

Comics Carnet: The Graphic Novelist as Global Nomad

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Abstract

An interdisciplinary approach is used to identify a new graphic novel genre, 'comics carnet', and its key features. The study situates comics carnet in a historical context and shows it to be the result of a cross-pollination between the American and French comics traditions. Comics carnet incorporates features from other literary genres: journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing. Its creators, primarily European males, document their experiences visiting countries that Europe has traditionally defined as belonging to the 'East'. A visual and narrative analysis, using theoretical perspectives derived from cultural and postcolonial studies, examines how comics carnet represents the non-European other and identifies the genre's ideological assumptions. Four representative texts are examined: Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (2001), Craig Thompson's, *Carnet de Voyage* (2004), Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang* (2005) and Marjane Satrapi's *Persopolis 2* (2004). The study concludes that the comics carnet genre simultaneously reinforces and challenges stereotypical assumptions about non-European people and places.

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Introduction

Comics Carnet

The publication of Peter Kuper's *Comic Trips* (1992) marks the emergence of a new type of graphic novel genre, which I have identified as 'comics carnet'. *Comic Trips* contains photographs, illustrations and short tales told in comics form that record the New York illustrator's travels in Africa and Asia. The name of this new genre: 'comics carnet', is a combination of the word 'comics' and the French term for a notebook: 'carnet'. The word 'carnet' also means an official pass or permit for crossing national boundaries. In comics carnet the author/artist use the comics medium to document his or her experience in another culture. As an explicitly subjective method, comics carnet becomes a mirror to reflect on how one culture views another and represents it in verbal and visual terms.

The majority of comics carnet are authored by white European males. This thesis is concerned with how these artists document their experiences in countries that Europe has traditionally defined as being part of "The East". This new graphic novel genre possesses many of the qualities associated with the literary genres of journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing. My thesis will first identify the key features of the comics carnet genre. Second, I will use theoretical perspectives derived from major postcolonial thinkers to assist in identifying the ideological assumptions contained in these graphic novels. To examine the texts I will employ a methodological approach combining visual and narrative analysis, since comics are a hybrid medium of image and text. The results of my study will demonstrate how comics carnet functions in

global popular culture and answer the following question: How does this new graphic novel genre, comics carnet, represent the non-European other?

Since comics carnet are a recent development in the history of the graphic novel I will examine genre theory, how new genres are defined and what purposes genre plays in mass media. To assist in uncovering ideological assumptions about the depictions of non-European other in comics carnet, I will use the insights provided by a number of postcolonial theorists. Authors such as Stuart Hall, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam suggest that contemporary media continue to perpetuate traditional Eurocentric hegemonic views of the non-metropolitan West. An ideological critique shows the importance of stereotypical representations in the comics carnet text.

Visual and narrative analysis of comics carnet will locate evidence of this ideological vision of the world presented to the reader. Close readings of the texts will identify the complex representations that arise in popular artifacts depicting cross-cultural interactions. The hybrid nature of comics makes them worthy of study as a unique form of popular culture.

My identification and analysis of comics carnet as a new graphic novel genre is an important contribution to comics research. There is an absence of critical literature exploring the cultural biases that may be present in these texts. In an increasingly interconnected world, the study of how a continually evolving popular culture form describes our experience of other cultures, peoples and places is of prime importance.

Personal Perspectives on Comics Carnet

My personal interest in the comics carnet genre is twofold. It arises from my childhood love of comic books and the impact of my experiences traveling abroad upon my life. I have vivid memories of a grey fall afternoon in 1964, riding in the back of my parent's 1958 Buick Special. We were heading home from one of our monthly shopping trips to Lethbridge. I ignored the passing landscape, for I was enthralled. I held in my hand a crisp new copy of a Superman comic book. Sensory experience of the smell of fresh ink, the feel of crisp newsprint and the vibrant colors remain in my mind. Superman was battling two of his old bald-headed nemeses; the mad scientist Lex Luthor and Brainiac, the green-skinned android dressed in flamboyant pink tights. This colorful tale so captivated me that I, a nerdish, sensitive overweight eight year old, fell in love with superhero comic books and became a voracious reader and collector of these process color fantasies. The vibrant graphics inspired me to copy and create my own tales. Until my late teens I had aspirations of becoming a comic book artist. I entered university and chose a different path and became a fine artist instead. However the bold lines and strong black and white contrasts of '60s and '70s comic book art still inform my creative practice today. My interest in comics books and graphic novels was reawakened a few years ago, after seeing an exhibition of the work of the German artist Neo Rauch in New York City in 2002. In his large-scale oil paintings Rauch incorporates many visual references to the popular culture of his East German childhood. Inspired by his example, I began browsing the used bookstores and junk stores near my home in Grande Prairie for source material to use in my own drawings and paintings. I rediscovered comic books

and began collecting reprints of tales from my youth and reading scholarly literature on this popular culture medium. This prompted me to become reacquainted with comics form in all its contemporary manifestations.

While searching for a possible thesis topic, an article in the Wednesday, September 7, 2005 edition of the *National Post* caught my attention. It was a short review of Guy Delisle's recently published graphic novel *Pyongyang* (2005). The French-Canadian cartoonist documents his two-month sojourn working for a French animation firm in the North Korean city. In my early twenties, I had lived and worked in the Bahamas for eight months. This experience, like Delisle's, challenged my beliefs and assumptions about the world. I soon discovered that a number of contemporary graphic novelists were publishing autobiographical accounts of their travels to foreign lands. I was fascinated that comics, one of my childhood loves, were being used to document the challenges and complexities of cross-cultural interaction. My subsequent reading in the fields of cultural studies and popular culture has served to enrich my understanding of this new graphic novel genre.

Critical Perspectives on Comics Carnet

To contextualize my analysis of comics carnet I will examine theoretical approaches in cultural studies, postcolonial perspectives, and narrative and genre theory. I will conduct a critical and historical study of the graphic novel tradition to situate comics carnet in its appropriate context. Popular views of the East as the 'exotic other' raise a

number of research questions for the critique of comics carnet, as outlined in the first chapter.

Since comics carnet incorporates features from various genres such as travel writing, journalism, autobiography, and ethnography it is necessary to discover how aspects of these different genres contribute to comics carnet. We must examine each genre's "distinctive styles, structures, conventions and ... [the] set of expectations [that come] from their readers" (Riessman, 1993: 18). The genres that shape the evolution of comics carnet will be traced and outlined below. A brief discussion of the graphic novel tradition will also be necessary to document the emergence of comics carnet. This will provide the basis for discussing the evolution of the graphic novel and the historical role of comics in popular culture.

Texts in the Study

I have chosen four artifacts that illustrate the key features of the genre for this study. In the first text, Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (1993), the author is a trained journalist who works within that tradition to document his travels through the Occupied Territories. Craig Thompson's *Carnet de Voyage* (2004), the second text, incorporates many qualities associated with traditional travel literature. Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang* (2005) has been chosen as an example of an ethnographic approach. The final volume, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis 2* (2000), is autobiographical in nature. It reflects the unique perspective of an Eastern, female observer and her experiences living in both the West and the East. As a member of the Iranian diaspora, Satrapi's work is an example of feminist postcolonial

literature. It provides a counterpoint to the majority of comics carnet texts authored by European Caucasian males.

Methodology

In this thesis I review analytical and theoretical approaches to the comics medium and incorporate relevant features of this literature in my own study. My methodological approach is qualitative and involves a thorough visual and narrative analysis of a sample of graphic novels identified as belonging to the comics carnet genre. The thesis focuses primarily upon ideological representations of cultural difference in these graphic novels. I will examine how women, non-European Others and exotic places are represented in these texts. The evidence gathered from the visual and narrative analysis will be used to draw conclusions about how these examples of comics carnet have represented the non-metropolitan East.

Originality of Research

My identification of this new graphic novel genre contributes to a better understanding of contemporary popular culture. The creators of comics carnet are redefining the comics medium. Comics carnet's emphasis on the writer/illustrator's personal experience in another culture sets it apart from most contemporary graphic novels, devoted to colorful tales in the superhero, fantasy, science-fiction and horror genres. Although texts such as those studied in this thesis have been reviewed (Williams, 2005) there has been no sustained academic study of them. I will use theoretical models

found in cultural studies and postcolonial theory. My thesis will address this lack in its attempt to answer this question: How does this new graphic novel genre, comics carnet, represent the non-European Other and what role do they play in the larger field of popular culture?

Chapter 1: Theoretical Approaches to Comics Carnet

Representations of the East as the exotic Other in popular culture extend over a wide range of media including graphic novels. Comics carnet incorporates features of various literary genres: autobiography, ethnography, journalism and travel writing. An understanding of the ideological underpinnings present in these texts thus requires an interdisciplinary approach. A number of important research questions need to be answered when examining any popular culture artifact that depicts cross-cultural interaction: What is the discursive relationship between the West and the East? How have European cultures traditionally represented other cultures in literature, art and popular media? What assumptions or stereotypes come into play in these representations? What are some of the problems that arise when a visitor/tourist describes another culture today? Can an outside observer ever truly know another culture? To help answer these questions I will examine several relevant theoretical models found in cultural studies and postcolonial theory. Graphic novels, like other popular media, reflect and reproduce dominant ideologies about racial and cultural difference. As fields of inquiry, postcolonial and cultural studies involve the study of practices, texts and images across all disciplines in order to write back, to correct, or undo Western hegemony. These approaches will provide the necessary lens through which to examine the ideological assumptions present in comics carnet.

This chapter discusses the theories and concepts of major thinkers in the field of postcolonial and cultural studies. I will first explore Edward Said's (1978) concept of 'Orientalism' as a discourse by which the West knows, represents and strives to control

the East. Orientalist texts often resort to the use of stereotypes to represent the Other. Stuart Hall examines the reasons and problems associated with this use of stereotypes. Eurocentric hegemonic discourse and representations of the Other are also analyzed by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) who develop the concept of polycentric multiculturalism. I then consider the relevance of two models of cross-cultural interaction: Arjun Appadurai's (2003) use of global 'scapes' and 'flows', and Homi Bhabha's vision of the Third Space and 'cultural hybridity'. The chapter concludes with an inquiry into the role of genre in popular culture, comics carnet as a hybrid genre and the key features of the other genres it incorporates: journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing.

Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Perspectives

Orientalism

In his landmark work, *Orientalism* (1978), a central text in the establishment of postcolonial studies, Edward Said examines the checkered history of the West's dialogue with and constructions of the East. Said was one of the first scholars to question many of the long-held Eurocentric assumptions of academics. According to Said, the West's view of the East in the political and cultural sphere is the product of Orientalism; a system of knowledge constructed to maintain a European cultural, intellectual and political dominance over the Orient. The West or Occident defines itself in opposition to the East. These ideological self-definitions maintain a hegemonic view of the Orient based not on an experience of the 'real' Orient, but on Western representations or ideas of the East

(Said, 1978: 73). These representations consist of a series of codes, conventions, institutions and understandings. Said describes Orientalism as an idea system, or discourse, for understanding and filtering the Orient into Western consciousness. Orientalism aided in the development of an administrative vocabulary employed by imperial and colonial powers to subordinate the East socially, politically, economically and culturally (Said, 1978: 92). Orientalism provides a language to describe the East to a larger European audience as an exotic Other (Said, 1978: 47-55). When describing the Orient Westerners are influenced by this cultural baggage that colors their personal experience as the creators and users of popular culture. This cultural baggage often takes the form of stereotypical representations.

Use of Stereotypes

Building upon Said's work, Stuart Hall (1997), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam examine the problematic use of stereotypes in the West to represent non-European cultures. Hall in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* notes:

Stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power. Power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group. One aspect of this power... is ethnocentrism - 'the application of the norms of one's own culture to that of others' (1997: 258).

In *Unthinking Eurocentricism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, Shohat and Stam observe that Third World cultures are often presented in Western popular media as "theme park clichés drawn from orientalist repertoire: India is all dreamy spirituality... Shanghai is

all gongs and rickshaws” (1994: 124). Said further elaborates on the use of derogatory stereotypes by Western media and governments. He states that media stereotypes “are effective in representing strange and threatening foreign cultures for the home audience” (Said, 1978: 292). Said asks why, despite the global challenges facing the planet, “popular caricatures of the Orient are exploited by politicians” (Said, 1978: 108). He notes that ‘Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hawk-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization’. The Chinese are viewed as untrustworthy, Indians are semi-clothed, and Muslims are childlike and incapable of democratic government (Said, 1978: 108). Hall provides a possible answer when he asserts that stereotypes aid in the construction of hegemony. Hall defines hegemony as a “form of power based on leadership by a group in many fields of activity at once, so that its ascendancy commands widespread consent and appears natural and inevitable” (Hall, 1997: 259). The use of stereotypes assists in the composition of ‘otherness’ and exclusion of ‘others’ from access to power. Fixing these boundaries is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. Secondly, stereotypes help determine power relations, as there is a connection between difference, its representation and power. Representations work hierarchically to mark, assign, classify and exclude those defined as Other. Hall suggests that the use of stereotypes is an important feature in the wielding of symbolic violence. Third, stereotypes help define what is real while implying that there are elements that cannot be visualized, so these become the object of fantasy. The relationship between what is shown and what cannot be displayed thus generates fetishism, which is “the substitution of an object for some dangerous and

powerful but forbidden force” (Hall, 1997: 266). Hall states that through fetishism, stereotypes invoke both fear and desire for the unknown. Stereotypes are problematic as they tend to “reduce, essentialize, naturalize and fix difference” (Hall, 1997: 258) as beyond “history, permanent and fixed” (Hall, 1997: 245). The use of visual stereotypes in particular may blind us to the operation of these naturalized codes and “the ideological effects of concealing the practices of coding which are present” (Hall, 2001: 127). Hall argues that ‘representation’, in visual and textual forms, is both a practice and a concept. For example, when we are dealing with visual images they can depict an event (denotation) that conveys a ‘message’ or meaning (connotation) (Hall, 1997: 258). These meanings are not neutral but culturally specific. Stereotypical representations, as Hall has noted, are very powerful determinants in how one culture views the other. Travelers in a foreign land expect to find and often draw upon them to help make sense of their experience in an alien culture.

The Relationship between Text, Discourse and Representation of the Other

Said comments on the disjuncture between the ‘imagined’ and the ‘real’ as experienced by many travelers. When their experience in a new place doesn’t agree with what they have read in a book, Said suggests that travel writers use narrative strategies “to say that a country is like this, or better that it is colorful, expensive, interesting and so forth” (Said 1978: 93). The second reason, Said suggests, for humans to defer to texts is the ‘appearance of success’. The result is that the experiences, places and people depicted in a text gain greater power and significance than the reality being described. In a

complex logic of reinforcement, the lived “experiences of the reader are determined by what they have read” (Said, 1978: 94). The subjects or content favored by writers defines in advance the reader’s experiences and expectations. A text claiming to contain knowledge about reality is not easily put aside; instead it is given authority to create both knowledge and reality (Said, 1978: 94). Said draws attention to the power of narrative or stories, since culture cannot be presumed to be neutral. He draws connections between culture and imperialism:

Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history (Said, 1993: xii).

Culture creates distinctions between self and others and becomes a site “where various political and ideological causes engage one another” (Said, 1993: xiii).

Said (1978: 94) refers to Foucault’s idea of discourse when discussing the relationship between Western writing and the ‘Orient’. Hall states that ‘discourse’ is usually used as a linguistic concept but that Foucault gave it a broader meaning. Foucault defines discourse as a “group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Foucault as cited in Hall, 1997: 44). Discourse controls the manner in which a topic can be discussed and understood, it sets boundaries and restricts our behaviors in relation to the topic. Discourse does not consist of just one text but in a wide variety of documents across a range of media both linguistic and visual (Hall, 1997: 44). Orientalism as a discourse combines knowledge and reality to create a tradition: “a

collection of dreams, images and vocabularies available to anyone” who wishes to talk about the East (Said, 1978: 73).

Of special concern to this thesis are discourses surrounding the concept of ‘difference’. Hall sees discourses of difference as a constant preoccupation and as tools to represent people who are of a different ‘race’, ethnicity, color, gender or sexuality as Other from the majority of the population (Hall, 1997: 232). Hall discusses three historical moments where the idea of the Other and race became associated. The first was in the sixteenth century with the initial contact between Europe and the kingdoms of West Africa. The second event of significance was the colonization of Africa by European powers for control of land, resources and markets. The third moment coincided with post-World War II Third World migration to North America and Europe. Discourses relating to race and Other continue to have a significant impact in cross-cultural interactions.

Hall observes that an examination of portrayals of ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’ in a particular culture at a specific moment can uncover similar representational practices and images in a variety of media texts. This acquisition of different meanings in different media, where one image makes reference to another, results in ‘intertextuality’. Hall describes the whole bank of visual effects and narrative imagery through which ‘otherness’ is portrayed at any one historical moment as a “regime of representation” (Hall, 1997: 232).

Hall elaborates on the reasons why the notion of otherness or difference is important. First, humans use binary opposites (such as black/white, day/night) because

they allow us to capture the diversity of the world within these either/or terms. Hall notes that this is a crude, reductionist and oversimplified way of creating meaning. Also binary opposites are never neutral, but imply a power relationship where one side of the binary is dominant. Second, Hall observes that we need 'difference' because we can only construct meaning through a conversation with the Other. Hall subscribes to Bakhtin's argument that meaning is created through dialogue, so that our articulations are changed by our interaction with another person (Hall, 1997: 236). Meaning is not fixed but instead is negotiated between "national cultures and their others" (Hall, 1997: 236). According to Hall, the third reason we need difference is *anthropological*. Cultures create meaning by classifying and ordering the world: "The marking of difference is thus the basis of the symbolic order we call culture" (Hall, 1997: 236). Likewise, societies maintain order by expelling and stigmatizing anything defined as abnormal, impure and or taboo (Hall, 1997, 236). The final reason for the need to demarcate difference is *psychoanalytic*; the concept of the Other is basic to the construction of self, "to us as subjects, and to sexual identity" (Hall, 1997: 237). Hall observes that these different reasons for marking 'difference' should not be seen in isolation but as interconnected. He also believes that 'difference' as a concept is ambivalent. It can be positive, as it is necessary for creation of meaning, the construction of language and culture, for our social identity and a "subjective sense of the self as a sexed object" (Hall, 1997: 238). The negative aspect is that "difference can be a threatening site of danger, promote negative feelings, hostility and aggression towards the other" (Hall, 1997: 238). The ambivalence of difference is

very relevant when examining cross-cultural relations and interactions in popular culture as demonstrated in comics carnet.

All of the above factors become relevant when we examine the metropolitan European West's depiction of people and places from another culture as the exotic Other. Said notes that the absence of an Oriental voice is the result of the West's dominance due to its enormous political and cultural power (Said, 1978: 95) allowing the West to maintain hegemonic control. Ironically, as Wang Ling (1997) observes in his critique of *Orientalism*, Said employs a comparative literature approach that examines primarily only English and French texts, ignoring those from Third World countries (Ling, 1997: 61). Wang Ling argues that this limits Said's research, and that a scholar engaging in postcolonial studies should also be cross-cultural and cross-linguistic (Ling, 1997: 61). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, in response to his critics, states that in *Orientalism* he left out the "response to Western dominance which culminated in the great movement of decolonization all across the Third World" (1993: xii). Besides armed resistance, Said notes cultural resistance on the part of the colonized. Above all, cultures cannot be seen in isolation from one another but are instead "hybrid, mixed, impure, and the time has come in cultural analysis to reconnect their analysis with their actuality" (Said, 1993: 14).

Shohat and Stam have expanded upon Said's initial work to make a number of linkages by first examining the extensive history of "multiply located oppressions", and secondly embracing Asia, Africa and the Americas in spatial/geographical terms (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 1). They study the connections between various disciplines such as theory, ethnography, Third World feminism, postcolonial studies and media studies.

Eurocentricism

Shohat and Stam discuss how 'Eurocentricism' is naturalized as 'common sense', agreeing with Said and Hall that Eurocentricism is so embedded in everyday life that it often goes unnoticed (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 1). Art, philosophy and literature are assumed to have been created only by Europeans and the neo-Europeans of the Americas and Australia. What is called 'Western Civilization' is seen as the pinnacle of thought. Traces of centuries of European domination inform culture, language and the media (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 3). Shohat and Stam feel that popular culture, using mass media forms, establishes Eurocentricism's broad base of power as the dominant hegemony.

Eurocentricism is "complex, contradictory, [and] historically unstable" and uses five methods to sustain hegemony (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 2). First it creates a master, linear historical narrative originating in classical Greece to modern day metropolitan Europe and the United States. Second, the West is presented as progressive with steadily evolving democratic institutions. Historical amnesia and legitimization are conveniently used to gloss over such aberrations as Stalin or Hitler. Third, Eurocentricism does not acknowledge non-European democratic traditions and it denies the political machinations present in Western democracy and the West's role in destroying democracies abroad. Fourth, the West's oppressive practices such as colonialism, slavery and imperialism are seen as exceptional accidents that played no role in Europe's disproportionate global power and influence. Fifth, Europeans appropriate the material and cultural production of non-Europeans; yet deny this while failing to acknowledge the achievements of non-

Europeans. In summation, Eurocentricism allows the West to think of itself in terms of its greatest achievements, sanitizes Western history and often demonizes the non-West as lacking and deficient (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 2). Eurocentric perspectives are reflected to various degrees in the examples of comics carnet to be analyzed.

Multiculturalism

Shohat and Stam see 'multiculturalism' as an assault on the hegemony of Eurocentricism while recognizing cultural heterogeneity. The authors question the 'universalism' of Eurocentric views and the idea that only one culture holds a "monopoly on beauty, intelligence and strength" (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 3). They hope that we will see 'Europe' itself as a geo-political fiction that minimizes even its own cultural variety (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 6). Instead of using binary oppositions, they propose a new model based on a polycentric multiculturalism as a possible solution. Multiculturalism deconstructs the traditional structures of power between communities and decolonizes representations in cultural texts. Through their constructions of identity, mass media and mass culture play a key role in cross-cultural dialogues in the post-modern world (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 7). Media audiences consume a complex variety of globally circulated cultural artifacts, and use goods from diverse sources to interact with assorted peoples. Comics carnet, within global popular culture, is an example of emerging multicultural and cross-cultural dialogues.

Global Flows and Hybridity

Arjun Appadurai in 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy' (2003) goes beyond the binary opposites of the East and West. Appadurai's model is a nuanced view of cultural interaction as more organic; both dominant and subordinate cultures undoubtedly affect and influence each other. He develops the notion of global flows of people, capital, information and ideas and proposes that the emerging global culture is a construction of complex imaginary transnational landscapes. In this new world "the image, the imagined, and the imaginary play a vital role in new global cultural practices: the imagination as social practice" (Appadurai, 2003: 29). Appadurai defines a simple framework to describe global cultural flows or 'scapes'. The five scapes he lists are a) ethnoscaples, b) mediascaples, c) technoscaples, d) financescaples and e) ideoscaples. These landscapes are the building blocks of 'imagined worlds' that both individuals and groups inhabit. When dealing with cultural products, the most important of these are ethnoscaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples. Appadurai defines ethnoscaples through the variety of contemporary travelers on the planet: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other transients. These migrations are an important element of the contemporary world and have a major impact of the policies and relationships between states. Mediascaples and ideoscaples are intimately bound to the topography of images. Appadurai refers to mediascaples as the ability of private and public interests to create and distribute electronic images throughout the world, thus control and ownership of these channels is of prime importance. In addition these mediascaples produce a complex and

vast collection of images, stories and ethnoscaples to global viewers. As a genre, comics carnet draws upon contemporary ethnoscaples, ideoscaples and mediascaples.

The world of commerce, information and politics intersect. Global audiences experience media as a complex and interrelated body of billboards, film, electronic screens and printed texts. The boundaries between fictional representations and realistic landscapes are blurred, especially to viewers remote from lived experience of metropolitan life. Mediascaples “tend to be image centered, narrative based accounts” of small segments of reality, offering their audience a combination of elements “such as characters, plots and textual forms” from which they can construct a script of how they imagine their own lives or those of others dwelling elsewhere (Appadurai, 2001: 33). These scripts “help to constitute narratives of the Other and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become protegena to the desire for acquisition and movement” (Appadurai, 2001: 34). Appadurai notes the subtle shifts in importance between genres such as print or film and shows how ‘pragmatic genre conventions’ influence the collective understandings of various types of texts. The interconnection between viewing, hearing and reading may impact on the form these diverse ideoscaples take in various local and global contexts.

