three relationships between text and illustrations, there is one more type of picturebook that cannot be omitted—the wordless picturebook. For these, the illustrations are paramount because that is the only vehicle for the author/illustrator to tell the story. For example, Lizi Boyd plays with grayscale, color, and cut-outs in her book ***Flashlight*** (2014). Two boys go exploring in the woods, and almost everything is grayscale, except the colorful animals and plants illuminated by their flashlights. Eventually, the boys themselves are illuminated by their flashlights in a twist of events. Boyd also uses cut-out windows on each page to reveal additional treasures in the woods that blend seamlessly into their background.

Another book showing the relationship between humans and animals is ***Bluebird*** by Bob Staake (2013), which is a mostly wordless graphic picturebook. Staake uses multiple panels

on each page to tell the story of a lonely boy who meets a bluebird that changes his life as he deals with isolation, bullying, and loss. Staake's use of color also helps portray the story mainly using grayscale and blue to draw the reader's attention to the bluebird until the story's turning point.

Finally, this column would not be complete without mentioning Jerry Pinkney. His mostly wordless picturebook retelling of Aesop's fable ***The Lion and the Mouse*** (2009) won the 2010 Caldecott Medal for its beautifully-detailed watercolor and pencil illustrations. Pinkney alternates between two-page spreads, small and large illustrations, and some panels to portray how the lion learns that help can come from unexpected sources.

Conclusion

In the end, readers cannot overlook the power of picturebook imagery. These illustrations are more than decorations, marketing tools, or fillers for white space. They can be fine art. They can allow emerging readers an avenue into literature and can provide enjoyment in their own right. A well-written text illustrated with high-quality artwork can provide children (and adults) with new insights as illustrations support and enhance stories, or illustrations can tell stories all on their own. In addition, the ways illustrators use color to reinforce ideas or to draw viewers' attention to images, the ways they use the size of images to establish importance, and the ways they use media such as watercolor, drawing, or collage to set a tone or create interest, provide information that can help readers make deeper meanings from the texts. As readers immerse themselves in images, the artistry of picturebooks offers many avenues for exploration!

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An Art-full Paradigm Shift: Foregrounding YA Visual / Artistic Texts

—Ashley Johnson, Dr. Jeanne Loh, and Jacquelyn Kerr

A picture is worth a thousand words. Or so we've been told, multiple times! But do we believe it, and if so, does that belief impact our practice? Like our students, most of us enjoy movies, watch our fair share of television, and use the visual aspects of technology to simultaneously enrich and simplify our lives. We might even love picture-books and choose to read graphic novels, comics, or manga. But in spite of the many and varied ways art permeates our lives and the world around us, it somehow rarely factors into the book choices we make for and with our students in our class-rooms. Pablo Picasso said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."

So why do we secondary English teachers often avoid graphic novels and other visual texts? A couple of deeply-ingrained paradigms might help to shed some light on this paradox. Society as a whole tends to elevate text over pictures/visuals in literature; the general public perceives alphabetic text as weighty and more "appropriate" for school, while illustrated texts are often seen as lighter and more fun. Children internalize this idea and strive to move past picturebooks, longing for the day they can graduate to chapter books with no pictures. Grownups don't need illustrations, they think; picturebooks are for babies. The secondary English canon reflects these paradigms and gen-erally includes few graphic novels or other visual texts. Marjane Satrapi, author of the controver-sial graphic novel *Persepolis*, calls us out on this: "Graphic novels are not traditional literature, but that does not mean they are second-rate. Images are a way of writing. When you have the talent to be able to write and to draw, it seems a shame to choose one. I think it's better to do both" (www.brainyquote.com). We know young people, either by choice or by circumstance, are continually bombarded by visual stimuli, so it is imperative that English teachers learn in to include and even embrace visual texts. When we foreground using the visual/artistic lens with our students, we will foster readers who will become critical consumers of a variety of texts, able to read and interpret the word and the world responsibly. In the process, we might also help to encourage a more pervasive par-adigm shift that will bring art in from the margins.

The reality is that our students are already extremely visual; in their lives outside of school, they use the language art of visualizing frequently and enthusiastically. Technology gives them almost unlimited access to a plethora of visual stimuli – Google, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, and Snapchat, not to mention television and movie sites and the vast resources of the Internet. And then there are the video games with sophisticated graphics, complex rules, and multilayered tech-niques to master and navigate. These visual texts are expanding the ways our students are literate; our concepts of literacy, literature, and literate behavior would do well to keep pace.

