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An Introduction to the Graphic Novel

Vicky Maloy



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Editors | Angela Murillo & Rachel Hall

Faculty Advisor | Jim Elmborg

Associate Editors | Julia Skinner & Katie DeVries

Layout & Identity design | Colin Smalter

Abstract:

This is a slide show from a presentation, "An Introduction to the Graphic Novel." The presentation covered the definition of a graphic novel, how to read a graphic novel, the history of graphic novels, and suggested further readings.

Keywords:

American Popular Culture | Information and Library Science | Library and Information Science | Reading and Language | Visual Studies





12 March 2010
Vicky Maloy
Academic Technology Librarian

What is a Graphic Novel?

What is a Graphic Novel



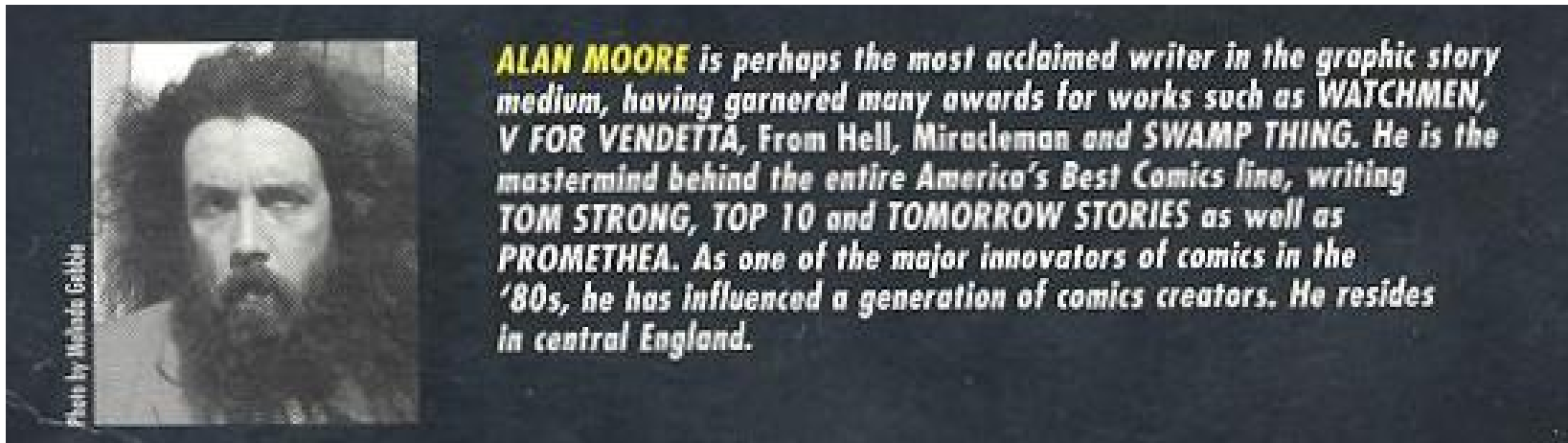
- Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.

Scott McCloud

Understanding Comics p.9

What is a Graphic Novel

- Alan Moore's definition of graphic novel:
“expensive comic book”



<http://www.blather.net/articles/amoore/northampton.html>

What is a Graphic Novel

- A way to express ideas
- A medium...like film or painting
- A format defined by images used in a sequence

A Graphic Novel can be:

- Action & Adventure (Here's our superheroes & swashbucklers)

But there's also:

- Biography, Comedy, Documentary (Non-fiction), Costume (historic) drama, Fantasy, Film noir, Horror (including zombies!), Mafia/Gangster, Mystery, Road trip, Romance, Science fiction, Vampire, War, Western, & Wuxia