Ideoscaples often attempt to fix meaning, but as Hall observes, meaning can never be fixed despite our efforts to do so. If differences between people are cultural, “then they are open to modification and change” (1997: 245). Difference is fluid. It slips, slides, drifts and new meaning is grafted onto old ones. Hall develops Bakhtin’s idea of *trans-coding*, which involves taking an existent meaning and re-appropriating it for new uses

(Hall, 2001: 127). When discussing cultural interaction Homi K. Bhabha (1996) takes a similar approach in his view of the Third Space. Instead of the polarities that Said creates, Bhabha believes in the hybridity of culture and suggests that the reexamination of the history of critical theory should substitute the concept of cultural difference for the idea of cultural diversity. Cultural difference is defined not as fixed meanings or objects, but as the manner in which culture is talked about. The person describing culture does so in a voice that is perceived as knowledgeable, authoritative, and adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification (Bhabha, 1996: 206).

Bhabha agrees with Hall that cultural difference is a process of demarcation through which declarations of culture or about another culture “differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity” (Bhabha, 1996: 206). Bhabha suggests that difficulties and problems arise when we come to the significant borders of cultures where meanings and values are often misunderstood, read in an incorrect manner and cultural signs misappropriated. Since cultures are never complete unto themselves, Bhabha draws upon linguistics and semiotics to describe what occurs when cultures interact and ‘talk’ to each other. He refers to the space between what is spoken about, how it is articulated and how the listener or reader understands it. The speaker is located in one time and place and the listener in another temporal spatial location. The creation of meaning requires that these two places be activated in the passage through a Third Space; that “all cultural statements and systems are built in this antagonistic and uncertain space of enunciation” (Bhabha 1996: 208). Once we comprehend this we see “why hierarchical claims to the ... ‘purity’ of cultures are

untenable, even before we give historical examples that demonstrate their hybridity” (Bhabha, 1996: 208). Bhabha argues that the Third Space is valuable to the field of cultural studies since it does away with the idea of binary opposites between them and us. Like Shohat and Stam, Bhabha sees the expressions of a culture’s hybridity as the best way to understand cross-cultural relations. Instead of using discourses of the ‘exotic’ or multicultural ‘diversity’ to describe such interaction, theorists should explore the concept of hybridity or this Third Space. Bhabha believes this will allow writers to “elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves” (Bhabha, 1996: 209). As will be demonstrated, the concepts of hybridity and Third Space can be usefully applied to the analysis of comics carnet.

Shohat and Stam (1994) suggest all cultures are affected and changed by the struggle over hegemony. They propose the concept of ‘polycentricism’ as being a more appropriate way of describing the present day world because it “globalizes multiculturalism” and imagines a reordering of inter-communal relations within and without the nation state (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 48). In a polycentric view of the world there are “many dynamic cultural locations” related and linked to one another, where no single point of view is privileged (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 48) Shohat and Stam describe seven key features of polycentric multiculturalism. First, they see all history of culture in relation to power and ask for changes not just in representations but also in the power dynamics. Second, they do not ascribe to a ‘pseudo-equality’ of all points of view. Instead they focus on those views of the oppressed, the marginalized and the underrepresented. Third, polycentrism celebrates the view from the margins and sees the

oppressed as involved and creative participants at the center of a communal history of conflict. Fourth, the authors give credit to those who have unique knowledge and a 'dual understanding' gained from their experiences of accommodating both the margins and the center. Fifth, instead of viewing identities as essential, stable and unified, polycentric multiculturalism sees them as diverse, fluid, historically determined and the result of "ongoing differentiation and polymorphous identifications" (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 49). Sixth, the authors see knowledgeable groupings based on mutual social desires and identifications. Finally, polycentric multiculturalism is seen as a complementary and conversational. All acts of cultural interaction take place not between separate, proscribed people or cultures but rather between fluid, unbounded communities and individuals.

We can surmise from Appadurai's, Bhabha's, Hall's, Said's, Shohat's and Stam's insights that the analyst faces many challenges when endeavoring to discover Orientalist or Eurocentric assumptions in a work of literature, art, film, music or graphic novel. As Jo Haynes (2005) notes, the Eurocentric West creates labels and categories so that the difficulties of cultural differences can be more easily consumed. Haynes says that these labels represent "a form of re-packaging of particular differences into a totalizing cultural phenomenon" (Haynes, 2005: 381). However the interpretation of past histories and cultural ambiguities are beyond such easy formulations (Haynes, 2005: 381). We must ask the question: does comics count as a graphic novel genre engage in a similar mode of producing and commodifying cultural difference within a Eurocentric or Orientalist discourse?

Our brief examination of postcolonial and cultural studies provides the necessary theoretical background to assist in determining whether or not comics carnet employs hegemonic Eurocentric/Orientalist discourses. Now we need to study the key features of each of the various genres that intersect in comics carnet: journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing. Hall's concept of 'intertextuality' is important to consider, as all of these genres have been used to represent cultural difference in popular culture.

Genre Theory

We have noted that comics carnet is a hybrid comics genre, incorporating features that we associate with journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing. Now we must ask: how do these various genres shape this new hybrid genre? To answer this question, one must examine and identify each of these genre's distinctive styles, structures, and conventions to demonstrate how they operate in comics carnet. Since the majority of comics carnet artist/authors come from a privileged position as Caucasian European males, is there any relationship between cultural position and the use of a specific genre form in the creation or maintenance a particular world view? As Christine Scodari and Judith Thorpe argue in *Media Criticism: Journeys in Interpretation*, one of the major reasons for studying the use of genre is that "a keener insight into the culture can be unpacked" (Scodari and Thorpe, 1992: 63).

Steve Neale and Graeme Turner in *The Television Genre Book* (2001) note that 'genre', a word of French origin that means 'type' or 'kind', is a useful tool in the study

of literature and popular cultural forms. These forms can be grouped into categories with a unique set of “conventions, features and norms” (Neale and Turner, 2001: 1). Todorov contributes to the definition of genre in his introduction to *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973). He discusses some of the methods used to study and define a genre in literature. While the concept of genre is borrowed from the natural sciences, literature is different than biology because each new work of art modifies the sum of possible works in a genre (Todorov, 1973: 6). As Nick Lacey notes in *Narrative and Genre: Key Concepts in Media Studies*, genre texts are the product of both the society and the history of the genre (1999: 143). Similar observations concerning various comics genres have been made by Berger (1970) and Harvey (1979). However, before we can discuss the emergence of comics carnet in its social and historical context, we need to examine individually the other literary genres it incorporates.

Four Generic Influences Upon Comics Carnet

Journalism

Kristian Williams has described the work of Joe Sacco as ‘graphic journalism’ and observes that in Sacco’s stories with their “inherent subjectivity contrasts sharply with the newsroom’s dispassionate prose” (2005: 52). Warren Bovee, in *Discovering Journalism*, describes journalism as a form of mass communication that provides useful and practical knowledge purporting to be true, as opposed to theoretical understandings, or invented fiction (1999: 28). Dahlgren and Sparks describe two other key features of journalism. It uses an ‘analytic mode’ to inform the reader about events in the world and

this information is communicated using the 'story mode' (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1992: 15). John Hartley comments: "News is a matter of fitting unknown facts to known narratives" (as cited in Branston and Stafford, 1996: 135). Journalistic accounts tend to follow a hierarchal structure with the headline, lead (both read together form a summary of the story), main events, context, and history (both forming the background category), verbal reactions and finally comments. (Van Dijk, 1991: 114) Journalists employ a certain style and rhetoric in their writing so we can identify it as journalism and not fiction. The chosen style can have clear social and ideological implications. (Van Dijk, 1991: 115) Journalists are trained to take news events and turn them into good stories. This involves identifying heroes and villains in a news item, creating suspense and making sure the story has a clear beginning and ending. (Branston and Stafford, 1996: 29) Journalists tend to depict occurrences with clear, unambiguous prose and little subtle interpretation even in a complex scenario such as a war (Branston and Stafford, 1996: 138). Events tend to be personalized and seen as the actions of people or individuals. Nick Lacey notes that since news stories are constructed as narratives, certain events may be omitted or under reported (2000: 41). So despite claims to 'objectivity' journalism is not a transparent window on the world. Instead, biased versions of events are articulated and often serve the dominant interests in a society (Branston and Stafford, 1996: 134).

Journalism has another role besides providing information; it is also a form of entertainment. In recent decades, writers such as Truman Capote and Tom Wolfe have been exponents of what is sometimes called 'new journalism'. New journalism uses many of the narrative devices associated with fiction such as scene construction,

dialogue, and a definite point of view. Instead of providing practical knowledge, the author's intent is to "provide understanding for the sake of knowledge and entertainment" (Bovee, 1999: 206). Comics carnet may be seen as an extension of 'new journalism' with the addition of a hand drawn pictorial narrative. Warren Bovee observes: "much of the new journalism is really contemporary history, or biography, or autobiography" (Bovee, 1996: 206). Sacco's works most closely follows the conventions of 'new journalism', though each of the texts considered in this thesis show evidence of journalistic influence.

Autobiography

Autobiographies can take myriad forms as the genre migrates across a wide variety of media and material sites of production. (Smith, 2005: 366). Comics autobiography is a recent addition (Witek, 1990; Hatfield, 2005). As a literary genre, autobiography is notoriously hard to delineate (Olney, 1998: xv). James Olney states: "everyone knows what autobiography is, but no two observers, no matter how assured they may be are in agreement about what it is" (as cited in Jay, 1984: 14). Literary critic Paul Delany has defined autobiography as a literary composition whose primary goal is to give a clear account of the author's life or a sequence of occurrences in his or her life in a unified manner that is usually written after a period of contemplation (as cited in Bjorklund, 1998: 168). An autobiography is a more or less objective life history that combines factual details with the author's information about his or her personality, social, emotional and often spiritual growth (Jay, 1984: 15).

Autobiographers are not simply recalling and recording events. Instead facts and occurrences are selected from life's complexity and ordered. The autobiographer or narrator needs to define a beginning, middle and end. To communicate with their readers, the autobiographer strives to reconcile the minutia with the all embracing, the singular insight with shared cultural understandings, and the objective with the subjective (Bjorklund, 1998: xiii). An autobiographer depends upon memory, so he or she may fill in the lost details. Hindsight allows early events in one's life to be reinterpreted from later experiences. The autobiographer's awareness of his audience is foremost and he will endeavor to strategically represent the self (Bjorklund, 1998: 16). The choice of words and the inclusion of certain events allow the author to present a certain image of one's self (Bjorklund, 1998: 39). Since revisions are used to fit the events of their lives into a narrative told from a current point of view, we can question whether the result is a 'true' life story (Bjorklund, 1998: 39). Like other autobiographers, the creators of comics carnet are very self-conscious of their role as author/artist as they control pictorial and written representations of themselves in these autobiographical texts.

Hatfield (2005) observes that comics autobiography presents its own unique set of problems:

Despite the implicit claim to truth that anchors the genre, the autobiographer's craft necessarily includes exaggeration, distortion, and omission. Such tendencies become doubly obvious in the cartoon world of comics (Hatfield, 2005: 114).

In comics, the author/artist faces the challenge of reconciling the "intimacy of an articulated first person narrative with the graphic expressionism of caricature" (Hatfield,

2005: 114). The cartoonist presents himself in the form of a cartoon image and can choose among a variety of expressive conventions to convey his own likeness. The result is a tension between the intimate confessional prose of the text and a cartoon graphic that may distance the reader. He notes that: "Prose invites complicity, cartooning invites scrutiny" (Hatfield, 2005: 117). Hatfield observes that like other narrative forms, comics autobiography can potentially falsify circumstances because the creator, when telling a story, orders memories of the chaos of lived experience with decisions about what to include and what to omit. Each of the texts examined for this thesis employ autobiographical narrative forms. Each author/artist is faced with the challenge of self-caricature. Working from memory, Marjane Satrapi in *Persepolis 2*, faces unique hurdles in representing self as her autobiographical text spans nearly a decade of her life.

Ethnography

Many of these same concerns arise when discussing ethnography. Mary Louise Pratt (1986) suggests that personal narrative has always been part of conventional ethnographic writing. The ethnographer's arrival, reception in a new place and culture, her adaptation to it, the various challenges faced and overcome are documented and finally the portrayal of the anguish of leaving. Many ethnographers lament that 'scientific' description leaves out many of the personal insights and knowledge gained from their experience (Pratt, 1986: 27). Ethnographers frequently describe their journey of self-discovery in a separate narrative, an autobiographical account, which is attached as a 'methodological appendix' to their published research (Atkinson, 1990: 106). This

account has the features of what Todorov has identified as type of narrative structure called 'the quest', a voyage of search, exploration and adventure (Lacey, 2000: 40). In this narrative, the ethnographer presents himself as a naïve intruder who embarks on a voyage of exploration moving from being an 'outsider' or 'stranger' to being a 'member' or 'habitué' (Atkinson, 1990: 106). Often the quest is aided by helpers and sponsors, who James Clifford (1990: 1) refers to as 'hybrid natives'. These characters enable the ethnographer's access to the culture he is studying and also act as guarantors of the authenticity of the experience.

Three different types or styles of ethnographic narratives can be identified. The first is a 'first contact' scenario where the traveler arrives in a pristine paradise welcomed as a Messiah by the natives. The second ethnographic style is the traveler marooned as a castaway or captive. This is the ideal, as the ethnographer is not simply a traveler passing through, but instead lives the part of an ideal participant/observer in a culture. The third type is that of the gruff Victorian explorer braving all sorts of mortal danger to accomplish his mission. Often they have a challenging master/servant relationship with their native helpers (Pratt, 1986: 27-50). Vincent Crapanzano (1986) compares the ethnographer to Hermes, the messenger of the Greek gods. He sees the ethnographer's role as that of a translator between cultures. In this role as a boundary-crosser the ethnographer has a dual identity. Who is privileged to speak and whose opinions their voice are important questions to ask of all autobiographical and ethnographic writing (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 3). The ethnographer is the messenger who uses a variety of methodologies to understand, decode and interpret other cultures and societies

(Crapanzano, 1986: 51). This involves a creative act of interpretation, whose goal is to make sense of the foreign yet preserve its 'otherness'. Also the ethnographer must convince readers of the truth of his message by using various forms of rhetorical language. The ethnographer's texts are assumed to be true and authentic without the need to justify their interpretation. As an omniscient observer, the ethnographer's presence is presumed not to have an impact on the culture he is observing. The ethnographer needs to establish credibility to communicate with the readers yet create an appropriate distance (Crapanzano, 1986: 51-71). There are many precedents, before the specialization of the twentieth century, where the same person filled the role of artist and ethnographer. The diaries and watercolors of Delacroix recording his trip to Morocco, or the work of George Caitlin documenting the aboriginal peoples of America are two examples. Comics carnet, with its mixture of images and text, continues this tradition. Guy Delisle's work most clearly represents some of the challenges faced by the resident ethnographer in finding reliable 'informants'. The other artist/authors studied in this thesis also face similar obstacles due to barriers of language, race and gender.

Travel Writing

Ethnographic narratives describing the ethnographer's quest for knowledge are often similar to those found in travel writing. Jacqueline Thursby (2005) uses the term 'travel literature' in both literal and metaphorical manner to describe both physical travel but also the voyager's inward journey when traveling. The nature of travel literature, both fiction and nonfiction, physical and psychological lends itself to cross-cultural

exploration (Thursby, 2005: 31). Eileen Groom (2005: 43) states that the travel writing genre has been overlooked by critics and seen as a second rate 'impure' genre that combines autobiography, journalism, letters, guidebooks and fiction. Yet this genre has been appealing to readers for a number of reasons. The first is the irresistible draw of adventure and people's unfulfilled desire to explore the unknown. Reading about the narrator's self-growth is the second appeal of the genre, especially if they are passionate in their descriptions of outward and inward travels and strike a balance between being an observer and a participant in the text. The third reason for travel writing's appeal is how the author's adventures give rise to questions about cross cultural experiences (Groom, 2005: 43-49). Histories of travel have primarily been written from a male point of view and that of the privileged worldly, urban traveler journeying to exotic rural frontiers (Clifford, 1997: 4). Travel writers and ethnographers often imply the superiority of western European culture. The ethnographer's point of view, especially as an agent in the larger agenda of European expansion, is often minimized and glossed over. Instead the culture observed is presented as Other and often portrayed as untouched as it was before Western contact (Pratt, 1986: 27-50). Today in travel writing, indigenous cultures instead are romanticized without examining the impact of the First World traveler on the Third World society. Travel writing also reveals hidden assumptions present within European culture such as the desire to control (Groom, 2005: 43-49). Craig Thompson's work shows the most similarity to conventional travel narratives, his inward journey sometimes results in a superficial and romanticized representation of his Moroccan experience.

Undoubtedly, comics carnet, like other forms of travel writing contains many unstated beliefs, which will be examined in the thesis.

The Importance of Cultural Studies and Genre Theory

We can observe that the various genres contributing to comics carnet have their own unique features, which allow the author to present to a particular point of view to the reader. Therefore the narrative form that an author/artist chooses is not completely objective. Despite their claims, journalism, autobiography, ethnography and travel writing are all in some manner subjective. Also, as comics carnet is a graphic novel genre with American and European origins, its creators are part of a Eurocentric cultural tradition. The West's centuries old assumptions, experiences, understandings and stereotypical representations found across a wide range of media may prevent even the most open-minded writer from presenting an unbiased account of their cross-cultural interactions. As noted, they may be influenced by this cultural baggage, which colors their comprehension and depiction of non-Western people, places and events. The insights gained from employing theoretical models in cultural and postcolonial studies, used in conjunction with genre theory, will be invaluable in our quest to discover the cultural and ideological biases of comics carnet. The next chapter adds further context to this study by examining the social, cultural and historical background of graphic novel tradition from which comics carnet springs.

Chapter 2: The American and French Ancestors of Comics Carnet

Comics and Genre

The emergence of comics carnet is one of the latest developments in the history of comics. Comics carnet is a hybrid genre in a number of ways. Besides combining features from a variety of literary genres beyond comics, it is also the result of cross-pollination between the American and French comics tradition. This intermixture of American and French influences makes it necessary to briefly examine the history of comics in each of these countries. This helps identify the various historical precedents and commercial influences on comics carnet, and allows this new genre to be placed in its proper social and cultural context. A number of points must be addressed when discussing the birth of a new genre. First, the development of genre forms in popular culture involves subtle interactions between the artist/creator, audiences, commercial considerations of their producers, and the ways and means of production and distribution (Branston and Stafford, 1996: 55-56). As Neale observes, the creators of popular culture use generic media forms that follow a commercial formula with associated conventions. These are seen as catering to consumer demand and fulfilling audience expectations (Neale, 2001: 2). Comics or graphic novels, as a form of popular culture, are no exception. Harvey suggests that we can classify comics according to genre. Identifying strips by genre and sub-genres, while possessing an awareness of the history of comics, allows the analyst to “take account of the different purposes different genre serve” (Harvey 1979: 644). It prevents inaccurate comparisons between strips belonging to different genres and various time periods (Harvey, 1979: 644). Second, Berger (1970: 32) observes that an effective

analysis of comics involves documenting the historical influences on the comics' content and style. Third, as there are different national traditions in comics, it is important to compare comics from a foreign country with North American ones to reveal differences in the portrayal of values and the stylistic conventions employed (Barker, 1989: 9; Berger, 1970: 32). The following analysis of comics carnet's ancestry presents a brief history of the comics medium in both America and France. This chapter examines the inter-relationships between the North American and Continental traditions. It identifies and describes the features of the various comics genres that serve as the historical precedents for comics carnet. Finally, this chapter explores aspects of the U.S. and French comics traditions that have had the most profound impact on comics carnet's development.

The Origins of Comics

Comics in their modern incarnation were created in the mid-nineteenth century by the Swiss author and illustrator, Rudolphe Topffer (1799-1846) (McCloud, 1994: 17). They are a unique popular medium using a combination of hand drawn images and text to tell stories. Comics were one of the most widely enjoyed forms of American popular culture in the twentieth century. However, they were dismissed by the cultural elites as a lowbrow, vulgar and disposable medium and were eventually seen "to be non-serious literature, specially suited to children" (Barker, 1989: 9). It has been only in the past decade that academic scholars have given comics serious critical attention. In America the two most dominant forms of packaging comics have been the "newspaper comics

page and the comic book” (Hatfield, 2005: 4). Since the 1980s a third way of distributing comics has gained ground: ‘the graphic novel’ (Hatfield, 2005: 4). The graphic novel has emerged in a number of countries. ¹ Whatever form they are packaged in, comics continue to provide immense pleasure to readers around the globe.

The father of the American comic tradition is R. F. Outcault, the creator of *The Yellow Kid*. *The Yellow Kid*, one of the first comics-related merchandising success stories, appeared first in Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World* and later in William Randolph Hearst’s *The New York Journal* at the end of the nineteenth century (McAllister, Sewell and Gordon, 2001: 1). The popular comic strip characters such as *The Yellow Kid*, *Buster Brown* and others that appeared in the Sunday color comics section of these newspapers, were used by newspaper publishers as a device to increase circulation (Horn, 1976: 11). These strips were aimed an adult audience, the purchaser of the newspaper. ² Their goal was first and foremost to entertain the reader so that he would buy the newspaper to read about his favorite characters (Marschall and Adams, 1981: 32). With the onset of the Great Depression commercial considerations were of prime importance for newspaper publishers. As an aid to maintain and increase circulation, the newly minted adventure strip genre fit the bill.

1930s Adventure Strips

The newspaper reader of 1930s, seeking an escape from the Depression’s hardships, turned to the adventure strip. Roy Crane’s *Wash Tubbs*, and Milton Caniff’s *Terry and the Pirates* (Goulart, 1975; Horn, 1976) were extremely popular. Despite their

artist/author's often-meticulous research, these comics presented a romanticized vision of the Orient as a foreign, dangerous but intoxicating world through the use of visual and cultural stereotypes (Harvey, 1994: 147). Robert C. Harvey, in *The Art of the Funnies: An Aesthetic History*, describes the adventure strip genre as a combination of:

Exotic and realistic: it engaged its characters in extraordinary events, threatened them with physical dangers, and did these in realistic terms, creating suspense by dribbling the story out a little at a time, day by day (1994: 150).

Harvey and Horn note that initially comic strips were of a humorous nature in the form of 'gag' strips, ending with a punch line each day. William H. Young in *The Serious Funnies: Adventure Comics During the Depression, 1929-1938* observes that humor strips were predominant at the Depression's onset (1969: 404). In the 1920s, the continuity strip emerged with outrageous, suspense filled stories told over a period of several weeks (Horn, 1976: 20). These strips, with their cliffhanger endings, were the prototypes for the 1930s adventure strip genre (Harvey, 1979: 644). The use of continuity became an excellent device to maintain newspaper circulation, as readers were encouraged to purchase the paper on a daily basis to find out what had happened to their favorite character. This serial format was also very popular with other contemporary mass media producers working in radio and film. In 1929 the serial strip, which could be funny, serious or a combination of both, evolved into the adventure strip, with day-to-day continuity and action-filled plots. This approach was adopted by Roy Crane in *Wash Tubbs*. In the late 1920s, Crane began to "heighten the drama of his stories with realistic detail" and incorporated travelogue realism with almost photographically accurate renderings" (Harvey, 1994: 79). The American creators of the adventure strip genre,

Harold Foster (*Tarzan*), Alex Raymond (*Flash Gordon*) and Milton Caniff (*Terry and the Pirates*) followed Crane's lead. This new genre opened up the comics to highly realistic, cinematic techniques that resonated with the equally contemporary adventure stories (Young, 1969: 424).

The adventure strips featured a lone white male imposing order on a chaotic land and maintaining this new stability. Adventure strips reject a "modern technological civilization in favor of a primitivism that accentuates individual worth" (Young, 1969: 411) where qualities such as physical prowess, honesty and an understanding of the natural world are valued. It is curious that the Depression itself is a forbidden subject in these dynamic action packed strips. While at first they seem escapist they are an unconscious response to the Depression, as a "symbolic visual and narrative search for order and stability" (Young, 1969: 425). The adventure strips portray a simpler utopian world where the lead characters experience no financial woes, psychological problems or trivialities that demean the quality of life. The heroes always surmount the odds and reestablish order and harmony, implying that despite the economic hardships good times will eventually come.