In this column, we want to suggest an art-full paradigm shift; we are hoping that secondary English teachers will join us in an effort to think about incorporating visual texts and to find ways to present those texts to our students as import-ant and relevant literary selections for required and optional classroom reading. We've included a list of recommended books for exploration and a few articles that might inform both reading and pedagogy.

At the Forefront of Diversity: The Changing Faces of Superhero Comics

When my husband first introduced our three-year-old son to Avenger comics, I resisted joining them. It didn't matter that before my son could say his ABCs or write his name, he could identify Iron-Man, Captain America, Hulk, Antman, Hawkeye,

Wasp and more. It also didn't matter that his choice activity that summer was reading with his dad. I simply refused to see those superhero comics as reading. I resisted their efforts to bring me into the family superhero comic experience. Looking back, I realize now I just didn't know how to read those texts. I couldn't seem to make the pictures and words work for me.

A year later, however, I found ***Ms. Marvel #1: No Normal*** developed by Marvel editors Sana Amanat and Stephen Wacker, along with writer G. Willow Wilson and artist Adrian Alphona. I couldn't wait

to add it to my syllabus for the undergraduate preservice teacher education course I was teaching called "Issues of Diversity in Children's and Adolescent Literature." This was not the blond-haired, blue-eyed Ms. Marvel of the past. In fact, in one of the critical moments in the text, the new Ms. Marvel, Pakistani-American Kamala Khan accepts that she can be an American superhero who looks like she does—brown haired and brown skinned. The illustrations of Kamala juxtaposed with the images of Carol Danvers, the original Ms. Marvel, create a portrait of this new understanding of what it might mean to be American. In this story, Kamala isn't just a new superhero from a diverse background. As she learns to fight obvious villains, she also confronts the challenges of being a Muslim teenage girl in contemporary American society. For example, she deals with the classmate who asks her if someone will make her cover her head, being told she smells like curry, and finding her own identity in a hostile world. In short, this comic is not only a story that by its very genre invites adolescent readers in, but by taking on issues of diversity, it also makes room for all readers to question what it means to live in a pluralistic society.

Challenging our American-centric perceptions of an even more beloved superhero, Gene Luen Yang, author of *American Born Chinese* (the first graphic novel to win the Printz Award for Young Adult Literature), has taken DC Comics' Superman to China in ***New Super-Man #1***.

Superman is no longer Clark Kent; instead he is Kong Kenan, a tall, broad-shouldered adolescent from Shanghai. This Super Man starts out as a bully, taking and rejecting snacks from a smaller, weaker boy—a twist on the classic nerdy superhero that raises questions about character growth and what it means to be/become a hero. Contrary to the expected nerd-to-superhero transformation, Kong Kenan starts out with the stereotypical physical characteristics of a hero in the images of artist Viktor Bogdonavic. Most interesting in this story is the idea that Kong Kenan is not just a Super-Man in China. Yang raises questions about whether Super-Man, a hero who fights for "truth, justice, and the American Way" can be Chinese. In the first comic, he fights a villain who targets rich people, and the Ministry of Self-Reliance offers him the opportunity to take on superpowers, providing the opportunity for this fairly traditional superhero story to raise questions about culture in a global era: what can be shared and what remains unique to a particular group?

Finally, Ta-Nehisi Coates, author of *Between the World and Me*, takes on a

new Marvel Black Panther comic. **Black Panther**, the first Black superhero in mainstream American comics, debuted in 1966 as the leader of an African nation by day and a superhero by night. Coates (2016) writes, "When I got the call to write

Black Panther, I was less concerned with character conflict than with the realization of my dreams as a 9-year-old." For Coates, a prominent national figure in current conversations about racism and justice for Black men in the United States, the opportunity to write a comic series was connected to his experiences as a kid reading and loving comic books. The author also felt challenged to "constantly think visually" and to consider through images and spare words whether "a good man can be a king, and would an advanced society tolerate a monarch." While he draws on the Marvel history to consider Black Panther's questions, he also draws on history and current events, including the rise of the Islamic State. In ***Black Panther #1: A Nation Under Our Feet***, Coates draws on powerful images created by artist Brian Stelfreeze to evoke questions about the divisions in society and the dangers of corruption. While I have not used this comic or the others in the series in my own teaching, one of the student teachers I supervise connected it to our college classroom conversations about Between the World and Me, offering the possibility of a text set in which it was included. I can't help but think this is a great direction for our English classrooms—bringing in comics alongside more traditional essays and novels to prompt thinking about justice and life in our nation.