Shohat and Stam (1994) discuss the role of late nineteenth century adventure stories, one of the influential forerunners of the adventure comics strip, in the indoctrination of males into service for the colonial empire. Adventure stories promoted the fantasy of exotic distant lands where young men could roam free from the commitments of heterosexual arrangements. While female youth were encouraged to be domestic homemakers, young boys had the whole empire in which to play, if only in their

imaginations. Adventure stories in film and comics allowed young males to vicariously participate as members of a passionate brotherhood, “a playing field for the self-realization of European masculinity... for the acting out of the robust, sexually charged dreaming, a kind of inner landscape [*lebensraum*]” (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 101). Cartoonists such as Caniff were weaned on these Imperial adventure stories and their stereotypical representations of culture and the racial Other (Harvey, 1994: 138). Besides appealing to the large juvenile market, the adventure comic strips also fulfilled the creator’s need to escape the demoralizing Depression by looking nostalgically at their youthful daydreams. In the male world of adventure strip heroes, the majority were carefree adolescent adventurers who worked outside of the law with no connection with institutional authority (Young, 1969).

A good example is Milton Caniff’s *Terry and the Pirates*, whose young hero Terry, ages as the strip unfolds. Terry is a rootless wanderer in the company of his handsome mature sidekick, Pat Ryan. Terry’s travels resonated with many of the young men who adopted a nomadic lifestyle, seeking work during the Depression. Movement itself implies change and may have served as a “substitute for class mobility during those troubled years” (Young, 1969: 417). As Young observes, *Terry*’s locale was Asia, which was unusual for the time. Caniff chose China due to the influence of his New York publisher, Joseph Patterson. Patterson christened the new strip: *Terry and the Pirates* and instructed Milton Caniff to set it in this Asian locale (Gravett, 2005: 154). Patterson commented:

‘Adventure can still happen out there’, he said. There were still pirates active along the China coast, he added, and referring Caniff to a book on the subject, he suggested that a beautiful lady pirate might make a good villain (as cited in Harvey, 1994: 144).

This was the impetus for Caniff’s most famous character, the Eurasian Dragon Lady. Her success helped generate the oriental *femme fatale* as popular culture stereotype. This image has since “prevailed as a representation of the Asian woman; she was cunning, mysterious, and inherently evil, luring Americans with her exotic looks and her unethical ways” (Chin, 2003: 14). The Dragon Lady embodies and represents the threatening Other as defined by Hall, due to her gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. Normally taboo in the comic strips of the time, international politics played an increasing role in Caniff’s work as war loomed on the horizon. In *Fantasy, Formula, Realism and Propaganda in Milton Caniff’s Comic Strips* Lawrence E. Mintz (1979) notes that the credibility Caniff sought is achieved through his introduction of real world events, themes and locales. This was due to the cartoonist’s use of research to create ‘authentic detail’ in his strips.³ Caniff’s depictions of ‘exotic’ places are “a blend of the idealistic, imaginary fantasy and the realism of travelogue education – of oriental flesh-pot and National Geographic” (Mintz, 1979: 680). Mintz concludes that Caniff’s jingoism and championing of the American military is “seen by some today as evidence of right wing leanings” and “the artists’ accounts of the causes of war, explained politically and psychologically, are at the very least more questionable” (Mintz, 1979: 675). As Shohat and Stam note, the adventure story and its descendant the adventure strip genre reinforced Eurocentric hegemonic views of the world and imperialist attitudes.

The Comic Book

Comic books have their origins in the mid-1930s, in the heart of the great Depression, when Maxwell C. Gaines began reprinting and repackaging the prominent newspaper adventure comic strips of the day, such as *Buck Rogers*, *Flash Gordon*, and *Terry and the Pirates* in book form (Jones, 2004: 100). Gaines's success inspired imitators and soon comic book publishers began commissioning new material as the supply of reprint material diminished. The comic strip adventure genre provided the literary and visual models for those working in the nascent comic book industry. In 1933 two twenty-year old science fiction fans of Jewish descent, Cleveland-born writer Jerry Siegel and Toronto-born artist Joseph Shuster created Superman. After being rejected by every major newspaper syndicate and publisher, Superman finally graced the first issue of National Periodical's *Action Comics* in June 1938 (Jones, 2004: 122). Superman became an overnight success, spawning many color costumed clones and giving birth to the superhero fantasy genre traditionally associated with comic books (Wright, 2001: 14). During the War years comic books gained a certain amount of respectability, as they were seen as an important part of the Allied propaganda effort. Racial and ethnic stereotypes abounded in their pages (Wright, 2001: 31). Despite the rationing of newsprint in World War II, the audience for comic books grew among the young on the home front and was a staple in the duffle bags of many enlisted men. Comic book reading as a cheap form of entertainment was a habit soldiers carried with them when they returned home at the end of hostilities (Jones, 2004: 213).

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, comic book readership was at its height and they were widely read by children and adults alike. The comic book industry was unregulated at this time and in the fierce competitive marketplace of the War period, publishers resorted to increasingly more violent, misogynist, and lurid tales of murder and mayhem rendered in gory, graphic detail to attract readers. Educators, parents, the clergy and lawmakers became aware of and were horrified at the contents of comic books (Wright, 2001: 83-85). During the mid 1950s a moral panic swept the English-speaking world and almost led to the demise of comic books. One of the most vocal opponents of comics was Dr. Fredric Wertham, a New York psychologist. In *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954), Wertham cited comics as the cause of juvenile delinquency. Despite his outrageous claim, Wertham's criticism of the depictions of violence against women and the use of racial and religious stereotypes in comic books was accurate. After a public outcry and intense media scrutiny, a U.S. senate committee looked into the matter (Jones, 2004: 274). It recommended the creation of a self-regulating body, similar to the Hayes Motion Picture Code of the 1930s, to monitor the content of comic books. The Comics Code Authority was formed in 1954. Overnight the number of comics published plummeted and any suggestion of sex, moral deviance, violence or the occult disappeared from their pages. Innocuous stories of superheroes, funny animals and humor predominated as adult readership declined and television became the dominant entertainment medium (Wright, 2001: 154-164).

Underground Comics

At the end of the 1960s, the vibrant youth counter-culture produced “uninhibited, raunchy and irreverent... underground comics devoted to social protest” and aimed at an adult readership (Beauchamp, 1998: 18). On the streets of Haight-Ashbury the irreverent ‘underground’ comic book *Zap* appeared featuring Robert Crumb’s Mr. Natural, who soon became an icon of the counter culture. Underground comics used unconventional distribution channels to circumvent the restrictions of the Comics Code Authority (Daniels, 1971; Estern, 1974). They were sold in head shops, on the street from a baby carriage by Mr. Crumb, or through the mail. Except for their covers, American underground comics were printed exclusively in black and white due to economic restraints (Daniels, 1971; Estern, 1974). In *Comix: A History of Comic Books in America*, (1971) Les Daniels observes that the publication of Robert Crumb’s *Zap Comix* in 1968 was significant for “its uninhibited treatment of sex... a defiance of convention, a defiance which, embracing a variety of social issues as well as warm bodies, has distinctly political overtones” (Daniels, 1971: 165). Crumb’s work, like that of his mostly male counterparts was deliberately transgressive and sought to subvert social and political norms. The results were often scatological in nature, very misogynist and demeaning towards women.

Of particular concern is Robert Crumb’s problematic use of stereotypical racial representations. In *A History of Underground Comics*, Mark Estern points out that:

Crumb usually treats blacks like objects. His characterization of Angelfood McSpade is a prime example: she is always having things done to her and is condemned to be a central character but never a protagonist. It’s hard to believe

that Crumb's stereotypes of blacks are supposed to make some general point about American racial attitudes (1986: 199).

Crumb defends his use of racial stereotypes as follows:

My 'negro' characters are not about black people but are more about pushing these 'uncool' stereotypes in readers' faces, so suddenly they have to deal with a very tacky part of our human nature. Yeah, it's tough (2005: 260).

The English comics' writer Alan Moore agrees that the stereotype:

Was subversive in the way it commented upon race...this was the first time I'd seen a cartoon depiction of the Negro so exaggerated that it called attention to the racism inherent in all such depictions (as cited in Beauchamp, 1998: 74).

Crumb's comics confirm Hall's and Shohat's and Stam's observation that popular culture reinforces hegemonic discourses. Crumb continues to perpetuate these negative stereotypes by using them in a manner where we 'laugh at' instead of 'laughing with' the objects of his satire and which licenses discrimination and abuse against women, religious and ethnic minorities. Because comics carnet has roots in underground comics, this ambiguous use of stereotypes remains problematic.

The underground movement collapsed in the mid 1970s as the counter culture waned and the authorities cracked down on head shops where these comics were sold (Hatfield, 2005: ix). Many of the artists associated with the underground movement would re-emerge in the 1980s, forming the basis of the alternative comics scene that served as a counterpoint to the large commercial publishers (Hatfield, 2005: ix).

Alternative Comics

In the late 1970s and 1980's mainstream comic books began to lose much of their mass audience and became the domain of a fan subculture. Traditional comic book retail outlets like newsstands and mom-and-pop stores gave way to the mall and chain stores that stocked few or no comic books. Comic book artists and writers started to publish their own books and retain copyright for their creations. Numerous independent publishers emerged, each specializing in niche markets from *Star Wars* to *Magna*. Comic books today are sold in specialized comic book stores and marketed directly to interested consumers. Direct-market distribution has permitted publishers to bypass the Comics Code entirely and indulge in the kind of graphic subject matter not seen since the early 1950s (Wright, 2001: 252).

Hatfield traces the origins of alternative comics to the 1970s underground 'commix' movement (Hatfield, 2005: ix). He cites as precedents "iconoclast magazines such as Spiegelman's *Raw* (1980-'91) and Crumb's *Weirdo* (1981-'93), both rooted in the underground" (Hatfield, 2005: ix). Many underground artists such as Art Spiegelman explored the idea that comics were a form of art, not simply mass entertainment. Throughout his career Spiegelman has combined "American popular culture, modernist practices and the print technology of the comics medium" (Carlin, 2005: 180). Spiegelman and fellow underground cartoonist Bill Griffith began exploring comics' potential as art rather than commercial mass culture in *Arcade*, a comic book magazine. In the words of Spiegelman's co-editor, this venture represents:

... a conscious effort to move away from the stifling and limiting themes of the early underground – sex, dope, violence, etc. The need for that sort of catharsis had passed...we wanted to get on with the business of being artists. Nothings wrong with a belly laugh – we just wanted to tickle the cerebellum [sic] as well as the funny bone (Carlin, 2005: 128).

Arcade only lasted six issues. In 1980 Spiegelman began co-publishing *RAW*, with his French-born wife Françoise Mouly. She introduced him to the French ‘comics as art’ tradition where comics are perceived as equal to film and literature (Callahan, 2004: 11). It was in the pages of *RAW* that Spiegelman presented *Maus* in serialized form, documenting his parent’s life and his troubled relationship with them. He gathered these tales into hardcover form in *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* (1986). This groundbreaking autobiographical graphic novel and its companion volume *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began* (1991) won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 (Carlin, 2005, 128). The publication of Spiegelman’s *Maus* resulted in the comics medium being treated with more seriousness by cultural elites in North America.

In *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar* (1990), Joseph Witek states that the underground comics demonstrated how escapist fantasy traditionally associated with comic books was an “artificially imposed cultural constraint” (153). Autobiographical and confessional stories were first seen in the 1970s underground comics (Witek, 1990: 129). Inspired by the example of underground comics artist/writers, Will Eisner revolutionized the comics medium with the publication of *A Contract with God* in 1978. Eisner tells a semi-autobiographical tale of his childhood in a New York slum. Comics autobiography emerged as a new genre as a result of the post-underground alternative’s rejection of the costumed superhero in

“favor of the particularized and unglamorous common man or woman” (Hatfield, 2005: 111). In 1976 Harvey Pekar began publishing *American Splendor*, a first person account of his life, on an annual basis. Pekar’s stories were illustrated by Robert Crumb, Frank Stack and Joe Sacco. Pekar’s focus “brought a radical appreciation for the mundane” (Hatfield, 2005: 111) In his wake “autobiography has emerged as nonfiction comic’s most familiar and accessible genre (rivaled only recently by graphic journalism of Joe Sacco)” (Hatfield, 2005: 111). Witek believes Spiegelman’s autobiographical work is important because it “explores the distinction between public and private history” (1990: 152). The emphasis on writer/illustrator’s personal experience sets them apart from the most contemporary graphic novels, the majority of which are devoted to narrating colorful tales in the superhero, fantasy, science-fiction and horror genres. As alternative comics continued to explore new subject matter they drew upon literary genres such as autobiography and journalism, incorporating their features and conventions.

Birth of the Graphic Novel

Alternative comics “have spawned the vital and often misunderstood genre of the ‘graphic novel’” (Hatfield, 2005: ix). Will Eisner first used this term to describe his highly influential work, *A Contract With God*. Hatfield states that the industry definition of a graphic novel is “any book-length comics narrative or compendium of such narratives” (2005: 4). He argues that the majority of ‘graphic novels’ have little in common in terms of their “structure, breadth, or coherence” (Hatfield, 2005: 4):

A graphic novel can be almost anything, a novel, a collection of interrelated or thematically similar stories, a memoir, a travelogue or journal, a history, a series of vignettes, or lyrical observations, an episode from a larger work (Hatfield, 2005: 5).

Instead of describing a distinct genre, the term 'graphic novel' is an all-encompassing name for a "vague new-class (sic) of social object" (Hatfield, 2005: 5). The term is being used as the comics medium seeks wider recognition within the larger fields of literature and criticism.

The French Comics Tradition

The Francophone comics tradition has developed in a manner separate yet parallel to its American counterpart, due to circumstances related to language, culture and geography. The French variants of the adventure strip, underground comics and the alternative have had a profound effect on comics carnet. The comics industry in France, unlike the U.S., was pioneered by people who had a love for the medium and fewer commercial concerns (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 148). French creators rarely assumed their audience was just children but instead created "comics for children that weren't patronizing and that could be read by adolescents and adults, as the material worked on many levels" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 148). In Europe, the weekly comic magazines that were initially distributed as a newspaper supplement "later developed into independent magazines published weekly and sold on newsstands for the entire week" (Couch, 2000: np). Christopher Couch states that:

Unlike the American comic books, which share with the European weeklies the format of periodical magazines, the European comic weeklies never abandoned

this continuing-story format. As with Herge's *Tin Tin*, [sic] other comic strips appeared in the magazines, and then each story arc was collected in a book (Couch, 2000: np).

In France these commercial mainstream books are known as *bande dessinée* or *BD* (pronounced bay-day), which translates as 'drawn strip' (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 146). They contain a complete story that has first been serialized. These slender hard cover volumes in full color were sold from the beginning in bookstores (Couch, 2000: np). The production of these volumes numbers into the thousands.

The postwar era is considered the golden age of French comics for a number of reasons. During the Nazi occupation, Germany had banned American comics, which in turn helped bolster the struggling French industry. Following the liberation of France, "American publishers poured into France and Europe a backlog of comic book production that was greedily consumed by the young" (Jobs, 2003: 693). This flood of American comics was greeted with dismay by both the left and the right, who were concerned about maintaining "France's cultural hegemony in the young's reading material" (Jobs, 2003: 693). A moral panic that equated American comics with juvenile delinquency swept France (Jobs, 203: 697). Concerns over culture and morals resulted in a strange coalition of Communists, Catholic morality groups, cultural imperialists and commercial interests, pressing the National Assembly to pass a law on 16 July 1949 to protect the "young from debauchery, delinquency, and corruption" (Jobs, 2003: 690). This effectively barred the importation of American comic books and helped foster the growth of a homegrown industry. The extremely popular Belgian comics such as *Tintin*

and *Spirou* were not condemned due to their Francophone character and their lack of objectionable content (Jobs, 2003: 697).

During the 1950s *Pilote* in France and *Tintin* and *Spirou* introduced their audience to a new approach to comics. The first was the Marcinelle School, located in a suburb of Charleroi, a French-speaking town in southern Belgium, associated with *Spirou*. *Spirou's* visionary editor Yves Delporte gave his artists great freedom and this “allowed *Spirou* to flourish and become a hotbed of invention and superlative story telling” (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 149).

***Tintin* and the French Adventure Genre**

The second important comics style is associated with The Bruxelles School that was founded by the Brussels based Hergé, the creator of *Tintin*. Hergé was a pen name for the Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi (1907-1983). Hergé had been working on the character *Tintin* for a number of years but it was his meeting in 1946 with the Belgian publisher Raymond Leblanc that resulted in the creation of a new magazine starring Hergé's hero (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 150). The art direction was overseen by Hergé and resulted in the development of a style, inspired by Hergé's own, called ‘La Ligne Claire’ (the Clear Line). This style, while it looks simple, is actually very complex. The cartoonists using it “endeavor to draw just the right lines” which involves a huge amount of preparatory study (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 150).

One of the most imaginative adventure comics created in Europe in the late 1920s, *Tintin* can be considered the European equivalent of *Terry and the Pirates* without

Caniff's sexual content. Translated into numerous languages, Hergé's character is well known over the world. Many of *Tintin's* tales are situated in the same Far Eastern countries as *Terry*. In the late 1920s Abbé Wallez, the editor-in-chief of the right-wing newspaper, approached Hergé to create comics for its youth supplement. Hergé's "two major interests: the Boy Scouts and drawing" were very influential in the development of his famous comics character *Tintin* (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 174). The hero of the strip was a blonde haired boy reporter, *Tintin*, and his dog Snowy. The first installment of *Tintin au Pays des Soviets* appeared 10 January 1929. It was collected in hard cover a year later (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 174). This was the first of the many *Tintin* albums that would appear until Hergé's death. While Caniff depended on a large reference library to understand China, Hergé had the advantage of actually encountering Chinese culture first hand in the form of the artist, Chang Cheng-Jen. Chang profoundly altered Hergé's life and his approach towards the comics medium. In 1932, Hergé met Chang, a French-speaking Chinese sculptor who had won a scholarship to study in Belgium in 1931 at Brussels's Art Academy. Chang was initially commissioned to execute the Chinese calligraphy in a new *Tintin* adventure, *The Blue Lotus*, so that Hergé's depiction of China would be more authentic. Chang and Hergé struck up a close friendship. Chang made Hergé aware of "the role that his stories should play in helping readers understand foreign cultures as they really were, rather than trotting out the stereotypes" found in the press and propaganda (Gravett, 2005: 152). Chang insisted that, "Hergé research the places where he was to send his character in order to create a sense of verisimilitude" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 174). Hergé, moved by Chang's tales of his homeland's suffering

during the Japanese invasion, broke with convention and made current events and injustices central to *The Blue Lotus* plot, introducing a younger version of Chang as China's spokesperson. Despite protests from the Japanese diplomats in Belgium he refused to alter the storyline. World events and concerns, well researched if sometimes disguised, often played a major role in future *Tintin* tales as they did in Caniff's *Terry* (Gravett, 2005: 152). *The Blue Lotus* marked a turning point for *Tintin's* creator and changed his method of working. Hergé states: "It was from that time that I undertook research and really interested myself in the people and countries to which I sent Tintin, out of a sense of responsibility to my readers" (Gravett, 2005: 152).

Despite this claim, Hugo Frey (2004: 177) states that many of the *Tintin* tales of the 1940s "continued to be marked with an imperialist mindset". He also notes that Hergé had links to the "authoritarian right wing and during the Nazi occupation of Belgium had continued to publish *Tintin* stories (in *Le Soir*, a newspaper whose content was overseen by the Germans) that demonstrated a striking level of anti-Semitism" (Frey, 2004: 178). Hergé was at a later date able to fend off charges of being a collaborator (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 175). It is astonishing to discover that Hergé recycled these anti-Semitic stories at a later date. He redrew and rewrote certain portions of them before they were published in album form (Frey, 2004: 178). Despite the cartoonist's revisions, Frey notes how Hergé's post-war tales are "shaped by extreme right-wing anxieties of retro-colonization that were common in Belgium, France and Britain from at least the late nineteenth century" (Frey, 2004: 178). From our discussion of *Tintin*, we find in the work of Hergé, the former Boy Scout turned cartoonist, two contradictory attitudes.

Hergé, like Caniff, used extensive research and endeavored to record the non-Western world in as much authentic detail as possible (Harvey, 1994: 147). Both felt a responsibility to their readers in this regard. Yet at the same time, as the previous discussion of the adventure strip genre suggests, Eurocentric attitudes and imperialist assumptions pervade the work of these armchair travelers. One's curiosity is then aroused to see whether or not any of these Eurocentric beliefs are to be found in comics carnet, the contemporary descendant of the adventure/travel genre.

Gravett argues that the history of comics and their relationship to travel must include the work of Hugo Pratt (Gravett, 2005: 156). Pratt (1927-1995) was an Italian born artist who worked and lived in several countries, including Brazil, England and France (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 205). Gravett notes that Pratt's life was almost as adventurous as that of his creation, Corto Maltese. In addition unlike Caniff or Hergé, Pratt was multi-lingual, widely read, and "fascinated by the cultures of the world" (Gravett, 2005: 156). In 1967 Pratt, while living in Milan, created a new strip called *Una Ballata del Mare Salato* set in the South Seas. One of the supporting characters, Corto Maltese, became the lead character in a later strip that became a critical and public success (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 205). Corto Maltese is a seafaring traveler, the illegitimate son of a gypsy woman from Seville and an English Sailor. Corto travels the globe, in the first decades of the twentieth century, becoming part of history in the making (Gravett, 2005: 156). Besides his travels, other influences on Pratt were Milton Caniff's graphic style and approach to research. Pratt based his tales on first hand experience gained while traveling, or from books and "made no distinction between

them” (Gravett, 2005: 154). Pratt is of one of the company of travelers and migrants who inhabit Appadurai’s global ethnoscapas (Appadurai, 2003: 32). Pratt’s linguistic knowledge combined with his experience working and living in a number of countries sets him apart from the more sedentary, unilingual artists, Caniff and Hergé. In this regard, Pratt has more in common with the contemporary creators of comics carnet. There are many similarities between Pratt’s *Corto Maltese* and Caniff’s and Hergé heroes. Like Terry and Tintin, Corto is a rootless wanderer, free from responsibilities. But unlike them he is a mature male capable of fending for himself, not a boy dependant upon other adults to assist him. Pratt acknowledges Europe’s multicultural past, which Shohat and Stam (1994: 3) have argued is usually ignored in popular culture. *Maltese* is the result of a coupling of English Europe with her cultural Other. Corto’s mother, a Spanish Gypsy, embodies two of Europe’s traditional enemies and scapegoats: Islam and the Roma people. Many of the supporting characters in *Corto Maltese* are Creole or mulatto. Pratt brings into question the ideals of Imperialism. For example in *The Brazilian Eagle* (1986) Corto aids the oppressed indigenus people against European colonial exploiters. The tale acknowledges the role European powers have played in colonial America. *Corto Maltese* is a contradiction in popular culture, reflecting the tenor of the times as former colonies asserted their independence and nationhood in the 1960s. On one hand *Corto Maltese* is a polysemic text articulating voices of the Other, women and Native alike, yet Pratt draws upon many conventions associated with the adventure strip genre. For example Corto is a Pat Ryan type paternal figure, to the orphaned teenage boy Tristan Bantam. It is the White European male, Corto who comes to the rescue,

overcomes all odds and restores stability and order. So despite Pratt's sensitivity, *Corto Maltese*, following the formulaic nature of the adventure strip genre, reinforces what Shohat and Stam have called the 'imperialist imaginary' by perpetuating many Eurocentric notions associated with the non-metropolitan West. Pratt is ultimately constrained by the waning colonial discourses of his time.

The French Underground

Pratt's reworking of the adventure genre to express other voices and his critique of long-held Eurocentric views is part of the larger questioning that occurred during the 1960s. France, like the rest of the Western world, experienced massive social upheavals. These affected the world of French BD, as many mainstream cartoonists rejected the prevailing order and wished to deal with more 'adult' themes in their work. As a result a number of cartoonists working for *Pilote* broke away to form a new magazine *L'Echo des Savanes* (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 154). The magazine commissioned and reprinted work by American artists such as Harvey Kurtzman, the creator of *MAD*, and by the father of the US underground comics scene Robert Crumb. Like its American counterparts, *L'Echo des Savanes* courted its share of controversy with its use of satire, violence, weird sexual content, and scatological humor (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 154). Many of these themes were carried over into *Métal Hurlant* where experimentation with the medium and adoption of non-linear storytelling were "massively influential and shaped the perception of adult comics for years to come" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 156). It inspired an English language version called *Heavy Metal* but the poor translations

and the editor's preference for "lots of naked flesh on display" left much to be desired and reinforced the perception of 'adult' comics as primarily preoccupied with misogynist fantasies (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 156). The creators of *Métal Hurlant* gave serious thought to the magazine's look and hired the graphic designer Etienne Robial, who had begun to make a name for himself as a small press publisher (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 160). In 1972, Robial and his wife created a small publishing house titled Futuropolis. Robial set high standards and had a preference for black and white. Robial, like Spiegelman, shared a belief in the idea that comics were an art, not just the lowest form of popular culture. For example Robial created a series called *30/40* that published cartoons at their original size, allowing "the reader to experience the artwork as the cartoonist drew it, bringing the creator closer to the audience, and allowing them to better appreciate the work" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 160-61). Futuropolis published a large number of monochrome books undoubtedly influenced by the US underground comics and setting a precedent that questioned the mainstream publisher's conventional belief that comics could only be in color (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005, 160). American underground comics were printed in black and white due to economic restraints whereas in France the use of monochrome was for aesthetic reasons.

The Impact of L'Association

Robial left Futuropolis in 1994, but one of the last books he published was *Labo*, a black and white anthology of cartoons created by a small collective: L'Association pour l'apologie du 9e Art Libre. Its members included Jean-Christophe Menu, Stanislas and

Matt Kloture. *Labo* appeared for only one issue in 1990. The collective expanded to include David Beauchard, Lewis Trondheim, Killoffer and Mocket and formed its own publishing house L'Association. This small publishing house has become "highly influential on the world stage" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 164). Two principles L'Association subscribes to include "the power of black and white or two-color work, and the other was in a sense of high quality throughout, not just in their choice of creators, but also in production values and design" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 164). The autobiographical comics of their American colleagues, Spiegelman and Pekar, profoundly influenced L'Association. David Beauchard, one of L'Association's founders, has concentrated on a series "about his brother's epilepsy and the effect it has had on his family" (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 167). This interest in autobiography can be found in a number of L'Association's publications. For example Marjane Satrapi, a former student of Beauchard, initially published *Persepolis* in a serialized format consisting of four volumes beginning in 2000. Satrapi's autobiographical account of her Iranian childhood has gone on to be a huge critical and commercial success internationally for the company (Pilcher and Brooks, 2005: 167). It was translated into English and collected in a two-volume set by Pantheon. Satrapi's work occurs at an intersection of the Francophone monochrome, 'comics-as-art' tradition and the American autobiographical comics tradition. Comics carnet is a nexus point where these two different histories come together in a number of ways.

The Emergence of Comics Carnet in the 1990s

As noted above, Crumb's, Pekar's and Spiegelman's autobiographical comics provided a prototype for a new comics genre: comics carnet. Examples of comics carnet began appearing in both America and Europe in the early 1990s. In 1992, Peter Kuper published *Comics Trips*, a record of his travels to Africa and Southeast Asia. This thin volume marks the first appearance of a work that can be included in the genre of comics carnet. Interspersed between reproductions of photographs, collages and watercolors we find a number of stories told in comics form. In 1993, Joe Sacco began publishing *Palestine* in serialized form. Trained as a journalist, his approach to comics autobiography has been identified as comics journalism (Williams, 2005). Like Kuper, Sacco is a first and foremost a stranger in a strange land. Both artists employ a documentary approach that blends journalism, autobiography, travel writing and ethnography. Sacco's approach has proved to be very influential and inspirational to fellow graphic novelists on both sides of the Atlantic. Kuper's and Sacco's work marks the birth of a new graphic novel genre: comics carnet.

Following in Kuper's and Sacco's wake, L'Association began publishing a flurry of titles in the late 1990s that can be classified as comics carnet. These publications use the medium of comics to record the artist/author's travels in the form of a journal or *carnet*, as it is known in French. L'Association has sent artists to many exotic locales and collected their efforts in various anthologies: *L'Association en Egypt* (1998), *L'Association en Mexico* (2000) and *L'Association en Inde* (2006). Works by sole creators have also been published. They include *Shenzen* (2000) by Quebecois, Guy

Delisle, who documents his tribulations while working in China. Delisle's *Pyongyang* (2003) describes in a similar vein the artist's tests and travails while working in Northern Korea. *Six Hundred Appearances of Killoffer* (2002) is based upon Patrice Killoffer's trip to Montreal Canada. Edmond Baudoin's *Araucaria: Carnet du Chili* (2004) reproducing a notebook of drawings of Chile's peoples and landscapes and records the impact dictatorship has had upon the country. Craig Thompson, an American graphic novelist, in the introduction to his *Carnet de Voyage*, (2004) acknowledges the influence of L'Association's comics carnet on his work. Examples of comics carnet are beginning to make their appearance in other countries besides America and France. 2006 saw the release of *Cargo: Comic Journalism Israel-Germany*, based on the L'Association model. Avant has published German and English editions simultaneously. This volume has contributions by three German and three Israeli cartoonists and illustrators, who document their experience of visiting each other's respective countries. Despite the publisher identifying this anthology as 'comics journalism' the majority of stories can be labeled as comics carnet. They are very personal accounts that have elements found in traditional autobiography, journalism, ethnography and travel writing. Since the late 1990s an increasing number of these publications and their continued critical and commercial success would seem to indicate a growing audience for comics carnet. This new graphic novel genre, documenting cross-cultural interactions, is itself the unique product of an almost century long conversation between the American and Francophone comics traditions.

Conclusion

Comics carnet is a relatively new comics genre with roots in the American and Francophone comics traditions. We have discussed how, in both the United States and France, the adventure strip genre emerged at roughly the same time, the early 1930s. The adventure comics of Crane, Caniff, Hergé and Pratt are, I believe, comics carnet's early ancestors. These cartoonists set their stories in exotic locales and their male heroes interact with non-European cultures. In comics carnet we usually have artist/authors who are Caucasian males of European extraction documenting their travels to a place traditionally seen by Western culture as 'exotic'. Also Caniff, Hergé and Pratt used copious amounts of reference material and employed a realistic, almost documentary approach to depict foreign peoples, cultures and lands as accurately as possible. In a like manner, the creators of comics carnet draw upon first hand knowledge in the form of notes, photographs and memories.

The second major influence on comics carnet was the underground comics that appeared in the late 1960s, in both America and France. Underground comics resulted in a re-envisioning of the comics medium, as they explored adult themes related to social commentary, protest and sexuality. The French and American alternative comics that followed the collapse of the counter-culture in the mid-1970s continued to explore these themes. Crumb, Pekar and Spiegelman greatly influenced artists on both sides of the Atlantic, as they embraced autobiographical narrative to document their creator's lived experience in an idiosyncratic, highly subjective manner. Comics carnet is a further development of the alternative autobiographical genre. Its primary focus is on the

artist/author relating his subjective perception of a cross-cultural interaction primarily in the form of travel.

In America, Art Spiegelman's comics anthology *RAW*, and in France the alternative comics published by Robial under the Futuropolis imprint, emphasized monochrome work. This preference for black and white or two-color continues in alternative comics for a number of reasons. First, the majority of small independent creators and publishers of underground and alternative comics face financial restraints. Monochrome is a more economical means of production. This is in stark contrast to the lush four-color work on high quality paper used by larger mainstream graphic novel publishers in the United States and France. Second, for aesthetic reasons alternative comics have adopted monochrome as a stylistic convention. Monochrome is seen as being closer to the true nature of comics-as-art. This helps situate the comics medium in the larger fine arts graphic tradition. Comics-as-art ancestors include the black and white satirical prints of Hogarth and Daumier. Their mass-produced prints were initially popular culture artifacts which art historians later re-evaluated and are now considered as belonging to the realm of 'high art'. Ideas surrounding notions of authenticity also come to the fore. Visual artists and critics perceive drawing as being the most direct means of observation and expression. In addition, the use of monochrome implies truthfulness and veracity. For the most of the twentieth century the black and white photograph, due to its mechanical nature, has been seen as totally impartial and capable of representing 'truth'. Creators in the comics carnet genre choose to work in monochrome due to these commercial constraints and aesthetic choices.

Comics carnet's appearance as a new genre in the early 1990s coincides with the increasing popularity of the mainstream 'graphic novel' format as a method of packaging and distributing comics for mass audiences. As we have noted in our brief history of the graphic novel tradition, cultural assumptions, means of production, commercial concerns, and the artist/author's talent and lived experiences all impact on the creation, form and content of a new genre form. This raises the following question: does comics carnet, with its roots in the adventure strip genre, contain similar Eurocentric assumptions? We have also observed that comics carnet is an offshoot of American and French underground comics. Underground comics, a unique product of the '60s counter-culture, espoused radical ideals regarding sexuality and society. Another question we must pose is this: Are the cartoonists of comics carnet, like their underground and alternative predecessors, engaged in a similar social critique? What is their perspective on the world? Are they advocating a particular political stance? Finally we must ask; why do the author/artists choose to work in the comics carnet genre? Why have these creators chosen to use the comics medium to record their experience in another culture? To answer these and other relevant questions we will conduct a close textual analysis of a number of graphic novels in the comics carnet genre.

Endnotes

1. Christopher Couch has observed: "Despite divergent histories of comic art publishing in the United States, western Europe, and Japan, in recent decades there has been an apparent convergence of publication formats: the *graphic novel* in the United States, the *album* in western Europe, and the collections called *tankobon* or *manga* in Japan' (Couch, 2000: np).

2. Milton Caniff (1907-1988), one of America's most successful cartoonists, stated: 'If the feature doesn't sell papers, it is useless... Always draw your stuff for the guy who pays for the paper. Kids will never see it if the old man doesn't buy the paper and bring it home' (Marschall and Adams, 1981: 32).

3. When discussing his use of reference material, Caniff remarked: "I have never been to China, so I go to the next best place the Public Library. From its picture file, and with a careful clipping of every scrap of data on things Oriental, combined with a dash of Encyclopedia Britannica, I am able to piece together a pretty fair background of Far Eastern lore. For authentic speech mannerism I plow through a pile of books by traveled people" (Mintz, 1979: 665).

Chapter 3: Analyzing Comics Carnet as Hybrid Texts

Based upon my theoretical understandings gleaned from cultural studies this chapter will undertake a textual analysis to trace ideological assumptions and representations in comics carnet. Since comics are a hybrid form, integrating image and text, I will review the unique features of this medium and the challenges that arise when endeavoring to analyze it. I will discuss the various analytical models previously used to study comics to locate relevant tools for my own study. The strengths and weaknesses of these qualitative approaches will be evaluated. The goals of my study are twofold. First, I wish to compare and contrast how the various artists/authors of comics carnet use images and texts to describe people, places, cultures and events and to represent the 'non-European Other'. Second, I wish to discover the ideological attitudes towards cultural difference communicated by these graphic novels.

As a distinctive popular culture medium, comics present interesting methodological challenges to the researcher. Arthur Berger, in *Li'l Abner: A Study in American Satire* (1970) suggests that an interdisciplinary method incorporating approaches used in the fields of literary studies, history, psychology and political science is the most effective approach. In his article 'The Aesthetics of the Comic Strip' (1979), Robert Harvey acknowledges that an understanding of comics as a cultural experience requires the insights of "sociology, cinematography, literature or psychology", even though these fields employ specialized languages that are basically alien to the medium. In *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar* (1990), Joseph Witek states that a scholarly and critical language for the

study of comics is in its infancy and its technical terms have arisen from *ad hoc* use by comic book creators and writers on the medium. In *The Aesthetics of Comics* (2000), David Carrier suggests that existing comics analysis is too simple, lacking in detail and rigor and is unsubtle in conceptual terms. Carrier advocates a more sophisticated method, requiring that the researcher identify the key ingredients differentiating comics from other verbal and visual media (Carrier, 2000: 95). In sum, a cross-disciplinary approach that acknowledges the comics' distinctive features is the most effective manner to analyze comics carnet.

The Hybrid Nature of Comics

As indicated earlier, the study of graphic novels is complicated by their hybrid nature and narrative combination of text and images. Harvey enumerates the following unique elements of comics: a) a narrative told by a sequence of pictures called panels, b) a continuing cast of characters and c) text or dialogue is included within the panels or issues from the character's mouths in the form of speech balloons (1979: 640). This combination of interdependent verbal and visual elements is the most original and identifying feature of comics. In 'The Funnies, the Movies and Aesthetics' (1985), Earle Coleman employs Erwin Panofsky's principle of 'coexpressibility' where images and text become aesthetically inseparable in successful comics. Image and text do not stand alone and the removal of one or the other impacts upon the whole. Nowhere else in literary forms are the pictorial and verbal so directly interconnected (Coleman, 1985: 94). In *The Language of Comics: Word and Image* (2001), Varnum and Gibbons point out

two different characteristics between visuals and text. The first is that visual images resemble the objects they are representing, whereas words are arbitrary symbols that stand for objects due to conventions and custom. The second difference is that words are spoken or read and understood sequentially in time, whereas the elements in an image are placed side by side and seen all at once as a whole or gestalt. Comics are a hybrid system of signification that blurs the boundary between the visual arts and literature (Varnum and Gibbons, 2001: xi). Harvey (1979: 642) discusses the 'visual/verbal blend' in comics and identifies it as the prime consideration when analyzing or evaluating a comic. Similarly, Will Eisner remarks that traditional prose uses:

writing with words alone, the author directs the reader's imagination. In comics the imagining is done for the reader. An image once drawn becomes a precise statement that brooks little or no further interpretation. When the two are 'mixed' the words become welded to the image and no longer serve to describe but rather to provide sound, dialogue and connective passages (1985: 122).

Text in comics can be read also as an image and becomes iconic in this respect. The way the hand-lettered text is treated graphically can visually reinforce its meaning. It can create a mood, provide a bridge between the visuals and the text and even imply sound (Eisner, 1985: 10). In comics, the narrative is established where the verbal and visual text run parallel to each other and both are read simultaneously. In comics, "we hear with our eyes" (Barker, 1989: 11). However the visual elements can contrast, reinforce or even contradict the written text.

Visual Analysis

To study comics, a methodology incorporating visual analysis is essential. Hatfield (2005: 67) suggests that analysts should be cognizant of the material properties of the graphic novel. Its overall design in terms of “its size, shape, paper and binding” may reinforce or work against its content and should be considered. Varnum and Gibbons observe that while pictures seem more direct and transparent this is an illusion, for just like words “they convey ideas and values, and reading them requires skill and sophistication” (Varnum and Gibbons, 2001: xi). The frame or panel containing an image uses a number of conventions that “conditions and establishes our relationship to that meaning” (Barker, 1989: 11). An important point is that cultures build up a glossary of images over time. Artists thus can create images that readers will respond to in a predictable manner (Varnum and Gibbons, 2001: xii). For example, an artist will use culturally agreed upon symbols to express such emotions as joy, sorrow or anger, which the reader will interpret accordingly. “The conventions employed in comic strips *condense* social relationships; they determine the kind of reader we become. They make *reading a social relationship* between us and the text” (Barker, 1989: 11). Comics’ use of an iconographic language presents another hurdle when conducting a visual analysis. Inge (1990: 12) states there is no such thing as realism in comics because the depictions of characters, physical objects, and landscape all belong to the tradition of caricature and comic exaggeration through unique drawing styles. Comics use caricature, which consists of symbols and abstractions emphasizing certain aspects of experience and suppressing other items (Varnum and Gibbons, 2001: xii). Icons are used as “a form of amplification

through simplification” to tell tales (McCloud, 1994: 29). Icons are based on the human need to use types to make sense of the world. As a method of classification Hall states “a type is any simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characterization” in which a few traits are emphasized and change is minimized (1997: 257). Will Eisner believes that, for visuals to be understood, the comic artist has to draw upon experiences common to the majority of readers. For imagery to communicate ideas successfully the artist must find a universal form and use the appropriate technique and style to add emotional impact and enhance the picture’s meaning. Eisner notes that comics creators make abundant use of stereotypes in order to communicate with the reader, he states that “It is an accursed necessity – a tool of communication that is an inescapable ingredient in most cartoons” (Eisner, 1985: 17). The use of visual stereotypes in comics is problematic however. Stereotypes, as Stuart Hall observes, tend to reduce, essentialize, naturalize and fix differences between people and are seen or read as natural:

Iconic signs are, however, particularly vulnerable to being ‘read’ as natural because visual codes of perception are very widely distributed and because this sign is less arbitrary than a linguistic sign (Hall, 2001: 127).

Since graphic novels use images to narrate stories, we need to be vigilant in our analysis of how visual stereotypes are employed as a means of maintaining hegemony and excluding ‘outsiders’. Analysts need to be very aware of their own cultural biases and worldview, as they may obscure the operation of these naturalized codes (Hall, 2001: 127).

When reading a graphic novel, we unify the sequence of images inside the panels in our minds while reading the narrative. The gutter between the panels or frames

indicates that time or space is being divided (McCloud, 1994: 99). Coleman (1985: 97) observes that the reader of comics becomes a 'human projector'. When discussing how we read a comic book, Witek (1989: 20) suggests we engage in 'Peeping Tomism,' as we gaze through the 'windows' of a panel's borders into another world. He describes a comic book panel as containing "an emblematic moment in time from a representative point in space" (Witek, 1989: 20). Harvey (1979: 650) labels this as "the graphic center of narrative focus" and defines it as the focal point of a successful comics panel composition. It is the element that contributes the most to the telling of a tale. This concept highlights the visual nature of comics while embracing the "story-telling function of comic strip art" (Harvey, 1979: 650).

Harvey proposes an analytical tool to consider the interconnected nature of image and story. First, one must examine the 'narrative breakdown', which refers to how the comic's creator divides the story into narrative units (Harvey, 1979: 648). When analyzing the layout of a page one needs to consider the position, size and shape of panels in relationship to each other. Composition, the choice and placement of the variety of visual elements inside each panel, also needs to be considered. Harvey observes that the language of cinematography is also suited to the analysis of panel composition. When conducting a visual analysis of comics it is necessary to be aware of a number of factors: a) the conventions and codes used in the comics medium; b) the medium's use of an iconographic language; and c) the complex integration of image and text used to tell tales (Harvey, 1979: 648)

Narrative Analysis

Recent literary theory and semiotics have focused attention on the relationship between visual and verbal languages. Witek (1989: 3) states that while comics may be unsophisticated in their subject matter, “in form they display a highly developed narrative grammar and vocabulary based on an inextricable combination of verbal and visual elements” that are integrated into a powerful, flexible form of literary narrative. Carrier (2000: 95) states that the language of comics is post-historical, as the comics medium has remained basically unchanged from the day of its inception and was immediately understood by everyone. For Inge (1990: xix), “Narration or storytelling is a main function of the comics”. Berger (1970) observes that comics use a narrative structure that is simple and easy to grasp, a chronological sequence of events that unfold through time in a linear manner with a beginning, middle and end. Dahlgren and Sparks (1992: 14) argue, “narrative is a way of knowing the world”. The teller of tales, whether graphic novelist, journalist, ethnographer, or biographer, uses archetypal forms of tragedy, comedy, romance or satire to convey a specific worldview (Riessman, 1993: 17). In the following analysis of comics carnet we wish to discover what narrative conventions are used and how the artist/author employ these conventions to describe a foreign culture from a particular viewpoint.

The importance of narrative analysis as a methodological tool when studying comics is stressed by a number of scholars. Berger (1970: 14) writes that a good study of comics should; a) examine the graphic, narrative and verbal style, b) note the changes that have occurred in the style of the strip during its history, c) list the main subjects

treated, d) document the historical influences on the strip's content and style, and e) study the values the strip has championed, revealed or attacked. In *Comics: Ideology, Power and the Critics*, Martin Barker emphasizes the point that comics tell stories following a formula. He defines a formula as the repetition of the same situation in different forms using a standard set of stages and having a predictable ending (Barker, 1989: 6). He notes comics characters belong to distinct genres and act accordingly within the genre's conventions (Barker, 1989: 6). Harvey agrees that comics can be classified according to genre and sub-genres. This allows the analyst to "modify the principle of visual-verbal blend in order to ... take account of the different purposes different genres serve" and prevents analysts from making comparisons between comics belonging to different genres (Harvey, 1979: 644). Barker suggests that we ask the following questions when conducting a narrative analysis. "How can we find out what the messages in a story are and how they might be received?" (Barker, 1989: 11). How might we be convinced to accept views, attitudes and reactions that we did not previously hold? In order to answer these questions Barker says we need to develop a theoretical model and method to guide us, and cautions that this theory or method will be able to only abstract bits from the whole narrative. Harvey (1979: 649) notes that comics have been and can be analyzed using literary criteria such as; a) the portrayal of characters, b) language style and tone, c) credible depictions of personality, d) how conflict is resolved, e) theme and f) unity of the work. The problem with this approach is that it totally overlooks the visual elements that are an essential feature of comics (Harvey, 1979: 650). A methodology using visual and

narrative analysis will be the most effective means to uncover the ideological underpinnings of comics carnet.

Conducting the Analysis

The identification of unique characteristics of the comics carnet genre is the first step in an effective study. The approaches suggested by Barker, Berger and Harvey to conducting an analysis of comics, in the previous chapters have placed comics carnet in a historical context, discussed the genre's historical precedents in America and France and identified some of its key features. As noted, comics carnet has American and French roots in the 1930s adventure strips, the autobiographical comics of the 1970s underground and the 1980s alternative comics traditions. Since the early 1990s a number of graphic novelists, primarily white males, have been documenting their experiences traveling, working and living in the East. They have chosen to work in black and white or monochrome. In addition, I have discussed the impact of various publishers, editors and commercial concerns on the creation of this new genre and its accompanying visual aesthetic. This has provided the necessary background information upon which to proceed with our study of how this new genre portrays the non-European world to a primarily Western cosmopolitan audience, focusing on the analysis of four specific texts.

To analyze the graphic novels, I need to address how the artist/author uses both visuals and text to depict his experience in an alien culture. I will examine the creator's use of formal elements related to visual imagery and how the narrative is structured. I will then apply the theoretical models of postcolonial theorists Said, Hall, Homi Bhabha,

Shohat and Stam to my observations. This will provide insights into how the non-European Other has been represented in these texts. From this analysis I will draw conclusions about the role the texts play in the larger context of popular culture.

To begin the textual analysis, following Hatfield, I will first examine how each text has been packaged by its publisher in terms of bindings, cover graphics, and color choice. Our second area of inquiry will scrutinize each artist/author's use of the comics visual language and conventions. The various analytical models proposed by Barker, Berger, Carrier, Harvey and Witek will be useful in answering the following questions. What style and medium has the author/artist chosen to use? Is the graphic novel printed in full color, black and white or monochrome and what possible mood is conveyed through this choice? How have the cartoonists designed and used frames, panels and splash pages in the graphic novel? What is the relationship between the size and shape of the panels and how the text is written? As Eisner has noted, the written text also functions as a visual element that emphasizes the verbal meaning.

From these broad questions related to the artist/author's use of the comics language I will then study elements more germane to the thesis. Crapanzano's (1986) discussion of the ethnographer's role as a translator between cultures is pertinent. How do the artists/authors represent themselves visually? How are they seen in terms of their relationship to the locale they are visiting and documenting? How are they dressed? Hatfield (2005: 114) notes that how the comics autobiographer chooses to represent the cartoon self is extremely important. The insights of Said (1978), Shohat and Stam (1994) regarding the depiction of place will be applied to the graphic novelists' representation of

the foreign landscape in visual terms. Do they present it using stereotypical conventions we associate with the 'exotic'? Is the place represented as contemporary or is it romanticized? Do they present us only with tourist views and locales or are we shown landscapes and places that don't fit the tourist's frame? Hall's (2001) work on decoding representations of the Other must be considered, as it is necessary to study how the graphic novelist visually represents the people they encounter in the place they are visiting. We will ask whether the cartoonist resorts to using visual stereotypes. Is there a difference between how children, women, and men of various religious, racial and ethnic minorities are depicted?

The next step in our study will be a close study of the use of narrative in each text. In this regard the work of Lacey (2000) and Neale and Turner (2001) regarding genre in popular media is important. As a new genre, does comics carnet follow particular narrative conventions? Do these graphic novels contain a similar story arc? Do they depict similar situations or events? From whose point of view is the graphic novel narrated? Said's writings on Orientalist discourses are of concern in discovering the artist/author's assumptions about the world. What happens if these assumptions are challenged? Hall's work comes to the fore when considering how the cartoonist represents people outside their culture. Does the author draw upon Western cultural stereotypes when describing their interactions or do they present us with more nuanced characters? Bhabha's (1995) model of the Third Space is relevant in our analysis of who speaks for the Other. Do we hear other points of view from native speakers? Does the

artist/author appear to be actively engaged in meeting others? With whom do they associate?