Texturizing Nonfiction: Graphic Memoirs

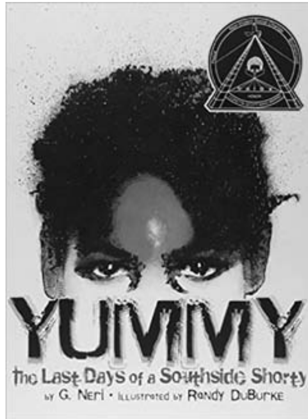
When you hear the phrase "graphic novel," you might think of comics. And when you hear "comics," you might think of the Sunday funnies, with the iconic "Family Circus," "Peanuts," and "Doonesbury," or of the delicately-bound issues of D.C. and Marvel Comics, with their titillating covers and cliffhangers.

Of late, the superhero franchise has monopolized the youth market, and even more so with the recent spurt of movies where superheroes team up to more effectively fight crime. Beyond the superhero branding ubiquitous in boys' clothing, superhero movies have burst into theaters and dominated sales. Local libraries have even jumped onboard, adding shelves of superhero graphic novels and comic books. Parents can easily find superhero easy-reader books, including *Tiny Titans* (a children's versions of *Teen Titans*), starring a diminutive Batman and Superman who attend junior high and speak in texting language, and other superhero spinoffs, with snarky punchlines and single-minded villains. In spite of this proliferation, now more than ever the subjects and genres of graphic novels seem to have outgrown the superhero convention.

As a result of the growing popularity of graphic novels, many authors and illustrators are venturing into and even creating new genres. There are graphic histories, like *The Boston Massacre, The Salem Witch Trials*, and *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb*, which often offer a more lively and vivid form of storytelling than history textbooks. There are also compelling memoirs that span human experience, from books about everyday lives that contain gems of insight and humor (e.g. *Smile* and *To Dance*) to the books that highlight the struggles and victories of significant figures of history. Some depict the ups and downs of protagonists' navigation through politically tumultuous countries, where uncertainty prevails (e.g., *Persepolis* and *Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey*). These narratives can be both intimate and expansive, as we see in the graphic memoirs reviewed below.

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty and *March: Book One* illustrate two American experiences. While they seem to be vastly different in character, age, and life choices, they are also inextricably connected; both tell stories from the past, reveal complex Black American perspectives, and speak to the emergence and the relevance of the Black Lives Matter movement in our country today.

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty, written by G. Neri and illustrated by Randy



DuBurke, draws from news outlets and newspaper and magazine publications to capture the life of young Robert "Yummy" Sandifer. In the summer of 1994, in South Side, Chicago, 11-year-old gang member Yummy shoots 14-year-old bystander and neighbor, Shavon Dean. This murder of a child by a child and Yummy's escape from a city-wide boyhunt captivates and baffles Americans all over the country. Politicians, lawyers, psychologists, and scholars pontificate on the causes of violence by children, the depravity of Black urban youth, the tyranny of gangs, the disintegration of family structures, and the environmental forces that create child murderers. Although *Time Magazine* spins this episode into a glitzy media headline that stokes suburban fears of urban ghettos, Neri and DuBurke tell instead a story about youth, innocence, race, and poverty.

Roger, a fictitious neighbor and peer of Yummy and Shavon, narrates the story. He ponders Yummy's life from a child's perspective: he is objective, inquisitive, and empathetic, ruminating over the circumstances that created Yummy, who was physically abused by his drug-addled and neglectful mother, lived with 18 other children in his grandmother's house, and, at age eight, dropped out of school and started committing crimes. When Roger's teacher assigns the class to reflect on Shavon's death and Yummy's crime, Roger ponders, "Why was Yummy the way he was?" (Neri & DuBurke, p. 50). He seeks answers wherever he can find them, from his gang-affiliated brother, Gary, to the elders and business people who lament their neighborhood's fall into gang violence. He also considers the T.V. pundits who, from a distance, pass judgement not only on Yummy but also on his community.

Neri successfully avoids simple answers to explain Yummy's life and instead draws a complex and mysterious portrait. This graphic novel is reminiscent of *Native Son* by Richard Wright, which also tells of a young black man on the lam in Chicago in the 1930s. Yummy's story is not just about two lives but about the history and current state of a larger neighborhood and a people still suffering from historical and institutionalized racism. DuBurke's black-and-white illustrations are stark and dramatic. Yummy's small, stout stature is conspicuous; he frowns, dressed in baggy clothing, as he gazes up at other gang members. When he terrorizes his peers or robs unsuspecting passers-by, Yummy's eyes are hooded and menacing. But, in close-up illustrations, when Roger recalls innocuous interactions, Yummy's face is earnest, open, and vulnerable. The juxtaposing images of Yummy's cold stare and innocent grin demonstrate Roger's struggle to understand Yummy's true nature: "I tried to figure out who the real Yummy was. The one who stole my lunch money? Or the one who smiled when I shared candy with him?" (Neri & DuBurke, p. 63). The novel seems to insist that Yummy's story is not simple, as both author and illustrator skillfully present multiple sides that address the reader's desire to understand the implications of race and racism in American history.

March: Book One is a memoir by Congressman John Lewis, a man whose life's work has had a unique impact on American history. The story begins with Lewis, as he starts his morning on the day of President Obama's historic inauguration. As he arrives at his office, a Black mother stops by with her two young sons to show them a piece of their collective past. From here, the story launches into Lewis's childhood. Born and raised in rural Alabama, he is the son of sharecroppers.

At age 5, he begins sermonizing to the chickens, and he shows an unyielding devotion to his faith and his schooling. Upon entering college, corresponding with Ralph Abernathy and Fred Gray, and meeting Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis's passion is sparked by his introduction to social gospel, a movement that uses Christian faith as a calling for social justice. His participation in nonviolent demonstrations, namely the occupation of the white-only Woolworth lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee, solidifies his commitment to civil rights work. Lewis finds resolve and strength in the movement's purpose: "I was not afraid. I felt free, liberated—like I had crossed over. We wanted to change America—to make it something different, something better." (Lewis, Aydin, & Powell, p. 102). March: Book One gives readers a glimpse of the early years of the civil rights movement, and Lewis, Aydin, and Powell continue the story of Lewis's legacy in *March: Book Two* and *March: Book Three*.

Powell's somber and intense black-and-white illustrations artfully depict Lewis's eventful journey. Moments of gravity appear in black background with white text, while more ordinary occurrences are designated in a white background and black text. Scenes jump back and forth from present to past, and Powell facilitates the movement with visual ease, so that readers are able to couple the early career of Lewis as a civil right worker to the lasting significance of President Obama's inauguration.

Told in text and images, *March: Book One* is a powerfully inspiring memoir that offers insight into one young man's involvement in the civil rights movement.

The Arrival: Shaun Tan Invites Us to See

A book without words? Author Shaun Tan calls *The Arrival* a graphic novel intended for adults, but the book actually defies any known categories. To read The Arrival is to foray into Tan's deliberately unknown, unexplored territory, yet in spite of that indefinable element, Tan's book can provide a mirror or a window for readers of all ages. Tan claims he wrote the book about a refugee's search for belonging to inspire empathy in his readers: "I don't expect the book to change anybody's opinions about things, but if it at least makes them pause to think, I'll feel as if I've succeeded in something."

On face value, *The Arrival* resembles a well-worn and much-thumbed photo album. The hardcover version is a large book – 9"x12" – and 128 pages filled from end sheet to end sheet with artwork. Like most picturebooks, the pages are not numbered, but the visual narrative has six distinct sections. Tan created the font types used in the title pages, and all of the symbols in the book are original. The cover itself is made to look like distressed leather worn by time and touch, and the pages within, also yellowed and marked with creases and splotches and stains, are arranged artistically and spatially to resemble photos in an album or scrapbook. Tan uses sepia colors throughout, which adds to the photographic effect and gives the impression of age. Although this color palette might feel limited at first glance, Tan is able to use color, light, and shading throughout the book to effectively communicate tone and intensity that in turn evoke a variety of reader reactions. In Tan's photographic composition, the reader looks and interacts with the art in order to make meaning and interpret the story.

The Arrival follows the journey of a man who leaves his home and family in search of a place of opportunity and safety. The situation in his homeland has become untenable and like many migrants, he wants to find a place he will eventually bring his family before the situation at home

explodes. Although the protagonist's journey to a new land is not always smooth and easy, he manages to find people along the way—sometimes fellow travelers, other times native residents—to help him out.