By answering the above questions for the main texts in the study's sample we will have the information necessary to identify common threads in this graphic novel genre. We will be able to hypothesize whether the various creators of comics carnet employ visual and textual elements in a similar manner to construct a particular worldview. Do these examples of this new genre share similar ideological assumptions? If so what are these discourses? What role does comics carnet play in the larger field of Western popular culture? And finally, what role does it play in global culture?

Comics Carnet Texts

The spate of recent publications of examples of comics carnet in both English and French poses a challenge for the analyst in choosing which artifacts to study. Cartoonists working in comics carnet have, since 1992, recorded their journeys to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. I have limited my study to graphic novels in which the authors document their experiences in countries that Europe has traditionally defined as part of the East. I have done this for two reasons. First, as Said and others have observed, Western culture's representations of the 'Orient' have a long history in Western culture. In the field of popular culture, Shohat and Stam assert that Eurocentric views of the East continue to be played out. We have noted how comics, one of the twentieth century's most prevalent forms of mass media entertainment, perpetuated this. We have seen how the adventure comics of Hergé and Caniff contained stereotypical representations of the

East and embodied an imperialist outlook. Since the origins comics carnet lie in the adventure genre, one way to discover whether or not this cultural baggage is still present is to compare contemporary cartoonists' representations of cultures and peoples with their predecessors. Therefore, I chose examples that are located in the same or similar geographical locales as Caniff's *Terry* and Hergé's *Tintin*. Also, as a side note, my linguistic abilities limit my study to texts originally published in English or available in English translation.

I have chosen four different graphic novels to illustrate the dominant approaches cartoonists are taking to this new genre, while drawing on other literary genres of journalism, ethnography, travel writing and autobiography. The first text that will be studied is Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (1993). Sacco's work has given rise to the term 'comics journalism' as a catch-all phrase for many of the graphic novels I have identified as belonging to comics carnet (Williams, 2005). Sacco, as a trained journalist, used the comics medium as a journalistic tool to document his experience visiting Palestine and the Occupied Territories. The Middle East is where much of the face-to-face interaction between the Occident and Orient has occurred for over five millennia. It has, and continues to be, a hotly contested cultural and geopolitical space with many divergent points of view expressed across all media. Like Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Sacco's work has received significant recognition outside the realm of comics fandom. In 1996 *Palestine* won the prestigious American Book Award. *Palestine* was originally published in a serial format in America consisting of nine issues. These were collected into a single volume by the Seattle based Fantagraphics Books, issued in 2002 with an introduction by

Edward Said. Said's willingness to provide a commentary on this graphic novel is indicative of the importance that cultural elites have placed upon Sacco's work. As I am using Said's theoretical model to examine comics carnet, his observations will allow us to gain an insight into what one of the great minds in the field of postcolonial studies thinks about this new comics genre. In addition, Sacco's work is strongly rooted in the American alternative comics tradition of Spiegelman and Pekar, and helps place comics carnet in a larger context.

The second graphic novelist whose work I have analyzed is Guy Delisle. I have chosen Delisle because his oeuvre is firmly grounded in the Francophone comics tradition. Originally Québécois, Delisle has resided in France since 1991 working as an animator. He occupies an interesting position as a Canadian living and working in France. His insights are those of a person who straddles both North American and European culture. In like manner, two of his graphic novels, *Shenzhen* and *Pyongyang* deal with the challenges of working and residing in a Far Eastern country. He has documented his experiences working as an animation supervisor in China and North Korea. In *Pyongyang*, first published in French by L'Association in 2003, the author describes his two-month sojourn working in North Korea's capital city. Delisle's graphic novels can be classified as an example of ethnography. As a migrant worker residing in a country for an extended period of time, Delisle has a different understanding and experience of a foreign culture than authors such as Sacco who are only short-term visitors. Fulfilling the traditional ethnographer's fantasy, Delisle is a castaway upon the shores of Chinese and North Korean culture (Pratt: 1986). Therefore, his work will serve

as a good example to uncover how the conventions associated with ethnographic writing are expressed in comics carnet.

Comics carnet can also be linked to recent developments in the area of travel literature. Craig Thompson's *Carnet de Voyage* (2004) contains distinctive features that we associate with travel writing. Thompson, like many travel writers, travels alone. As a solitary traveler, even though keenly observant, Thompson is somewhat detached due to barriers of language. In this graphic novel Thompson records his impressions of Morocco, Barcelona, France and the Alps. Thompson, like Sacco, comes out of the American alternative comics tradition. This graphic novel is distinctive however, because Thompson is greatly indebted to the carnet or travel journals published by L'Association during the past decade (Thompson, 2004: 5). They provided a prototype for *Carnet de Voyage*, so this graphic novel will allow us to see what aspects of the American and French comics traditions have influenced comics carnet.

The fourth graphic novel I will analyze here is Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return* (2000). *Persepolis 2* will be used as a control in our sample of comics carnet. It is the second volume of Satrapi's autobiographical account, chronicling her teenage years as a student in Vienna, her subsequent return to post-revolutionary Iran and her final immigration to France in 1994. Her work is similar to Spiegelman's *Maus* as it "explores the distinction between public and private history" (Witek, 1990: 152). *Persepolis*, like Delisle's graphic novels, was first published in France by L'Association, in a serialized format consisting of four slim volumes. It has since been translated into a number of languages and become an international best seller. Although arguably closer to

the autobiographical comics genre, it has been chosen for a number of other reasons. Its author belongs to the Iranian diaspora and *Persepolis 2* is an example of postcolonial literature in the form of a graphic novel. More importantly, Satrapi speaks from a female point view located inside an 'Eastern' culture. Unlike the other graphic novels in this genre, we have an artist/author documenting her experiences living in the West, while attending a boarding school in Austria. When Satrapi decides to return to post-revolutionary Iran, we see the East described through the eyes of a native who has lived in the West. She is an example of Clifford's (1990) 'hybrid native' who uses a western idiom and language to tell her story. As a diasporic artist, she exemplifies Bhabha's idea of the Third Space. Satrapi occupies an interstitial space between East and West and her perceptions and insights are rare in a genre dominated by European male authors. Her work will serve as an effective counterpoint in our study of comics carnet.

The graphic novels chosen for this study are of sufficient variety to assist in the identification and study of key features of this new genre. All of the graphic novels I am studying depict the author/artist's experience of traveling, working, or living in a country located in the mythical East and with which Europe has had a centuries-old relationship. The varied backgrounds of the creators will be useful in determining how the East is represented in the comics carnet genre and whether or not these graphic novels contain a Eurocentric bias. The study of these complex and varied texts will allow one to see how comics carnet functions in global popular culture.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Comics Carnet

The purpose of this analysis is to see how creators of comics carnet represent the cultures and peoples seen as belonging to the East. The study of the four chosen texts initially examines how these graphic novels are marketed and packaged. I discuss the artist/author's use of the comics medium's formal conventions in terms of splash pages, the deployment of panels, the point of view, and the use of text. As these graphic novels are subjective accounts, it is necessary to study how these cartoonists visually and verbally represent themselves. Finally, this chapter scrutinizes these four creators' representation of place; the country they are visiting and of the Other; the inhabitants of these lands. The examination of the above features will provide the relevant information to draw some conclusions about the role comics carnet plays in the larger field of Western popular culture.

The Marketing of Comics Carnet

As comics carnet is a relatively recent development in the history of comics and popular culture we need to inquire into how these graphic novels are marketed to locate their readership. As I write this, Palestine, North Korean and Iran are frequent topics of conversation in the world's newsrooms. The texts in this study have been reviewed in major newspapers and magazines such as *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, *The New York Times* and *Time*. Comics carnet is a graphic novel genre that embraces hybridity, as it is a blend of ethnography, journalism, and autobiography in comics form. Since comics carnet documents the lived experience of its creators, this genre appeals to

readers seeking alternative sources of information about the world's trouble spots and foreign cultures. The audience for comics carnet is similar to that of World Music in the way both are marketed to "grownups not adolescents" (Frith, 2000: 306). The consumers of these graphic novels are educated, relatively wealthy and often well-traveled public. The audience, as in the case of world music, is a "very sophisticated young middle-class public... with a progressive interest in what's going on in politics, economics etc. many of whom are engaged in the peace movement, environments, etc." (Ling, 2003: 239). In Canada, the Vancouver-based Raincoast Books has been active in supporting and distributing the major graphic novel publishers such as Drawn and Quarterly and Fantagraphics. Satrapi's graphic novels are published and marketed internationally by Random House. In the past five years, comics carnet has been more widely distributed and can be purchased from a variety of vendors ranging from large bookstore chains such as Chapters, to independent bookstores and comic book shops.

In most bookstores, comics carnet is displayed in the graphic novel section. This section is usually divided into the following subcategories: a) fantasy and superhero titles published in full color by the mainstream publishers such as DC, Darkhorse, Image and Marvel, b) Anime and Manga imported from Japan and c) the 'alternative' graphic novel section. Comics carnet can be found in the alternative category with other monochromatic graphic novels aimed at mature readers. The content of Satrapi's work makes her autobiographical texts an exception. Her graphic novels are occasionally displayed in the cultural studies or women's studies section of a bookstore.

Analysis of Comics Carnet Packaging

To differentiate their products from other graphic novels on the shelves, the publishers of comics carnet make very conscious decisions related to packaging: i.e. bindings and cover graphics. The packaging of these graphic novels indicates what initial impressions the publishers wish to make on the reader. How are they bound? What illustrations are used on the cover? What colors are chosen and why? What type of font is used for the text? Is the graphic novel printed in full color, black and white or monochrome? What possible mood is conveyed through these choices? The answer to the above questions helps illustrate what view of the East is presented to potential consumers.

Joe Sacco's *Palestine* was first published in hardcover in 1995. It has since been reissued in paperback in a standard comic book size: 10.7 by 7.1 inches. The cover is printed on a glossy cover stock. The color scheme is monochrome in warm sepia tones. The title text is san serif and is printed in a warm ochre color. The other type is in yellow. In the lower right hand corner is the following quote from Edward Said: "Gripping ... a political and aesthetic work of extraordinary originality." The cover illustration is a bird's eye view of a Palestinian refugee camp with its squalid living conditions. The cover graphic is intended to grab the reader's attention. Said's quote read in conjunction with the illustration suggests that Sacco's text addresses the gritty reality of Palestine and refutes the stereotypical representations of the Holy Land found in most travel literature.

Craig Thompson's *Carnet de Voyage* (2004) evokes romantic notions of travel. The volume's intimate size, 5.5 by 7.5 inches, and paperback binding make reference to an artist's journal or sketchbook. The cover is in color, using warm tones and a cool

cerulean blue printed on a stock with a matte finish. We are presented with an image of the artist in a long coat, carrying a suitcase, wandering down a picturesque Paris street. We are at street level and encounter the artist/author head on. The back cover has a photograph of the author and makes visual reference to a passport. All of these images point to the volume as a personal record that documents cartoonist's travels and suggest the excitement and glamour of travel.

Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea (2005) by Guy Delisle is a hardcover volume. It is also a modest size: 6.42 x 8.72 inches. The cover is a matte black with an embossed graphic of a woman holding a butterfly net. The elegant image implies we are dealing with an ethnographic account. Ethnographers, like entomologists gather specimens from foreign lands, only in the form of words and images. The dust jacket's color scheme of white, black, Venetian red and yellow ochre evoke an Oriental opulence. The font used is san-serif with the author's name and subtitle in yellow ochre on a white background. The graphic novel's title is in a larger size font in Venetian Red. The graphic on dust jacket reproduces an image found in the text. We see rows of girls, with forced smiles, playing the accordion. We are looking down upon them from above. The illustration situates the viewer in a position of power; surveying identically attired Oriental women performing for the reader. Said and Shohat and Stam (1994) note that traditional Eurocentric discourse implies the political and cultural superiority of the West over the East. This is expressed in visual terms. On the back cover we see a subtle reproduction of an image of two young workers; one holding a hammer, the other holding a rifle on a Venetian Red background. This graphic brings to mind propaganda posters

traditionally associated in the West with communist and socialist regimes. In a twelve point Times Roman font, we have a quote from *Foreign Affairs* magazine that summarizes *Pyongyang's* contents. Above this quote is small excerpt from the graphic novel. We see a picture of the author gazing out a bus window at an urban landscape. The next panel presents some summary images of the city and the cartoonist's comment "Everything is very clean. Too clean in fact". The dust jacket's images and text all suggest to a potential reader that Pyongyang is an exotic yet ominous place.

Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return* (2004) is an intimate size: 4.68 by 8.83 inches. The cover is pale blue with the volume's title and author's name in white. The font reminds the viewer of a hand printed wood block. The subtitle is printed in gold. There is an accent of red in the small hand-drawn self-portrait of the artist in a cameo format. As the only illustration, it tells the reader that this is an autobiography. A decorative border in black and gold frames the cover, and is repeated on the back cover with various comments by reviewers reproduced. These elements make reference to Satrapi's Iranian heritage and suggest a precious, hand-made quality appropriate for a personal memoir.

Visual Style and Use of the Comics Language

The formal analysis of visual and textual elements in comics carnet is driven by a number of associated questions. What style has the author artist/ chosen to use? Is it a realistic, expressionistic or a cartoon style? Has the artist chosen to work in pen, brush, wash or a combination of both? How have the cartoonists designed and used frames,

panels and splash pages in the graphic novel? Have they followed the conventional grid layout or do they employ a more experimental approach? Do they favor a particular point view? Does the artist favor close-ups, mid-range views or long distance shots? What is the relationship between the size and shape of the panels and how the text is written?

In terms of technique, attention to detail and expressive distortion, Sacco's style is reminiscent of the work of Pieter Brueghel, the Flemish engraver and painter who documented European peasant life in the mid-1660s (Appendix 2). By working primarily in pen and ink, Sacco uses stipple and cross-hatching to create value and texture visually similar to Brueghel's engravings. The graphic novel is printed in black and white except on the chapter frontispieces that are illustrated with details from a panel in the chapter. Sacco uses hand-lettered text only and text boxes are arranged in a variety of angles to create a dynamic rhythm when read. For titles, Sacco uses much larger text to grab the reader's attention. The cartoonist's effective use of splash pages increases the dramatic effect. The graphic novelist uses a wide variety of approaches to his page layouts. For example on pages 107 to 113 Sacco works with a standard grid format, but he often employs a montage of skewed panels to suggest conflict, movement and tension as found on page 123. The artist employs multiple points of view on the same page for maximum expressive effect and to create a sense of the reader being in the heart of the action (Sacco, 2001: 55). A sense of threat is conveyed when the reader is required to look up at someone (Sacco, 2001: 37). In other instances when people speak to the reader directly, it is as if Sacco is using a handheld camcorder for an over the shoulder shot. At other times the artist provides the reader with a more omniscient bird's eye view. Of all the graphic

novelists in the study, Sacco's approach most closely replicates the visual modes of documentary film.

Thompson's realistic style is very reminiscent of Milton Caniff's work (Appendix 4). He uses a calligraphic brush pen to create his images and his graphic novel reads more like a sketchbook/journal than a standard comic. Thompson avoids the grid layout. His pages are more organic, without a drawn frame separating the images and with many full-page illustrations throughout the graphic novel. He uses hand-lettered text to describe personal observations augmented by a graphic. When he does employ speech balloons it is primarily to document his own thoughts and feelings. Thompson reproduces what John Urry has identified as 'the tourist gaze' (as cited in Lister and Wells, 2001: 9). The graphic novelist focuses primarily on exotic details and incorporates long distant views of scenic landscapes and picturesque architectural landmarks.

Delisle's style is expressionist (Appendix 1). He works in a simplified cartoon style using pen, ink and crayon to provide tonal variation. *Pyongyang* is printed in monochrome with a wide range of tonal values. This creates a bleak mood. Delisle's panels follow the grid format with little variation, his compositions are very static with few diagonals and he uses hand-lettered text. Delisle's viewpoint is primarily mid-range to long distance shots with a few bird's eye view depictions. These imply that the cartoonist is on the sidelines, a detached observer of North Korean culture.

Satrapi's simplified iconographic style is reminiscent of the classic work of James Thurber (Appendix 3). She often uses pattern and arabesque that also suggests the Islamic-inspired brushwork of Matisse. Her calligraphic brushwork creates stark black

and white images. Satrapi uses variations of the standard grid format that range between seven to nine panels per page. There are very few splash pages in *Persepolis 2* and it uses hand-lettered text. Satrapi's minimal style with mid-range to long distance shots and few close-ups implies that like Delisle, she is working from a distance. She is removed in time and space and relies upon memory to recreate the past.

The comparative analysis of visual style and the use of comics formal language reveal some of the differences between the American and French comics tradition. Sacco and Thompson both use a realistic style and strive for accuracy but for different reasons. As a journalist, Sacco wishes to support and authenticate his text. His inventive page layouts, deployment of text and multiple viewpoints show the influence of documentary filmmakers and CNN journalism. As a travel writer, Thompson wishes to capture the 'exotic', picturesque details of Morocco. In comparison, Delisle and Satrapi work in a more minimal iconographic style that shifts emphasis to the importance of the narrative. They both present a more detached viewpoint that rarely deviates from the standard panel grid layout. These two cartoonists work primarily from memory and seek to render the essence of their experience.

Representation of Self

Each artist/author of these texts represents and situates themselves in relation to the culture being described. Crapanzano's (1986) discussion of the ethnographer's role as a translator between cultures is pertinent here. The creators of comics carnet, like ethnographers, employ various visual and literary styles and a particular viewpoint to

understand, decode and interpret other cultures and societies. Hatfield (2005) states that cartoonists may choose from one of many expressive conventions to illustrate their own likeness. Their visual and verbal self-representation creates a dynamic tension between inner experience and its outward, visual expression (Hatfield, 2005: 117). The graphic novels being studied each possess features associated with specific literary genres and their creators' represent themselves in conformity with the conventions of this genre.

Joe Sacco shows himself dressed casually with a camera bag slung over his shoulder. The one feature that sets him apart is the way Sacco visually renders his eyeglasses. The artist's eyeglasses are drawn as blank circular shapes, unlike others who wear eyewear in the novel. We never see the artist's eyes. This visual device suggests that Sacco neutrally records what he sees, like the camera's mechanical eye. As a journalist the cartoonist wishes to be seen as striving for objectivity and truth.

Thompson, on the other hand, shows himself to be the typical artist-cum-tourist/traveler seeking out the picturesque and the exotic. As Melton (2005) and Groom (2005) suggest, tourists are seen as passive explorers who sign up for an itinerary and wait for experiences to come to them. By definition, tourists are always viewed as outsiders who can never have an 'authentic' experience of a culture. This contrasts with the 'traveler' who is an active participant seeking adventure. The traveler often suffers discomfort but is well rewarded with 'real' insights. This is a powerful, romantic image that is much more appealing to those who go abroad. Thompson might identify himself as a traveler, but even though he says that he wants an authentic experience of the local for the most part he remains an 'outsider'. Thompson is often critical of Morocco.

Documenting his prepackaged camel trek, he brings the reader's attention to the 'gamey meal' he ate, the desert's chill and his case of 'camel bowels' (Thompson, 2004: 56-57). Thompson is the most self-absorbed of the artists in this sample. He documents his self-pitying moods and then mocks himself with a strange cartoon character, who reminds him that there are others much worse off (Thompson, 2004: 86-87). Thompson depicts himself in a casual manner, dressed comfortably in tourist garb: a short sleeved shirt, trousers, and carrying a shoulder bag for his sketchbook and drawing materials. Thompson often portrays himself in front of a scenic view; his drawings are composed like a tourist snapshot. In three instances we see the artist drawing on location. In this way, Thompson positions himself as the artist/traveler, visually consuming the 'exotic' and picturesque locales he visits.

While Thompson fits the mold of the travel writer, Delisle can be compared to the ethnographic archetype that Mary Louise Pratt (1986: 36) identifies as the castaway or captive. Being a captive in a culture is idyllic for the ethnographer because he is not simply a traveler passing through but instead is an ideal participant/observer (Pratt, 1986: 38). Delisle wishes to truly know North Korean culture, but is limited by his linguistic abilities and government control over his freedom to travel and interact with North Koreans. He becomes the detached ethnographer recording what he sees and experiences, and acknowledges in a humorous manner how, during his stay in North Korea, he is in a sense a captive. Delisle, (2005: 43) makes reference to the 1960s TV cult classic *The Prisoner* portraying himself as 'Number Six', trapped in 'The Village' under continuous surveillance, whose attempts to escape were continually thwarted. He is forever the

'outsider' looking in, and identifies himself as a 'Foreign Capitalist' (Delisle, 2005: 34). He sets himself apart from the North Korean cadre of comrades. Delisle's situation is not the idealistic mode of captivity as suggested by Pratt, for he is never allowed to become a full participant in North Korean culture. As a migrant worker, Delisle is a member of Appadurai's ethnoscape, involved in the production of the global mediascape. He functions as a twenty-first century colonial overseer managing the production of animation, produced for consumption by foreign audiences.

Satrapi like Sacco, Thompson and Delisle belongs to the global ethnoscape. She is part of the diaspora that left Iran to escape the repressive revolutionary regime. Clifford states that travel histories need to be articulated along gender lines since women's experiences are distinct from those of men (Clifford, 1997: 5). *Persepolis 2* is an excellent example. Autobiographical in nature, *Persepolis 2* describes Satrapi's life as a young teenage girl studying in Vienna and her subsequent return to post-revolutionary Iran. Satrapi is a castaway upon the shores of Western culture. Multilingual, she has lived in both Eastern and Western cultures and is able to traverse between them. Thursby (2005) talks about the metaphorical relationship between travel writing and life writing as both involve a journey. The author's outward journey of travel accompanies an inward journey. In Satrapi's case, she documents her coming of age while she travels in both the West and the East. Bjorklund (1998: 16) notes that autobiographers endeavor to strategically represent the self. Satrapi represents herself as an 'outsider' in both Western and Eastern contexts. She situates herself as a rebellious nonconformist by nature, one who continually challenges and questions the constraints of both Iranian and European

culture. Unlike the other authors who employ photographs, drawings and notes from the present, Satrapi uses her own memories as the basis of a narrative that spans a period of years, not simply months or weeks. Compared to the more static representations of her fellow graphic novelists who are speaking with a mature adult voice, Satrapi's self is more fluid. Throughout the graphic novel her self-portrait changes according to her age and circumstances of her life. For example on pages 35 and 36, she visually represents the mental and physical transformations that occur during her transition from adolescence to womanhood. Satrapi describes the depression and alienation she felt upon her return to Iran. The artist draws herself as a blank featureless silhouette on a black background and writes: "I was nothing. I was a westerner in Iran, an Iranian in the west. I had no identity" (Satrapi, 2004: 118). With this statement Satrapi acknowledges her unique predicament of being able to bridge both cultures but not feeling home in either. She inhabits the Third Space as her narrative tells the tale of a journey through time and space between two distinct cultural spaces over a number of years. In real terms, Satrapi articulates the experiences and gives voice to the feelings and complex challenges that confront the diaspora communities in Appadurai's ethnoscapes.

Representation of Place

Each of the authors represents themselves in a different manner, expressing a different point of view and employing many of the conventions associated with related literary genres. The common thread is that all four depict a locale that the West has defined as belonging to the East. The East that these artists visit ranges from the Middle

East of Morocco, Palestine and Iran to the Far East of North Korea. Said (1978) and Shohat and Stam (1994) have discussed how the landscape of the East is represented in a particular manner in Western media. Do these graphic novelists resort to 'exotic' stereotypes to describe the lands they visit? Is place represented as contemporary or is it romanticized? Are we presented only with tourist views or are we shown landscapes and places that do not fit this notion?

Joe Sacco avoids the picturesque postcard views associated with the Holy Land and instead presents very detailed drawings that have a documentary feel to them. On page 217, he depicts the horrific crowded conditions of the Jabalia Refugee Camp showing the dilapidated homes and the forest of TV aerials reaching into the sky. We see pedestrians and vehicles navigating the muddy streets along with a donkey pulling a cart. Sacco provides the following commentary: "We've hitched a lift... a donkey cart. Another refugee camp experience... Good for the comic, maybe a splash page" (Sacco, 2001: 217). Unlike most journalists, Sacco is transparent about the fact that he is constructing and presenting a particular point of view to the reader. This self-revelation on the author's part may be a strategy to more fully engage his reader. It is an attempt to guarantee that his graphic novel is an 'authentic' description of Palestine. Sacco depicts Israel as the polar opposite of Palestine. Tel Aviv is shown as a modern, clean, dynamic, peaceful urban city filled with well-dressed people enjoying the beach and partaking of café life. The closest Sacco gets to presenting the picturesque tourist stereotypes of Israel can be found on pages 253 to 257 when he accompanies his Israeli acquaintance Naomi through the Arab quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. His companion, however, is unnerved

by the experience. For her it is a 'forbidden zone' that she normally does not enter. In this sequence Sacco challenges the West's vision of the East as ancient and unchanging (Said 1978: 96). He shows the reader a view of an Arab village that has been recently occupied by Israeli settlers (Sacco, 2001: 254). The reader is made aware of the fact what the West views as a picturesque, timeless landscape is still being contested. The political control and ownership of these places is in flux. Sacco reveals the tensions that do not normally accompany the postcard view.

While Sacco shuns the stereotypical representations of the Holy Land, Thompson's *Carnet de Voyage* abounds with the exotic imagery found in the traditional travelogue and guidebooks to Morocco. Thompson focuses on the market, its vendors, architecture, famous landmarks, picturesque details and scenic views (Thompson, 2004: 95). For example on pages 89 to 92, we are presented with street views and portraits of the various merchants and their wares. On pages 68 and 69 he depicts the fishermen, their boats and their catch. If we compare Thompson's graphic novel to the journal/sketchbooks kept by the nineteenth century French Romantic artist Delacroix, during his trip to Morocco in 1832, we would see great similarities. Delacroix, one of the originators of an 'Orientalist' visual discourse, created many of the stereotypical images of Morocco that Thompson employs. The sights, smells and sounds of Morocco cause Thompson great personal discomfort. Morocco for him is "Total CHAOS" (Thompson, 2004: 31). He observes that in Fez, "there is literally BLOOD flowing through the street gutters" (Thompson, 2004: 89). The East, as Thompson describes it, is an example of what Shohat and Stam label 'the imaginary Orient'. The Orient is primal and primitive.

The cities of the East are chaotic; their streets are threatening and filled with the teeming masses of humanity. At the end of his stay in Morocco Thompson meets Ahmed, a professor of Arabic language who urges the author to “not let the hustle of the medina mar my opinion of Arabic people” (Thompson, 2004: 103). Thompson acknowledges that his perceptions of Morocco may be prejudiced due to his limited experience and admits that he was seeking the exotic (Thompson, 2004: 44). As Said (1978: 93) notes, what is written about the East in travel literature creates expectations in the reader who, when confronted with the Orient’s reality, endeavors to make it conform to the written text. Thompson came to Morocco expecting to find an ‘exotic’ land described in travel literature. His graphic novel reinforces this vision of Morocco.

Delisle’s limited linguistic capabilities force him to reach conclusions based primarily upon what he visually observes. However as Rose (2001: 6) concludes, visual images are not simply transparent windows onto the world but are also a tool for interpreting and representing experience. Delisle is no exception, and like Thompson in Morocco, he arrives in Pyongyang with a predetermined set of assumptions about North Korea. Delisle makes reference to George Orwell’s *1984*, which he smuggled into Pyongyang as the perfect “book that comes to mind for a stay in North Korea” (Delisle, 2005: 40). Delisle’s keen observations reinforce this perception in visual and verbal terms. The cartoonist uses a generic cartoon style to draw and model buildings, vehicles, even people to give the city a bland, cookie-cutter feel. Delisle’s approach contrasts with the gritty realism we find in Sacco’s *Palestine* or the lush calligraphic detail of Thompson’s renderings of Morocco. Delisle uses splash pages to great effect, to highlight

a particular aspect of Pyongyang that has caught his fancy. Employing fine line work and subtle grey washes these large panels with their rounded corners suggest old nineteenth century daguerreotypes. Delisle represents Pyongyang as a city filled with failed utopian projects, museums devoted to propaganda and a gray totalitarian architecture. The dull uniformity of Pyongyang suggests an oppressive, sterile environment where everything is strictly controlled and lacks individual difference and choice. The artist records what his guide calls 'volunteers' hard at work on a variety of tasks such as maintaining roads, painting bridges and watering lawns. Delisle also notes the omnipresence of the state's propaganda apparatus. For example when enjoying the beauty of the countryside, on one of the few occasions he is able to leave the city, Delisle is horrified to discover a rock wall emblazoned with a patriotic message (Delisle, 2005: 109). North Korea is represented by Delisle as the physical embodiment of Orwell's totalitarian state. As in Thompson's case, the text predetermines the visitor's reality.

Having resided in West and the East, Satrapi presents her reader with a more nuanced view than the other graphic novelists in my study. Satrapi works from memory and the result is that her depictions of place often have minimal detail and only key features are highlighted. Satrapi presents her readers with a pared down depiction of a Catholic church that she visited on Christmas Eve with her roommate's family (Satrapi, 2004: 56). We see a crucifix, the Virgin Mary, the choir and pillars all rendered in a stark simple manner. Satrapi's view of the West is often not very flattering. She depicts her hardships while living on the streets of Vienna after a failed relationship. The penniless author searches for food in the trash (Satrapi, 2004: 85). Eventually caught riding the

trains she is evicted and sleeps on the street, a dangerous thing for a young girl. Satrapi's depiction of the East highlights positive and negative aspects. When she returns to Iran, her parent's home is seen as warm and reassuring, full of love, while the exterior world of the city is threatening. Upon her return, Satrapi decides to go for a walk in Tehran. On page 97, Satrapi uses expressionist images to show the city towering menacingly over the artist. We see her diminutive silhouette strolling over an image of skulls: "I felt as though I were walking through a cemetery... surrounded by the victims of a war I had fled" (Satrapi, 2004: 97). In post-revolutionary Iran the streets are never a safe place for a woman. Females may be accosted at anytime by the revolutionary guard and censured for their dress or behavior. Satrapi notes that many Iranians lived a double life. Inside their homes, they were free to be themselves, criticizing the state, and engaging in outlawed behaviors and activities. On the street, behavior and dress were strictly controlled (Satrapi, 2004: 151). Satrapi's Iran is a place where public and personal spaces are sharply differentiated. The state decides what it deems acceptable behavior and may intrude upon one's private space. For example, Satrapi depicts the arrest of her and her friends by the Revolutionary Guard for attending a party where both genders freely mingle (Satrapi, 2004: 152-156). In *Persepolis 2*, Satrapi represents the East as possessing endearing qualities. Before her final departure from Iran, Satrapi celebrates the natural beauty of Iran as she wanders the mountains surrounding Tehran. Satrapi visits the Caspian Sea with her grandmother, where she breathes in "that very special air that doesn't exist anywhere else" (Satrapi, 2004: 186). As a result of dwelling in both East and West Satrapi possesses what Shohat and Stam (1994: 48) have termed a

'polycentric vision'. East and West for Satrapi are not stark polar opposites. She views place from multiple vantage points simultaneously in a manner that challenges one-dimensional stereotypical representations.

Representation of the Other

The question of whether or not the creators of comics can resort to the use of stereotypes when representing place applies equally to how they portray the inhabitants of the country they are visiting. Eisner (1996: 17) notes that the graphic novelist uses a symbolic language consisting of simplified images of people and their behavior in order to communicate with their reader. Since graphic novels are now distributed globally, Eisner observes that a cartoonist must be conversant with what is universally understood. He elaborates: "each society has its own ingrown set of accepted stereotypes. But there are those that transcend cultural boundaries" (Eisner, 1997: 19). Hall's insights concerning the decoding of stereotypes come to the fore when discussing how the creators of comics can represent people outside their culture. Hall notes that the use of stereotypes becomes very problematic when dealing with representations of the gendered, racial, and cultural Other. Stereotypes exclude and reduce subjects to a few "simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped characteristics", fix difference and define power relations (Hall 1997: 258). As part of Appadurai's global mediascape, to what extent does comics can't representation of the non-Western Other reinforce traditional Eurocentric hegemonic discourses? Do the artist/authors draw upon Western cultural stereotypes when representing people of a different race, gender or cultural background? How does

the cartoonist describe his interactions with the natives? Do we hear other points of view from native speakers? Are we presented with one-dimensional portrayals or more complex depictions? Is Bhabha's model of the Third Space relevant to our analysis of who speaks for the Other?

One of the most prevalent forms of the Other has been the 'colonial exotic' female (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 326). Forbidden yet desired, the non-Western woman has become a fetish object of European male fantasies. One of the most enduring stereotypes in Western popular culture has been the 'veiled woman' of Arab culture (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 321). She has intrigued and fascinated Caucasian male visitors from the West for centuries:

The orient is ... sexualized through the recurrent figure of the veiled woman, whose mysterious inaccessibility, mirroring that of the orient itself, requires Western unveiling to be understood (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 148-149).

In a similar manner, women of Asiatic origin have been represented in popular media as alluring and dangerous, desired and feared. Both 'woman' and 'native' are seen as threatening and "must be controlled through the systematic unearthing of the hidden" (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 150). A close study will reveal the graphic novelist's unspoken assumptions and hidden attitudes to gender and to non-European cultures.

In *Palestine*, Sacco presents the reader with a number of different portraits of women that challenge Eurocentric stereotypes. In true journalistic fashion, Sacco records a number of short interviews with a variety of Palestinian women. Early on in the graphic novel, he introduces us to a Palestinian woman who, in the author's words, is "one tough cookie" (Sacco, 2001: 97). The cartoonist draws her smoking a cigarette; while she

narrates her 18-day stay in “Jerusalem’s notorious Russian Compound, courtesy of the Shin Bet”, the Israeli secret police (Sacco, 2001: 97). Besides the physical abuse she endured:

The Shin Bet reckoned they could play the twin cards of gender and Arab culture against her... They implied a long imprisonment would ruin her marriage prospects... And they threatened rape, she says... they accused her of using a trip overseas to find sexual partners... Once she’d made clear they couldn’t intimidate her sexually, the Shin Bet abandoned that tack – and eventually the interrogation itself (Sacco, 2001, 98 -99).

This woman’s determination, resiliency, and strength in this situation challenge traditional notions of women being the weaker sex. At the end of chapter five, Sacco devotes nine pages to document the complex situation facing Palestinian women. We meet two executive members of the Palestinian Federation of Women’s Action Committee who discuss some of the challenges they face in educating women about their economic and legal rights. We hear from Rita, a Catholic, who in Sacco’s words, is “philosophical about the slow road to societal change. Her colleague, Muna, a non-practicing Muslim is more skeptical about using Islamic law to advance women’s rights” due to irreconcilable differences and beliefs of Arab culture (Sacco, 2001: 135). Both women voice concerns about being doubly oppressed:

While the intifada fosters discussion of social change... Feminists here talk about the lesson of the Algerian revolution where women fought alongside men but were pushed back into traditional roles once the French were defeated (Sacco, 2001: 136).

Sacco reveals how ethnicity and culture exacerbate the challenges Palestinian women face. He contrasts images of university educated women in Western dress with those wearing the hijab. In the segment titled ‘HIJAB’ Sacco, an educated European male

admits he cannot comprehend why women wear the hijab. For him this mode of dress is, “nondescript, I blank out most all the women who wear it, they’re just shapes to me, ciphers, like pigeons moving along the sidewalk” (Sacco, 2001: 137). Sacco visually reinforces this lack of comprehension in the splash panel. From a bird’s eye viewpoint we see the cartoonist on the street with over two dozen women wearing the hijab, their backs to both Sacco and the reader. Sacco shows how the hijab has made these women undifferentiated and invisible to his Western male gaze. Sacco admits that he is “stunned, shocked, I mean, I didn’t know such life forms could initiate contact” when while riding in a taxi, a young woman wearing a hijab starts asking him questions in fluent English (Sacco, 2001: 137). Sacco admits his cultural bias and lack of understanding when he acknowledges “the hijab was more my problem than hers”. Sacco further elaborates that wearing the hijab is a nexus point of discussion in Palestine and “throws the relationship of the intifada, Islam and women into some relief” (Sacco, 2001: 137). He gives a brief history of why wearing the hijab was adopted and then enforced with violence by “ Hamas, the extremist Islamic group which rivals the secular PLO” (Sacco, 2001: 138). Sacco then records interviews with Muslim feminists in Gaza Town and is most shocked and puzzled when he talks with “two attractive young women decked out with cosmetics” who seem to counter everything he has seen in Gaza. They tell Sacco: “I want to believe strongly enough to wear the hijab always” for religious reasons (Sacco, 2001: 140). Sacco once again acknowledges the cultural divide between him and these women. He admits to the “gulf between us... I realize then I’ve forgotten what it’s like to have faith” (Sacco, 2001: 140). To emphasize his journalistic sensitivity Sacco, on the last page of

this chapter, remarks that in the end he is 'Still One of the Boys'. Sacco is visiting a blind man who apologises to his two guests that he cannot offer them tea as one wife is ill and the other is visiting family. He muses that he will "have to go out and get another wife" (Sacco, 2001: 141). All three men laugh hysterically. Sacco (141) then chimes in, "If you marry her within the hour, maybe you can get lunch". Again all laugh and Sacco points out that in the patriarchal Palestinian culture women are seen as domestic chattel and demeaned in the end. The artist/author shows that men still have the last laugh at the expense of women.

Thompson, of all the graphic novelists in this study, has the least contact with Eastern women due to barriers of language and his position as a European male traveler/tourist. As in his representation of place, Thompson depicts Muslim women in a generic manner. For example on page 43, in the top panel, the artist has faithfully reproduced 'Variations in women's dress'. We see the majority wearing variations of the hijab to one lone female dressed in jeans and a tank top. Thompson provides no written commentary about his thoughts on this matter. When the artist does write down his thoughts, they are very cursory observations. On page 61 in a square word balloon with an arrow pointing to a sketch Thompson remarks, "The BEDOUIN women look like *NINJAS!* [my italics]". The artist uses one stereotype to refer to a woman outside of his cultural experience. Hall notes that visual representations of 'otherness' gain meaning in context. Images accumulate meanings or juxtapose meanings against each other across a "variety of texts and media" (Hall 1997: 232). On the same page documenting the Berber women's apparel, Thompson as ethnographer presents the reader with a front, side and

back views and the appropriate colorful travelogue description (Thompson, 2004: 61). Thompson symbolically represents veiled women as the sensual exotic Other. On page 75, Thompson has drawn a Bedouin woman, her dark clothed form mirrored in a puddle. Beside this mysterious clothed female is a black cat, traditionally a symbol of female sexuality. For Thompson, Moroccan women are an enigma. This is in stark contrast to Thompson's representations of the female European tourists he encounters. He tends to showcase the beauty of the Western female and often includes portraits of them. For example on pages 66 and 67 Thompson has drawn three portraits of Beatrice a fellow traveler. She is described in much more visual and verbal detail than any of the Moroccan women the artist meets. Thompson acknowledges that "the separation of the sexes being a frustrating element of Moroccan culture" (2004: 84). However, like Sacco, he does have an experience where a young woman wearing the hijab initiates conversation.

While Sacco describes women wearing the hijab as 'pigeons', Thompson refers to the young women as a 'gaggle' or a flock of geese. Veiled women are like birds, just part of the scenery of the street. For Sacco and Thompson, they become ciphers and nonentities, not worthy of notice. However when conversing with 'one of the guys' Thompson finally penetrates the façade of the exotic veneer that Morocco presents to tourists and travelers when he makes the acquaintance of Driss, a lamp seller who has a stall in the market. According to Thompson; "Driss is fluent in English" and "is Muslim, but in a casual/personal way" (Thompson, 2004: 90). Thompson's portrait of Driss shows the lamp seller donning a western-style windbreaker and wearing an Adidas ball cap. Beneath the drawing's date, the artist has noted that the music playing in the background

is by 'CAT STEVENS', a successful British pop star of the 1970s who later converted to Islam. Due to Driss's linguistic abilities, Thompson is able to bridge the isolation he has experienced in Morocco and engage in a cross-cultural dialogue. Later that day, Thompson is invited to dinner with Driss's family. On page 94, Thompson describes their cramped living quarters and documents examples of Appadurai's mediascapes and their global flow, as they view "BOLLYWOOD and Bob Marley videos" (Thompson, 2004: 94). Driss and his family consume transcultural examples of global popular culture, which are a far cry from the traditional Arabic or Moroccan folk music. Recording his conversation with Driss is one of the few instances in *Carnet de Voyage* where Thompson uses word balloons. Driss gesticulates with his raised left hand to his wife who is busily preparing the meal. Her back is towards us, the viewer. Driss states that women have no value, but are domestic chattel who should obey their husband and take care of family and home (Thompson, 2004: 94). Thompson shocked at this revelation asks: "You really BELIEVE that?" Driss replies: "Yes. It is the LAW of ISLAM" (Thompson, 2004: 94). Thompson responds:

I tell him women and men are entirely equal and that society creates inequalities. He agrees, but then says that men are in control. He says he'll find me a Moroccan wife (Thompson, 2004: 94).

Driss emphatically states: "A WOMAN FOR THE HOME. 100% QUALITY. TO COOK AND CLEAN. NOT WEAR JEANS & WALK IN THE STREETS SHOWING OFF HER BODY" (Thompson, 2004: 94). For Driss, a woman who wears Western attire, as seen on page 43, is inferior. According to a double standard, a male like Driss may enjoy Western music and wear Western dress that denotes an embrace of 'Western' attitudes.

But appearances can be deceiving. Bhabha (1995: 206) notes that it is at the “boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs misappropriated”. Despite his statements about being a Muslim in a ‘casual/personal way’, Driss subscribes to rigid traditional values regarding women. By documenting this conversation, Thompson records some of the complexities and contradictions of modern Morocco that challenge the exotic travelogue images.

In *Persepolis 2* Satrapi provides the most astute understanding of the role that restrictions on female attire can play in culture. However sympathetic Sacco and Thompson may be in describing the plight of women, Satrapi speaks to us from a lived experience beneath the veil. For Satrapi, the veil is a symbol of repression and limitation which she must accept if she is to function in Iranian culture. When she decides to return to her homeland she writes; “I again put on my veil...and so much for my individual and social liberties” (Satrapi, 2004: 91). Satrapi describes how the Iranian regime seeks to control how women dress and how women negotiate and resist this imposition. Upon her arrival in Iran, a fellow student, Shouka knows that Satrapi has lived abroad simply by the manner Satrapi dons her Maghnaeh, hooded headscarf. She tells Satrapi that: “You wear it like a beginner” (Satrapi, 2004: 139). In the following panel, we see Satrapi wearing her Maghnaeh, smiling, her hands are raised pointing to a diagram. On the left we see a side view in which “not a hair shows in profile” but when you meet the person face to face “you see tufts from the front” (Satrapi, 2004: 139). Satrapi observes; “Nevertheless, things were evolving... year by year, women were winning an eighth of an inch of hair and losing an inch of veil”. On page 140 in the top panel, Satrapi

illustrates the variations on the approved modes of female dress with an x-ray view of what is concealed. Unlike Sacco or Thompson who see the veiled body as simply shapeless, a cultural insider can read the subtle differences and meanings. Satrapi writes:

With practice, even though they were covered from head to foot, you got to the point where you could guess their shape, the way they wore their hair and even their political opinions (Satrapi, 2004: 140).

Satrapi also discusses the role of dress as a means of resistance. She states that after many high school and college students had been executed and imprisoned that instead of voicing political opinions, resistance to the regime became more discreet as “it hinged on the little details. To our leaders, the smallest thing could be a subject of subversion... In short... everything was a pretext to arrest us” (Satrapi, 2004: 148).

Satrapi observes that the Iranian regime used fear as a method to prevent questioning and personal reflection. If a woman left her home more concerned about whether or not her appearance was acceptable she would not ask such questions as: “Where is my freedom of thought? Where is my freedom of speech? My life, is it livable? What’s going on in the political prisons?” (Satrapi, 2004: 148). The result of this repression, was that for women; “showing your hair or putting on make-up logically became acts of rebellion” (Satrapi, 2004: 148). When Satrapi first arrives in Iran and meets her childhood friends she is shocked that “they all looked like the heroines of American T.V. series, ready to get married at the drop of a hat, if opportunity presented itself” (Satrapi, 2004: 105). Satrapi portrays her friends as glamorous beauty queens. At first she finds them very superficial. In due course Satrapi concludes that when “something is forbidden it takes on disproportionate importance” (Satrapi, 2004: 105).

She learns “that making themselves up and wanting to follow Western ways was an act of resistance on their part” (Satrapi, 2004: 105). Satrapi documents how a ‘Western stereotype’ of femininity is appropriated and used as a tool to resist the orthodox hegemonic discourse of the Iranian State.

Persepolis 2 illuminates the limits of the Orientalist discourse found in Western art and literature surrounding the ‘exotic veiled woman’ who supposedly inhabits the ‘harem’. This all-female space has been seen in the West as a “masculinist utopia of sexual omnipotence” or as a “privileged site of female interaction and even of Sapphic fantasy” (Shohat and Stam, 1993: 161-163). Like Thompson, Satrapi discovers that the adoption of Western dress does not mean the embracing of Western mores and values. Satrapi, who as a young teenager in the West was horrified by Western attitudes towards sex, now shocks her Iranian girlfriends. On a ski trip she and her childhood friends discuss their sexual experiences. When Satrapi admits she has had a few sexual experiences, her companion responds angrily: “So, what’s the difference between you and a whore???” (Satrapi, 2004: 116). Satrapi suggests that the adoption of Western modes of dress, which can be read as a symbol of modernity and resistance, is contradicted by the wearer’s traditional belief system.

While Satrapi represents the ‘Eastern’ woman from a lived experience ‘inside’ an Eastern culture, Delisle is perennially on the outside looking in. His interaction with the opposite sex is limited due to circumstances of language and position. The insights he presents in *Pyongyang* about women’s feelings and status are based on conjecture from his observations. There is a satirical note to Delisle’s observations of North Korean

women. On page 134, he devotes the top four panels to his insights on North Korean female attire. Like Sacco and Thompson, Delisle depicts women as an undifferentiated mass, indistinguishable from one another. Like a true ethnographer, Delisle then draws our attention to the significant details of female dress that have caught his attention. As a Western male Delisle is struck by the lack of variety and the desexualized nature of North Korean women's apparel. The contrast between how Korean and the few foreign women dress is emphasized on page 84. While Delisle and his fellow animator David wait for an elevator, a long haired girl in a short dress strides past the pair. Delisle informs David that she is Chinese (Delisle, 2005: 84). This sequence while reinforcing a stereotype of the 'sexual exotic oriental woman' is illuminating; as it draws the reader's attention to the variations of dress found in Communist countries of the Far East. China's dress code is more liberal while North Korea is more conservative. Delisle, like Sacco, depicts women engaged in a wide variety of occupations. This contrasts sharply with Thompson and Satrapi who show women working only in the home. Sacco and Delisle demonstrate that women in the East are involved in their societies in numerous ways.

Delisle's inability to speak Korean proves to be a source of frustration in his few interactions with members of the opposite sex. The cartoonist's depiction of his interactions with his ever-smiling female aide shows her almost desperate desire to please her foreign, male supervisor (Delisle, 2005: 27-28). Delisle notes that the North Korean government, to show foreigners how happy its citizens are, has smiling women performing the regime's officially sanctioned music. The cartoonist is saddened by his tour of a North Korean school where the children present a concert for their guest. Delisle

notes that one can sense “behind their strained faces”, the extreme “concentration that goes into playing the music and, especially into trying to keep up these Miss World smiles” (Delisle, 2005: 156). The author writes that “the thin veneer of their smiles” is presented as “proof that these young prodigies are flourishing here” (Delisle, 2005: 157). The graphic novelist however feels, “It’s all so cold.... and sad. I could cry” (Delisle, 2005: 157).

Delisle’s description of the smiling female musicians hints that beneath the calm surface of North Korean society there are hidden tensions. The cartoonist’s depiction of a waitress catching flies in the hotel restaurant and ruthlessly and slowly crushing insects beneath the heel of her shoe is an excellent example (Delisle, 2005: 41). Crapanzano (1986) states that for an ethnographer to convey his message in a convincing manner he will employ all the persuasive devices at his disposal to describe and interpret a foreign culture. On the surface, it appears that Delisle is simply describing an everyday event. However, his use of language reinforces a popular culture stereotype of the ruthlessness of the oriental ‘femme fatale’. Delisle’s text further suggests that North Korean citizens are full of repressed anger.