The Arrival represents four years of research, development, and drawing. The book contains hundreds of graphite pencil drawings. Inspired by the wordless picturebook The Snowman, by Raymond Briggs, Tan set out to create a wordless picturebook about a stranger in a strange land—one of his longtime fascinations; over time the project became a wordless graphic novel depicting the migrant experience. He says on his website (www.shauntan.net) he intended the "enigmatic, sepia-toned silence" of the pictorial journey to slow the reader down and to induce the confusion the protagonist is feeling. In order to "read" the art, the reader has to pay more attention to the visual clues and cues, since the art essentially is the story; each person who picks up the book will fill in the blanks and construct a uniquely personal narrative. In the end, the enigmatic and ambiguous nature of the book's format puts us in the shoes of the traveler and we, too, must struggle to find the familiar in the strange. For those of us who do not read graphic novels, that might be double the struggle, but well worth the effort.

Reading *The Arrival* has resonated the most for the international students and English Language Learners in my classes. Although the absence of words and recognizable language is frustrating for me and the majority of my students, the ELLs find that the pictures allow them to take a break from the constraints of reading English and, because most of them have come from other countries to study at MSU, they can also mobilize their lived experiences as strangers in a strange land trying to find the familiar in the strange. The fact that the art depicts a land that is unfamiliar to all of us somewhat levels the playing field, and I have noticed that in written reflections as well as in class discussions, the ELL's have valuable input that enriches and elucidates our collective reading experiences.

Trending Now: Shakespeare & Social Media: #saywhatyousee

Young people are the biggest change agents when it comes to language. Right now, their participation in texting and social media is making an impact, for better or worse! This shift is especially evident in the visually-oriented books in the OMG Shakespeare series. For many English teachers, Shakespeare is sacred; however, many students do not share this love of the bard's language. Courtney Carbonne, a children's book editor, decided to address that great divide by "collaborating with the greatest playwright of all time," turning several of Shakespeare's most popular works into modern day dramas played out in social media. Just as electronic books will never completely replace printed books, I don't anticipate these clever books will ever replace the original works of Shakespeare. However, I have to admit the attempt to translate Macbeth (new title: *Macbeth #killingit*) by using iPhone text messaging and other recognizable features (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and a wide range of emojis) is clever and entertaining.

Elizabeth Tardiff designed the cover, and from the start, the book's design sets it apart from the typical copies of individual Shakespeare plays you might find on a classroom or library shelf. This deliberate design contributes to the overall gimmick. The book is small—about the size and shape of a typical electronic tablet—and therefore light, portable, and easy to handle. The cover features an oval shaped "screen" depicting a man and a woman dressed in period clothing; he is wearing a sword and gripping a lethal-looking dagger, while she clutches a cell phone lit up with text messages. Both their faces have been replaced by emojis, and

each figure features a text message. His expression is harried, and hers is recognizably angry—sounds about right for the Macbeths! The oval screen is surrounded by actual-size graphic representations of every known emoji, including the flags, the clothing accessories, the food, and the symbols. The title of the book runs across the top in a text message box, and the font looks like a text message announcing a hashtag: Macbeth #killingit.

According to children's literature experts Hintz & Tribunella (2013), "Digital media is a relatively new form; its narrative and artistic potential is not yet fully realized. … Digital books—like classic picturebooks—require many types of literacy at once" (p. 182). This is especially true for teachers! So for those of us less well versed in the art of texting, tweeting, and navigating social media, the book includes a few helpful glossaries at the beginning and at the end to support clueless readers. The "Who's-who" provides the cast of characters, each with an appropriate emoji to represent him/her. These are entertaining and made me LOL: for example, the Three Witches are represented by three old lady heads, and Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft, is the dancing girl. The apparitions are !? and the Three Murderers are three skulls. At the back of the book, the author includes "The 411" for those not in the know, which functions as a shortcut urban dictionary and identifies the acronyms and other letter combinations frequently found in social media. Here readers will find the familiar AKA and ASAP juxtaposed with the less familiar FOMO and IMHO. Profanities are included, with strategically placed asterisks, of course, to avoid being NSFS (not suitable for school). Behind that section is the much needed directory of emotions (via emojis). Since I've often wondered what some of the more baffling expressions were, I am now much better equipped to utilize the full range of emojis on my iPhone, including sheepish (and/or grimacing). Score!

But how do we "read" the art? In the case of this book, all of the "art" is computer generated, so our art-full examination will focus more on the artful arrangement of the graphics and less on the art itself. How does the author mobilize graphic elements and devices in order to fully tell the tale of Macbeth? And how does the updated translation of Shakespeare affect the overall impact of the tale? If Shakespeare's plays are truly timeless and of the people, then social media's influence should not compromise his work, right? The answer to that tongue-in-cheek query might vary across readers. That in turn might spark some lively (and hopefully substantive) debate.