Analysis of the representation of women in these four graphic novels reveals how stereotypes of women function in Western and Eastern cultures. It also highlights the role of dress as a means of social control of women in the East. A woman who chooses to adopt a contemporary European mode of dress is viewed differently in the four countries in which these graphic novels are situated. In Palestine, Morocco and Iran, a woman in Western dress is often seen in a negative light. Yet for feminists in these countries,

Western attire is a symbol of emancipation, equality and resistance. Delisle's observations in North Korea imply that women's attire is dictated by the state. In *Pyongyang*, we see that North Korean women dress according to the profession or occupation they are engaged in. Delisle observes that the majority of Korean women dress very conservatively and as in Palestine, Morocco and Iran, exposed flesh is a sign of Western decadence. Foreign women, however, are not bound by this dress code. Shohat and Stam discuss the hegemony of the Eurocentric gaze in which Anglo-American and Third World media have promoted a "canonical notion of beauty within which White women... were the only legitimate objects of desire" (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 322). Sacco, Thompson and Delisle's representations of women reinforce the Eurocentric gaze, despite these graphic novelist's efforts to accurately record and document female voices and appearances. Satrapi presents the most accurate representation due to her gender and life experience. She has resided in both the West and the East and thus possesses knowledge that her male counterparts, however well-intentioned, lack.

Representations of the 'Native'

Satrapi is what Clifford terms a 'hybrid native', able to cross cultural boundaries. For journalists, travelers and ethnographers, the hybrid native allows them access into a foreign culture. The ethnographer, aided by these helpers, sponsors or guides who ensure access and act as characters in the story, validate the authenticity of the author's experience (Atkinson, 1990: 109). Sacco, Thompson and Delisle all depend upon the

services of one or more 'hybrid natives'. To gain a better understanding of how cross-cultural interactions are represented in these graphic novels the following questions must be answered. What is the relationship between the graphic novelist and his foreign guides? How the native is represented? Are the local inhabitants presented in a positive or negative light? Does the graphic novelist resort to stereotypes? The answers to these queries will help uncover any possible Eurocentric assumptions and biases held by the creators of comics carnet.

In *Palestine*, Sacco documents the various methods he employs to meet people who can provide him with access to certain locales or people he wishes to interview. Sacco seeks out people who will provide him with a 'good story' to help sell his comic. He cynically admits: "My comics blockbuster depends on conflict; peace won't pay the rent" (Sacco, 2001: 76). Sacco, who has a degree in journalism, is trained to ask questions (Sacco, 2001: 286). He is aware that the Palestinian people know he is an outsider. They distrust him and suspect him of belonging to Israeli intelligence (Sacco, 2001: 5). In order to overcome the Palestinian distrust Sacco uses various strategies to win their confidence, comparing the process to going on a series of 'Blind Dates' (the subtitle of an early chapter). The cartoonist, conversant with local customs, commences to play a sort of cat and mouse game. He presents himself as a charming, innocent and gracious guest. After winning his host's confidence Sacco, like a documentary filmmaker, has the native speaker address the reader directly. For example on page 9 the street vendor is drawn looking directly at the reader as if making eye contact. Throughout the novel Sacco continues to use this device, which implies to the reader that the author is

accurately and faithfully documenting the voices, experiences and opinions of the Palestinian people. This idea of transparency is an illusion. Branston and Stafford (1996: 134) in their discussion of journalism as a genre, note that it is not simply “a window on the world”. Sacco, like documentary makers in other media, selectively edits his material to construct a particular point of view. As noted previously, when discussing the role of Palestinian women Sacco records as many diverse voices and contradictory opinions to create the illusion of an ‘objective’, ‘well-balanced’ piece of journalism. Likewise on pages 8 and 9 we meet a number of Palestinians of various genders, ages and backgrounds. By showing this cross section of people, Sacco seeks to gain the reader’s sympathy for their plight.

Sacco has arrived in the Holy Land with a clear agenda. The graphic novelist drops all pretense of journalistic objectivity when half way through the novel he discloses the reason for his visit to Palestine. While staying with Larry, an American ESL teacher in Gaza town, Sacco reveals that his reading of Edward Said’s texts such as *The Question of Palestine* is “one of the reasons I am here” (Sacco, 2001: 177). Sacco acknowledges Said’s influence and reveals his sympathy towards the Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Sacco is aware that graphic novelists, like journalists, need to attract an audience. Both genres include depictions of violence and use strategies to appeal to the consumer’s emotions. A graphic novel, ranging from superhero fantasy to comics carnage, “needs some bang bang” (Sacco, 2001: 118). Journalists, when covering long ongoing stories such as the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, will look for a ‘twist’ or way of personalizing the

event to engage an audience (Branston and Stafford, 1996: 138). ‘Human interest’ stories are one way that journalists can elicit the audience’s sympathy. On page 157 Sacco introduces the reader to Ammar. In one of the most poignant segments of the graphic novel, we discover that Ammar’s wife needs a heart and lung transplant. Ammar seeks Sacco’s aid in finding assistance for his wife. Moved by the situation, Sacco replies that he will try. Ammar starts crying and is visibly upset as we discover that he has not worked in over two years. Ammar queries Sacco about the possibilities of him finding work in the West. Sacco responds that it would be difficult in America, or Europe and he finally admits: “I don’t know” (Sacco, 2001: 158). The cartoonist depicts a downcast Ammar. In the following pages Sacco depicts Ammar’s living conditions and the circumstances of his life in great visual and narrative detail. Almost destitute, Ammar still has immense self-pride, as visibly documented in the two page segment titled *One Shekel to Gaza Town*. Sacco thanks Ammar for his hospitality and is taking a ride back to Larry’s flat. Sacco is in the cab; Ammar reaches through the window and drops a shekel in the driver’s hand. Sacco protests but Ammar emphatically replies: “I pay!” (Sacco, 2001: 176) The final panel shows Ammar standing amid the mud and chaos of the refugee camp as if seen out the rear window of the departing cab. Sacco uses his encounter with Ammar to challenge the one-dimensional picture of Palestinians and Arabs that are presented in Western media by appealing to and manipulating the reader’s emotions.

Sacco’s demonstrates his indebtedness to Said’s critique of Orientalism throughout *Palestine*. A direct challenge to the West’s stereotypical representations of

Arabs is found on page 167. His host, Ibrahim is leafing through Sacco's guidebook and stops at a drawing of an Arab beside a donkey. Ibrahim angrily challenges the West's stereotypical representation of Arabs:

Is this how they think of us? Leading a donkey? You will tell them what you see here! In my family, my cousins, we have students! A professor! A teacher of computers! Arabs have technology! And we Palestinians love education (Sacco, 2001: 167).

This is an example of Sacco's effort to record alternative voices that challenge traditional Eurocentric hegemonic discourses about the East.

Unlike Sacco, Thompson has limited contact with the local inhabitants of Morocco. His most sustained interaction is with the young boys in the market, such as Mahmoud. On page 31, Thompson has drawn a self-portrait of himself seated, enjoying an evening meal in the Djemma El-fina, the large central square of the medina. We also see a young boy lifting the cartoonist's jacket and picking his pocket. Thompson's depictions of these boys, who offer their services as 'faux' guides, portray them as cunning, manipulative, with ulterior motives, seeking to separate the tourist from his money. On page 100 Thompson makes a point of identifying Mahmoud and his eldest brother as 'Arab', then states that his invitation to be a guest in an English class at the University was a hoax. Instead:

Little Mahmoud was acting all shifty-eyed & (sic) I was suspicious this might be another unsolicited tour to extract more money from me (Thompson, 2004: 100).

The drawing beneath shows Mahmoud, a box with an arrow pointing at the boy with the caption: 'Shifty-eyed'. The next day, Thompson who has agreed to meet with Mahmoud observes: "again he was shifty-eyed... talking constantly of money" (Thompson, 2004:

103). When the cartoonist, who is not feeling well, tells the boy that he wishes to be alone, Mahmoud “got pissed off and indignant” (Thompson, 2004: 103). Thompson, in the bottom panel on page 103, shows the young boy waving his fist at the departing cartoonist, yelling: “FORGET YOU! YOU BAD MAN!” Thompson suggests to the reader that Mahmoud’s family is “quite poor, and he’s just looking to scratch up a few dirham to help out” (Thompson, 2004: 103). Despite his admission, near the end of his visit to Morocco, that “most everyone is welcoming & (sic) generous outside of the concentrated tourist pockets”; the cartoonist inadvertently reinforces negative stereotypes (Thompson, 2004: 103). Thompson’s repeated identification of Mahmoud as a ‘shifty-eyed’ Arab; often depicted yelling at the artist ultimately implies that Arab people are money grubbing, untrustworthy and easily angered.

Delisle is not a tourist like Sacco and Thompson, but is an official guest of North Korea and provided with a guide, Mr. Kyu, and a translator, Mr. Sin. They are the ‘hybrid natives’ who act as the North Korea government’s official gatekeepers, strictly controlling Delisle’s access to people and places. Delisle takes to walking home after work, finding it one of the few opportunities whereby he can converse more freely with those with whom he is officially authorized to associate. Both Kyu and Sin are fluent English speakers of whom Delisle observes that despite his “insidious questions... were always steadfast in their loyalty to their country and beloved leader” (Delisle, 2005: 56). Even on the rare occasions the cartoonist happens to witness an event that contradicts the official vision of North Korea, his caretakers endeavor to answer Delisle’s questions in a manner that portrays the regime in a positive light. For example on page 139, the

cartoonist notices a man in a tree picking fruit and stowing it away in his shirt outside the studio window. The artist states that: “when I point him out, my translator blushes and stammers excuses”. Delisle concludes: “Maybe he’s hungry,” but his translator has disappeared (Delisle, 2005: 139).

Delisle relates how his guide strives to protect his fellow citizens from subversive influences. One day Delisle puts on some acid jazz while he works. His guide angrily demands: “You have to turn down your jazz! It could have a bad influence on the others!”(Delisle, 2005: 90) In Appadurai’s context of global cultural flows, North Korea is seen as a place that actively controls access to all outside forms of media. Delisle’s presence in North Korea is perceived as a ‘necessary evil’ because it brings badly needed foreign investment and capital. He is, however, a source of possible cultural contagion. Delisle portrays his hosts as active agents who function to inoculate and protect their fellow natives from the contamination of foreign influences (Delisle, 2005: 39).

Even western consumer goods are seen as subversive by those loyal to the regime. For example, when visiting a museum Delisle discovers a beverage stand that sells Coca Cola to tourists. The cartoonist notes that this is an anomaly in a country where McDonalds, jeans and Coke are forbidden (Delisle, 2005: 106). The author offers to buy his guide and translator a Coke. They politely refuse. Like Satrapi, Delisle discovers that when something is forbidden indulging in it, “becomes an act of defiance. It isn’t glorious, but it’s good enough... Especially since I’ve always hated this drink” (Delisle, 2005: 106). Ironically, not all Western goods are forbidden. The cartoonist informs us that, “in the 1990s, at the height of a famine that claimed some 2 million lives, North

Korea was the world's biggest client of Hennessey Cognac" (Delisle, 2005: 175). At the end of his stay Delisle decides to give a bottle of Hennessey Cognac, originally intended as a gift to the animation studio's head, to his guide and translator. His caretakers are thoroughly delighted and Delisle notes that it was "one of the few moments of real joy I witnessed" (175). His Korean hosts are portrayed as being deadly serious, incapable of emotion. When his translator, Mr. Sin, tells Delisle that each star he sees on the side of a bus stands for 5,000 accident-free miles, the graphic novelist wryly replies: "Great! Well, from now on I won't get on a bus with less than 3 stars... Hee hee!" (Delisle, 2005: 57). Delisle's Western sense of humor is lost upon his Korean host. His translator makes no comment or reply. Delisle shows that despite being fluent in the English language, the artist's culturally specific Western humor and irony often escape his hosts. Likewise Delisle implies that his guides are not too swift and are serious servants of the North Korean state. The graphic novelist views North Korea as an oppressive, somber society where freedom and access to alternative viewpoints is severely limited and strictly controlled. The 'native' in *Pyongyang* is represented as a hardworking, unquestioning, joyless devotee of a leader who fits the stereotype of an oriental despot.

Satrapi, in *Persepolis 2*, provides an insider's perspective on what it is like to live under a repressive regime. A hybrid native, she reveals to her Western readers that despite severe restrictions Iranians resist and live lives filled with joy, hope and sadness. Delisle as the captive 'outsider' gets only occasional glimpses of this. However as an Iranian, Satrapi's understanding of Austrians is based upon stereotypes. Awaiting the arrival of her roommate, Lucia, she wonders:

What she would look like. Europe, the Alps, Switzerland, Austria...from this I deduced that she would be like Heidi. This was okay with me. I really like Heidi (Satrapi, 2004: 1).

Satrapi soon discovers that Lucia does not conform to her storybook vision. The cartoonist gains a much more profound insight into Austrian culture when Lucia invites her to spend Christmas with her family. The experience forces Satrapi to question and challenge her stereotypical views of the West. Lucia is the first of many guides we meet in *Persepolis 2*. These guides are numerous and of different races, ages and genders and assist the author in negotiating both Austrian and Iranian culture. Satrapi, having spent much of her adolescence abroad, is unaware of many social mores of post-revolutionary Iran. For example, when she is contemplating a divorce, a childhood friend Farnaz, explains to Satrapi the fate that awaits her in Iranian society if she decides to separate (Satrapi, 2004: 178). How the 'native' is represented in each of these graphic novels is varied due to the author's intentions, linguistic abilities, freedom of movement and gender.

Use of Narrative

Neale and Turner (2001) observe that the degree of hybridity and overlap between genres in popular culture has been underestimated. Each of these graphic novelists is influenced by conventions associated with another literary genre employing distinctive narrative modes to represent the Other. Crapanzano (1986) and Atkinson (1990) state that ethnographic narrative is a tool by which an ethnographer sequentially arranges and emphasizes events and experiences as the author goes from being an 'outsider' to

becoming an 'insider'. These narratives can assume three basic forms: the 'quest', the 'pilgrim's progress' or the 'confessional' mode (Atkinson, 1990: 104). Each of the graphic novels can be linked to one of these narrative archetypes.

Palestine conforms most closely to the narrative structure of the 'pilgrim's progress'. The pilgrim narrative is constructed as a journey with "faltering first steps", through introductions and sponsorships that allow the author access to a "domain of esoteric knowledge" (Atkinson, 1990: 109). Sacco, like other visitors, has come to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage. As we learn at the conclusion of chapter six, Said's writings inspired Sacco's visit to Palestine (Sacco, 2001: 177). His goal is not to satisfy a spiritual thirst, but is a journalistic search for the 'truth' about Palestine and its people. Sacco's graphic novel begins with his arrival as a naive newcomer to the Middle East. Sacco documents his interactions with a wide range of guides and sponsors, his adventures and mishaps until in chapters seven and eight the author enters the inner sanctum of the Jabalia Refugee Camp and gains access to its inhabitants and their stories. Sameh, his guide, initiates Sacco into the harsh reality of camp life allowing him to experience first hand the bleak 'truth' that lies behind Said's words.

Sacco takes a roving perspective to create the illusion of objectivity by interviewing people of varying ages, genders, and ethnic backgrounds on both sides of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. His graphic novel is written in the self-conscious personal subjective style of 'new journalism'. Bovee (1999) observes that writers working in this genre often seek to provide understanding for its own sake in an entertaining style. *Palestine*, as a graphic novel, is constructed as a series of journalistic reports filed by

Sacco that have a dual purpose to inform, entertain and engage the reader about the Palestinian plight.

Carnet de Voyage on the other hand, like much travel writing, is confessional in nature. It tells the tale of Thompson's journey to another world, in this case Morocco. As in most travel writing, the tale is told from the author's subjective viewpoint and follows a simple narrative arc. It follows the cartoonist's arrival, his initial disorientation, his encounters with the locals and fellow travelers, the various hardships he encounters and his departure. Groom notes that many travel writers are, "somewhat ordinary people genuinely interested in learning about themselves and other cultures and unafraid of revealing their fears and mistakes" (Groom, 2005: 45). The discomfort and dislocation Thompson experiences while traveling in Morocco catalyzes "enlightenment about the self" (Groom, 2005: 45). The artist observes: "Wherever you go, there you are" (Thompson, 2004: 44). Thompson initially thought his trip to Morocco was the beginning of "some exotic adventure" but instead discovers that he is a "simple, quiet fellow" (Thompson, 2004: 44). Thompson analyzes his personal worldview when he meets Darren, another American traveler. Both men "are the same age... from the Midwest, [with a] similar Fundamentalist upbringing" (Thompson, 2004: 85). He perceives Darren to be "the quintessential laid-back traveler" whereas he feels "a bit isolated, neurotic and burdened" (Thompson, 2004: 85). Thompson concludes that drawing in his journal is "a manner of interacting with the world" and extending himself (Thompson, 2004: 85). He keeps his carnet out of fear and potential self-disappointment if he stops (Thompson,

2004: 85). The countries he travels through; France, Morocco, Switzerland and Spain, form an exotic backdrop to Thompson's self-absorbed angst.

Pyongyang follows the traditional narrative structure found in many ethnographic accounts. As in many travel accounts, the narrative tends to predominate over description. The cartoonist documents his arrival, his subsequent experiences and finally his departure. *Pyongyang's* narrative structure conforms most closely to the 'pilgrim's progress'. However unlike Sacco, Delisle is continually frustrated in his efforts to gain insider knowledge. He is a virtual captive in Pyongyang. According to Pratt (1986) this is an ethnographer's dream. But the barriers of language, the diligence of his guides and constraints of movement imposed upon him by the North Korean government make it a nightmare for Delisle. According to Groom, travel writing as a genre, "highlights assumptions within Western culture that... may [be taken] for granted, the desire to control for instance" (Groom, 2005: 46). Delisle's account reads like "one long, frustrating master-servant feud" traditionally associated with "African colonial exploration and writing" (Pratt 40). As a captive ethnographer, Delisle diligently records what he sees and experiences, despite imposed limitations. Primed by reading Orwell's *1984*, Delisle arrives with a set of assumptions and draws upon stereotypes found in Western popular culture of the Cold War era. As a result, the cartoonist depicts North Korea and its citizens in an unflattering light. The country is represented as the bleak bastion of a totalitarian communist state. North Koreans are portrayed as hard working, joyless savants, who resolutely follow their leader blindly in rejecting the West's cornucopia of goods and media. Like Sacco, Delisle possesses a sincere desire to learn

the hidden truths of the country he is visiting. His pilgrimage ends in failure for he is unable to penetrate the inner sanctum of North Korean culture and acquire its esoteric knowledge.

Satrapi's *Persepolis 2* presents a truly unique point of view. Her autobiography documents her own transformation into a 'hybrid native'. Having resided in both the West and the East for extended periods of time, she articulates the subjective experience of being the Other and the 'insider' in both contexts. Rocío G. Davis (2005) describes *Persepolis 2* as transcultural biography. She observes that transcultural biographies engage in an educational mission when describing experiences outside of Europe or America (Davis, 2005: 265). The reader adopts the position of the autobiographer as a child and "learns about heritage, culture and experiences historical events fashioning a seemingly artless insider perspective" that is multi-layered and complex (Davis, 2005: 265). Satrapi, as autobiographer, selectively chooses which events to record in sequential order. Since comics narratives contain more gaps than traditional autobiography the text is more fragmented (Davis, 2005: 270). The author makes no pretense towards objectivity; the story is her personal reminiscences. However, as Bjorkland notes, autobiographers try to reconcile the "particular with the universal, the idiosyncratic with shared cultural understandings, and the subjective with the objective" (Bjorkland, 1998: xiii). Satrapi combines a memoir of one family's story with that of the political history of a country undergoing revolutionary change (Davis, 2005: 271). She describes the events of her childhood, her own personal growth and her dawning awareness of the complexity of related socio-political and literary concerns (Davis, 2005: 269). Satrapi uses the

“conventions of Western perception of Iranian culture (Orientalism) to critique Iran from her transcultural perspective” and constructs a “text that obliges readers to rethink previous concepts about Iran... and strategies of self-representation” (Davis, 2005: 271). *Persepolis 2* documents Satrapi’s quest for identity and social and cultural belonging. This duality is found in all the texts in our study. Comics carnet employs a subjective viewpoint to seduce the reader and easily identify with the author. All four examples examined here are autobiographical accounts, but each one posits a difference response from the reader. Each of the texts analyzed speaks from and is a document of Bhabha’s Third Space, where members of one culture communicate with another.

Conclusion

Analysis of Sacco, Thompson, Delisle and Satrapi allows us to draw some conclusions about this new graphic novel genre and its representation of non-European peoples and places. The creators of comics carnet seek to understand and interact with people as equals and eventually penetrate the veneer of exoticism that they initially encounter. They strive to record as accurately as possible the words, thoughts and actions of the people they encounter in their travels, thus creating sensitive portrayals that challenge traditional Eurocentric assumptions. For example, Sacco’s sympathetic depiction of Palestinian refugees directly confronts the notion that they are merely terrorists. Satrapi presents the reader with a nuanced portrait of the lives of contemporary Eastern women, documenting her dual experiences: as an immigrant to the West and as a citizen of an Islamic theocracy. Delisle, through the use of humor and irony, represents

the Korean people and all their foibles in a positive light. Despite his stereotypical views, even the self-absorbed Thompson has empathy for the young Arab guides, acknowledging the difficulties Moroccan citizens face. All the texts, in one way or another, challenge one-dimensional representations and instead reveal complex lives filled with all-too-human hopes, aspirations and challenges. The creators of comics cannot represent the non-European Other as an active participant in the modern world.

Each text foregrounds features associated with other literary genres. In the tradition of new journalism, Sacco is transparent with his reader, acknowledging Said's influence. With his widely roving eye, Sacco documents the contemporary Palestinian people and records their voices. In doing so *Palestine* is a polycentric text because it articulates a viewpoint that directly questions and confronts traditional Eurocentric assumptions and representations of the East. Thompson's *Carnet de Voyage* reinforces traditional Eurocentric discourses about the East. Thompson grew up in the American Midwest, attended a Christian school and resides in Portland. His lack of experience living and working in cross-cultural contexts is reflected in the stereotypical representations of both Europe and Morocco found in *Carnet de Voyage*. Thompson the tourist/traveler seeks out the exotic Orient, but he rarely engages with its contemporary reality. Morocco is a picturesque and colorful land, sometimes threatening and chaotic, but often presented in a condescending manner. *Pyongyang* also assumes a superior position. Delisle describes North Korea as the perfect example of the totalitarian Orwellian state. Delisle's desire to truly engage with the culture is thwarted by the barriers of language and constraints upon interpersonal contact and movement, so the

artist uses an ironic style as an outsider looking in. For Delisle, the migrant worker, North Korea is a place to be endured. It is seen as an oppressive inhuman realm that lacks the West's vitality and life.

Persepolis 2 straddles East and West; the artist is both outsider and insider in either context. As a transcultural autobiography, this work is a polysemic text. Satrapi's memoir provides keen insights into the difficulties immigrants to the West face. Her minimalist, iconographic style documents her individual experience as a member of the Iranian diaspora while it expresses universal experiences of puberty, family connections, falling in love and intimate relationships. Satrapi's subjective point of view allows her to represent positive and negative aspects of both East and West. Her autobiography documents her journey of self-discovery and her final acceptance that she cannot continue to live in Iran. The repressive nature of the regime will not permit her the life she desires. Satrapi's decision to leave Iran at the end of *Persepolis 2* further implies the superiority of the West over the East that we find in all four texts. It initially appears that comics carnet does reinforce hegemonic discourses of Western superiority. Sacco's text unwittingly reinforces the Eurocentric discourse of the East as a place of long standing conflicts and oppression. Thompson's tourist gaze perpetuates the mythic Morocco found in popular culture; the imaginary Orient of *Casablanca* for example. Delisle draws upon stereotypes that depict the East as a place where tyrants rule with an iron hand. Sacco and Satrapi, however, do introduce implicit critiques of traditional representations of the East. Both artists have lived in a variety of cultures and use their insights to suggest that the world is not so black and white.