The bulk of the story unfolds through a series of text messages, notes, Facebook posts, tweets, and reminders. There are even surveys, chat rooms, music and picture posts, carts with purchases, and a Kingterest board. Every page looks like a smartphone screen but still manages to look and function like a script. Characters "like" each other's posts, send invitations, and friend and unfriend each other. This social media smorgasbord tends to highlight the soap opera drama of the play in ways that are clever and effective.

All of the titles in the OMG Shakespeare series come in both print and eBook form. These books can serve to supplement the challenging reading of Elizabethan English. After reading the original text aloud and discussing the language and action in progress, taking a second look at the text via the social media version might help students solidify their understanding of the play. It might also be productive to discuss what is gained and lost across both versions. The texts will generate enthusiasm about reading Shakespeare by keeping the conversation relevant and fresh – YOLO (You Only Live Once) as opposed to TL;DR (Too Long; Didn't Read). WTG, Courtney Carbo!

Young Adult Literature Reviewed

Coates, T. Ill. B. Stelfreeze. (2016). *Black Panther: A nation under our feet (Book 1).* New York, NY: Marvel Worldwide, Inc. ISBN: 978-1302900533

Lewis, J., Aydin, A., & Powell, N. (2013). *March: Book One.* Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions. ISBN: 978-1603093002

Neri, G., & DuBurke, R. (2010). *Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty.* New York, NY: Lee & Low Books. ISBN: 978-1584302674
Shakespeare, W. & Carbone, C. (2016). *Macbeth #killingit.* New York, NY: Random House. ISBN: 978-0553538809
Tan, S. (2007). *The Arrival.* Melbourne, Australia: Arthur A. Levine Books. ISBN: 978-0439895293
Yang, G. L. Ill. V. Bogdanovic, (2016). *New Super-Man #1.* Burkbank, CA: DC Entertainment. ISBN: 2940153268569
Wilson, G. W. Ill. A. Alphona. (2014). *Ms. Marvel #1: No Normal.* New York, NY: Marvel Worldwide, Inc. ISBN: 978-0785190219

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Coates, T. (2016). The return of Black Panther. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-return-of-the-black-panther/471516/.
Hintz, C., & Tribunella, E. (2013). *Reading children's literature: A critical introduction.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
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Sipe, L. (1998). Learning the language of picturebooks. *Journal of Children's Literature. 24*(2), 66-75.
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Yang, G. L. (2007). Stranger in a strange land. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from nytimes.com.

List of Art-full Books to Get You Started

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic by Alison Bechdel
El Deafo by Cece Bell
Hyperbole and a Half by Allie Brosh
Jay-Z: Hip Hop Icon by Jessica Gunderson (illustrated by Pat Kinsella)
Amulet series (#1-7) by Kazu Kibuishi
Here I Am by Patti Kim (illustrated by Sonia Sanchez)
Little White Duck by Na Liu (illustrated by Andrew Vera Martinez)
Bayou 1 & 2 by Jeremy Love
Feynman by Jim Ottaviana (illustrated by Leland Myrick)
Mouse Guard: Baldwin the Brave and Other Tales by David Peterson
Kill My Mother by Jules Pfeiffer
Snowden by Ted Rall
Owly series (#1-5) by Andy Runton
Dare to Disappoint: Growing up Turkey by Ozge Samanci
The Arab of the Future: A Childhood in the Middle East, 1978-1984 by Riad Sattouf
Persepolis 1 & 2 by Marjane Satrapi
Rad Women Worldwide by Kate Schatz (illustrated by Miriam Klein Stahl)
To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel by Siena Cherson Siegel (illustrated by Mark Siegel)
Maus 1 & 2 by Art Spiegelman
Lumberjanes 1 & 2 by Noelle Stevenson & Shannon Watters (illustrated by Brooke Allen)
Blankets by Greg Thompson
Habibi by Greg Thompson
American Born Chinese by Gene Yang
Shadow Hero by Gene Yang

List of Helpful References & Online Resources to Consult For More Information

Gravett, P. (2005). *Graphic novels: Everything you need to know.* New York: Harper Collins.
Pawuk, M. (2007). *Graphic novels: A genre guide to comic books, manga, and more.* Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
Weiner, S. (2004). Show, don't tell: Graphic novels in the classroom. *English Journal, 94*(2). 114-117. *American Library Association's Great Graphic Novels for Teens* http://www.ala. org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/greatgraphicnovelsforteens/gn.cfm
Cooperative Children's Book Center: *Graphic Novels* http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/graphicnovels.asp
The Graphic Classroom: http://graphicclassroom.blogspot.com