As an emerging graphic novel genre, comics carnet ultimately reflects contemporary mediascapes where Eurocentric discourses are increasingly contested by other voices. The texts analyzed can be located in Bhabha's Third Space as polysemic and multicultural texts that challenge Orientalism. As Appadurai notes, the interconnection between viewing, hearing and reading may transform global mediascapes and ideoscapes in local contexts. Comics carnet allow for a two-way conversation between the West and East to occur. By telling tales of the lives of non-European Others, often ignored by Eurocentric mainstream media, comics carnet can be an example of what Shohat and Stam term 'polycentric' texts. They speak from the margins, informing Western readers about the contemporary East. The result is that these hybrid texts are contradictory in nature as they both reinforce and question hegemonic discourses.

Conclusions and Further Research

Summary of Research

The goal of my thesis has been to answer the following question: How does the new graphic novel I have identified as comics carnet represent the non-European Other? I have employed an interdisciplinary approach to this question and explored theories of the Other from cultural studies and postcolonial studies. By situating comics carnet in its historical context and employing a textual analysis of four representative texts, I conclude that comics carnet narratives challenge long-held beliefs about the non-European citizens of the globe and present instead more fully realized portraits that confound stereotypical representations. Its creators may limit themselves to working primarily in black and white, but the picture they present of non-Western peoples and lands is a subtle one. Comics carnet occupies Bhabha's Third Space; where cultural boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are crossed. These texts record the misunderstandings that occur when we engage in a cross-cultural interactions and document the complex processes involved. What makes the texts unique are the many opportunities given to the non-European Other to speak back to the West. Therefore, comics carnet contains often contradictory messages that simultaneously reinforce and question assumptions that the West is superior to the East. These 'polycentric' texts reflect the reality of contemporary global culture where a multitude of multicultural voices are clamoring to be heard.

The Importance of Comics Carnet in Popular Culture

Comics carnet continues to gain an ever-expanding readership and plays an important role in global media culture for a number of reasons. First, the accessibility of the comics medium, with its mixture of image and text, attracts and educates a diverse audience. The comics carnet artists transform a traditionally escapist form of popular culture and use it as a tool to educate their audience about the subtleties involved in a cross-cultural dialogue. Second, the genre's self-revelatory nature as a form of autobiography, allows it to record the attendant misunderstandings that accompany cross-cultural interactions in a way that resonates closely with a reader's lived experience. Third, by documenting the lives and voices of non-European Others, normally not recorded by mainstream media, comics carnet encourages its audience to question many of their own assumptions about non-European peoples and lands. Fourth, comics carnet allows non-Europeans, like Satrapi, the opportunity to represent themselves and challenge stereotypes. It helps facilitate a more balanced conversation between West and East and greatly enriches global ideoscapes and mediascapes. Therefore, in an increasingly interconnected world, comics carnet is a significant new form of contemporary popular culture.

Further Study

Due to limitations of space in my study, I have not been able to explore many other related areas of research interest. For example, the representation of religion and gender roles could also be analyzed. My study of graphic novels created in America and

France could be expanded to include a number of non-Western texts that have recently been published. Satrapi's work is one of the first examples of what I would call this postcolonial graphic novel tradition. Artists from India, Africa and Latin America are beginning to document their lived experience in comics form. Study of these non-Western graphic novelists' representations of the West would be of considerable interest. Like world music, food, arts and crafts, comics carnet are consumed in the West as a form of what Haynes describes as "the easy faces of cosmopolitanism" (Haynes, 2005: 381). Research into the function, purpose and role of these commodified cosmopolitan forms of popular culture would be worthy of extensive study.

In a related vein, a new comic book company, Virgin Comics, has been created to use Indian mythology, art and history as a basis for cutting-edge graphic novels and comics, with the future potential for larger franchises, animation, computer games and movies. Virgin plans to market its comics in India, the United States and the United Kingdom. India has its own rich comic and graphic novel tradition. A comparative study of traditional Indian comics and the Virgin product would be of considerable interest.

Finally, a comprehensive study is needed of how the West appropriates indigenous cultures, repackages them and then markets the cultural product through comics and other media forms in the country of origin. The above examples illustrate how comics carnet as a newly emerging genre will undoubtedly go through numerous transformations and permutations. These will provide future scholars abundant material for future study and research.

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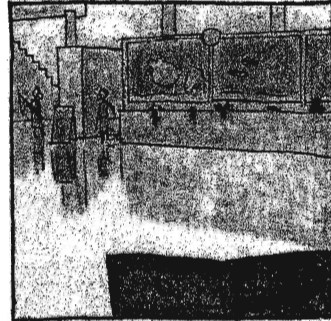
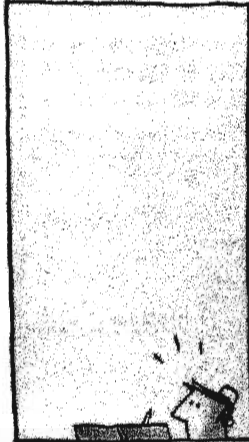
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Appendices

I SPEND THE REST OF THE AFTERNOON TAKING NOTES, FLOATING ON THE SONIC GROOVE OF MY BRILLIANT COMPATRIOT PLASTIK-MAN.



AT SOME POINT, I NOTICE THE STRANGE BEHAVIOR OF THE CAFÉ WAITRESSES.

ONE WAVES A BUTTERFLY NET AS THE OTHER ADVANCES, FLY SWATTERS IN HAND.

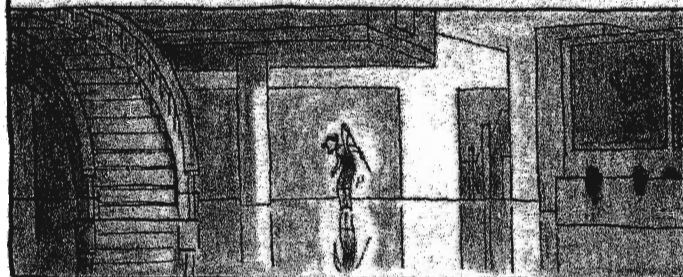


THE ONE WITH THE NET MAKES A CATCH.

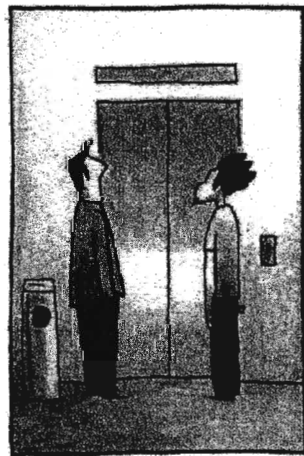
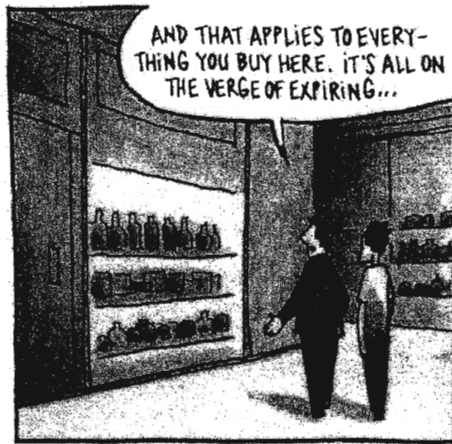
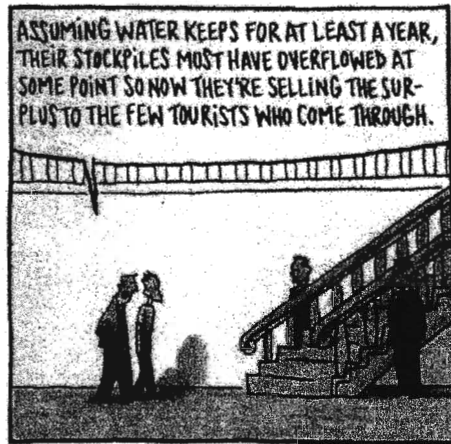
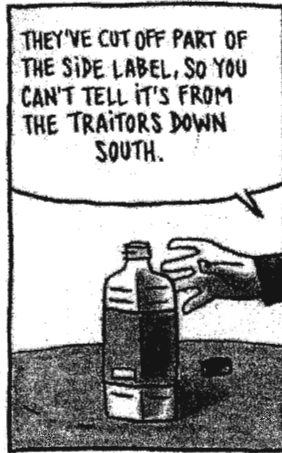
SHE SEIZES HER PREY.



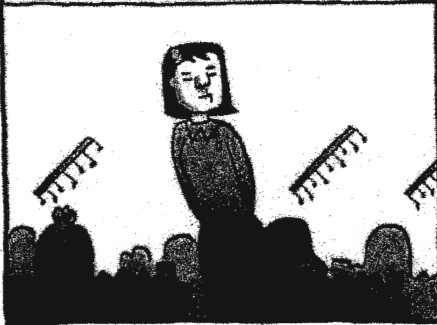
AFTER TAKING THE FLY FROM THE NET SHE RUTHLESSLY WEDGES IT BETWEEN THE MIRRORED SURFACE OF THE GRAY MARBLE FLOOR AND HER RUBBER-SOLED SHOE, THEN CRUSHES IT WITH GREAT CARE, GRINDING HER HEEL FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN INORDINATELY LONG TIME.



HER COLLEAGUE LOOKS TAME BY COMPARISON.



YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE THE TRAINING NEEDED TO ACHIEVE SUCH ROBOTIC RESULTS...



THE LITTLE SAVANT MONKEYS ARE DISPLAYED WITH GREAT PRIDE.



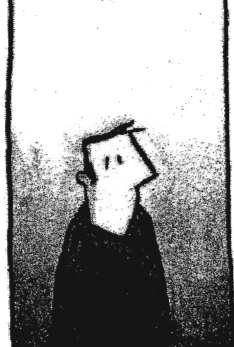
AS THOUGH THE THIN VENEER OF THEIR SMILES WERE PROOF THAT THESE YOUNG PRODIGIES ARE FLOURISHING HERE.



IT'S ALL SO COLD... AND SAD.



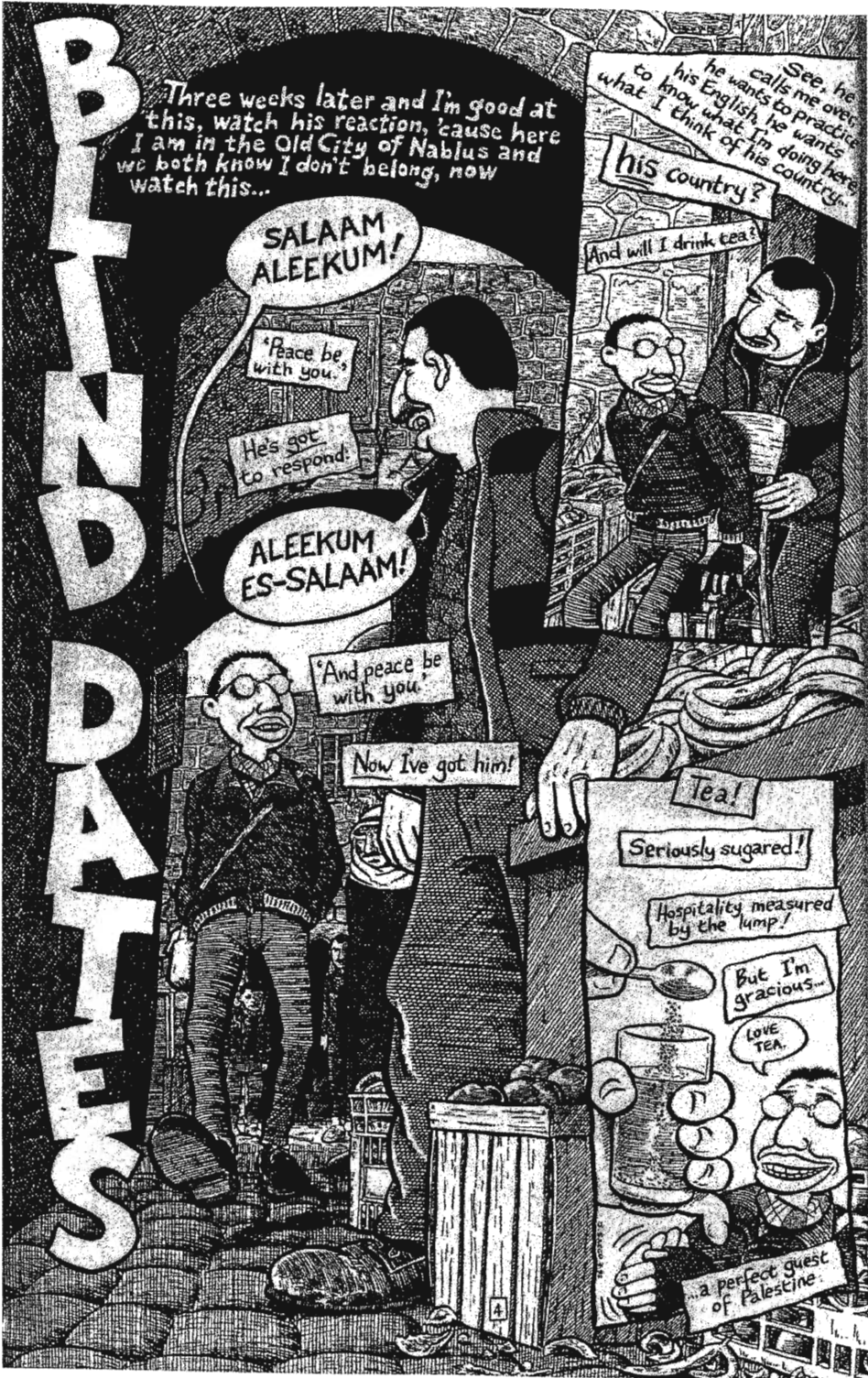
I COULD CRY.



THE VISIT ENDS IN A BIG AUDITORIUM, WHERE THE CHILDREN PERFORM A LIVELY SHOW.



THE FINAL CURTAIN FALLS WITH A PORTRAIT OF KIM JONG-IL IN ITS CENTER, AND ALL THE LITTLE ACTORS GREET IT WITH A DEEP BOW.



BRINDAITES

Three weeks later and I'm good at this, watch his reaction, 'cause here I am in the Old City of Nablus and we both know I don't belong, now watch this...

SALAAM ALEEKUM!

'Peace be with you.'

He's got to respond.

ALEEKUM ES-SALAAM!

'And peace be with you.'

Now I've got him!

See, he calls me over to his English, he wants to know what I'm doing here, what I think of his country, his country?

And will I drink tea?

Tea!

Seriously sugared!

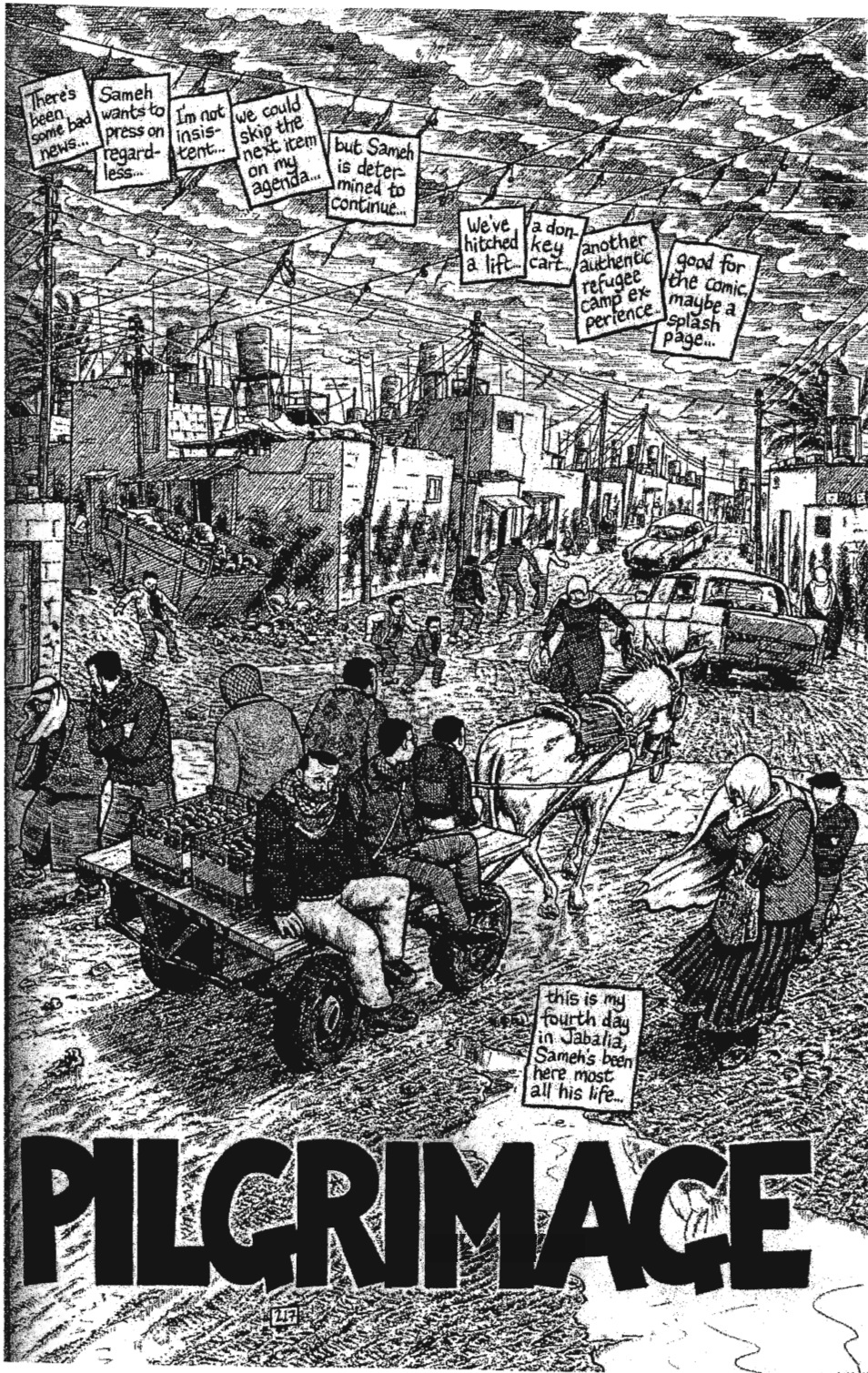
Hospitality measured by the lump!

But I'm gracious...

LOVE TEA.

a perfect guest of Palestine.





There's been some bad news...

Sameh wants to press on regardless...

I'm not insistent...

we could skip the next item on my agenda...

but Sameh is determined to continue...

We've hitched a lift...

a donkey cart...

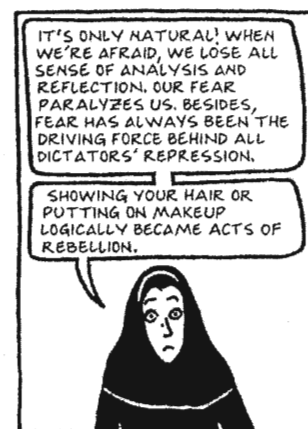
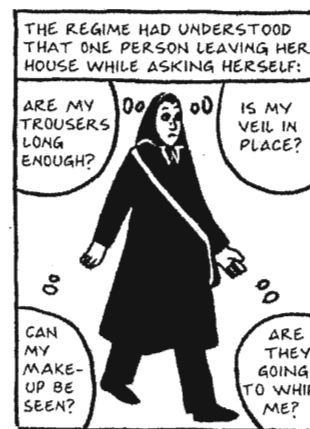
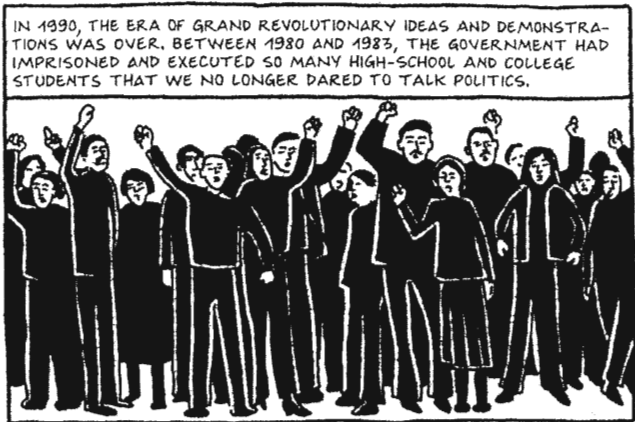
another authentic refugee camp experience...

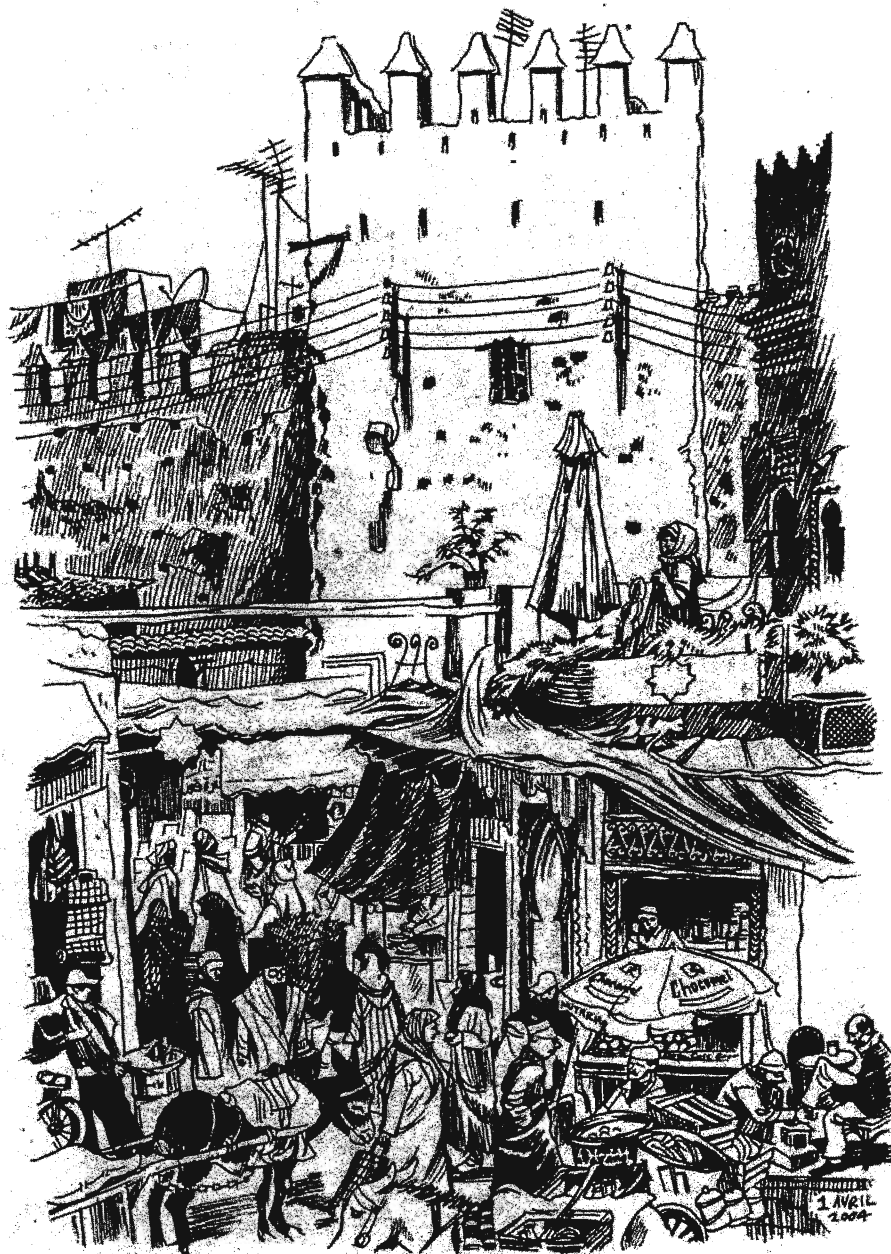
good for the comic, maybe a splash page...

this is my fourth day in Jabalia, Sameh's been here most all his life...

PILGRIMAGE







The tour was followed by the MANDATORY HARD SELL--leather products, rugs, shoes, antiques, etc. Wanting nothing, I did get suckered into an antique ink well. And I tried on a jallab and a Tuareg head wrap like a true tourist. Actually, the big Sucker part was forking over 100 dirham as a tip. (They wanted 250.)



Afterwards, I was lost, stinky, and still cripple-footed. A small boy led me back to the central Medina, but I had no money left to offer in return.



Variations in women's dress



I'm sick from the belly outward, but resisting the idea. Running into the couple from the South of France again, they mock my American immune system - so conditioned to sterility that I can't handle a little bacteria in food. It's true. And I'm conditioned to ample breathing space, too -- the claustrophobia turns me woozy. My vision is blurry with snake charmers & sad little monkeys & more Gnawa dancers, and I'm dreaming of my friends back home.