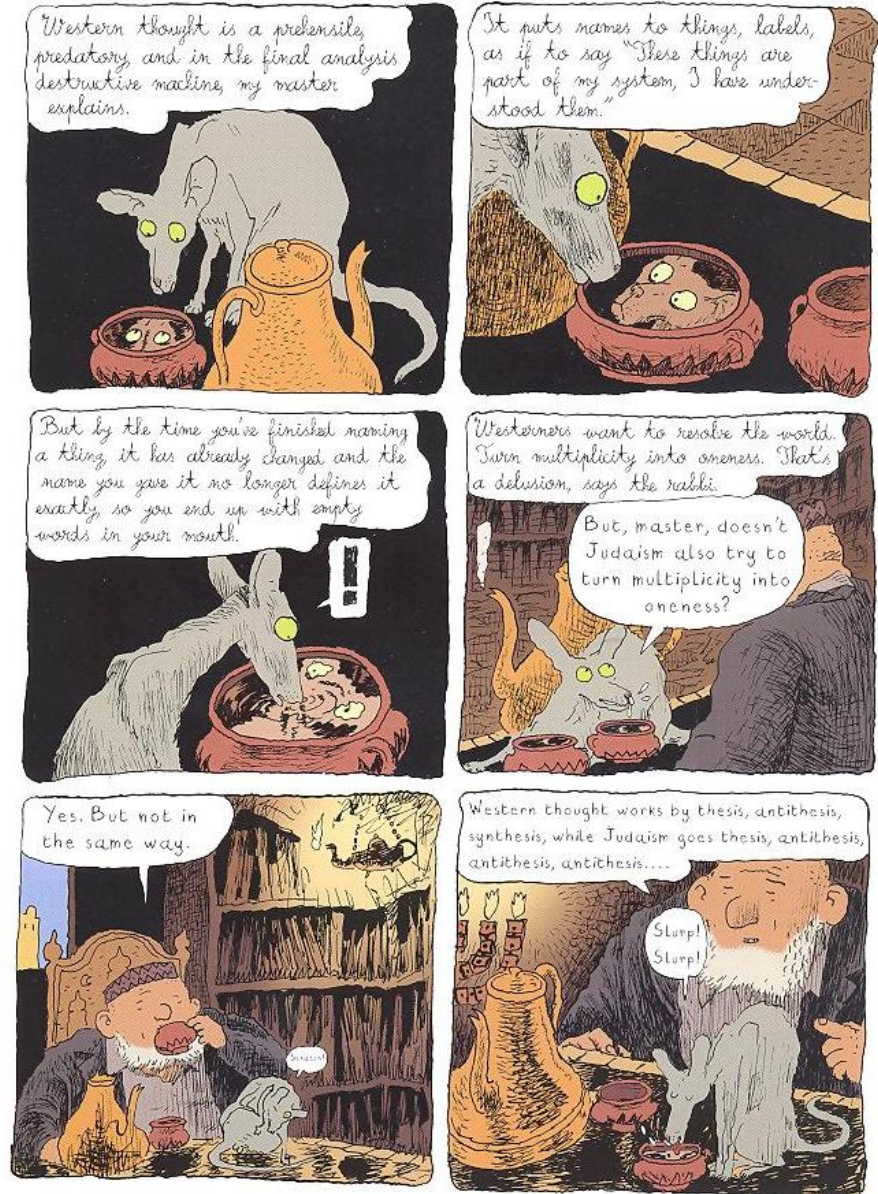
A Graphic Novel = Words (sometimes) + Art (always!)



Talking about Graphic Novels:

Literature

- Plot
- Characters
- Dialog
- Setting
- Audience



Talking about Graphic Novels:

Art

- Style
- Color
- Design
- Symbolism
- Perspective
- Lettering



Talking about Graphic Novels:¹¹ ¹¹ Vocabulary

gutter

layout

panel

sound representation

speech balloon

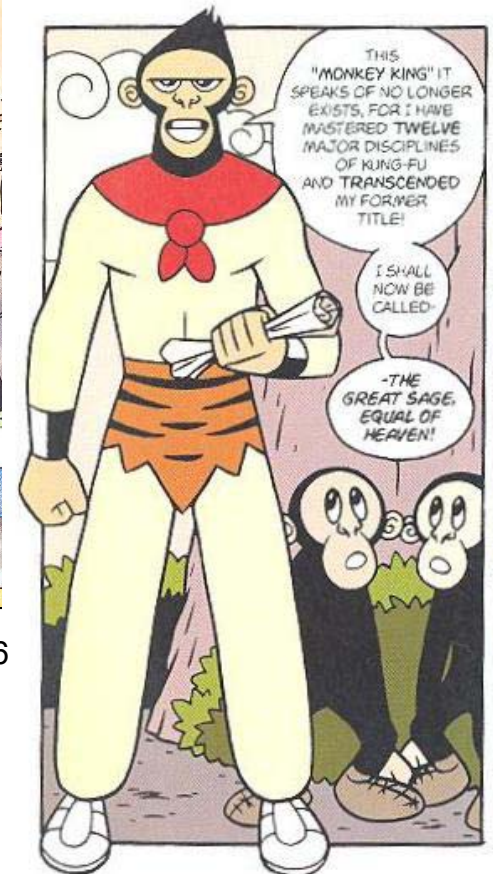
thought balloon

Vocabulary: Panel

- Sometimes the physical page functions as the panel.
- Occasionally the panel is only a suggestion for the artist who does not contain the art within the frame.



To Dance © S. Siegel 2006



American Born Chinese © G. Yang 2006

Vocabulary: Gutter



The space between panels.
Read *Understanding Comics* for examples
on the ways the gutter defines comics.

Vocabulary: Sound Effects



Color, font, size & shape all are used to convey audio information in a visual manner.

Vocabulary: Balloons (speech & thought)



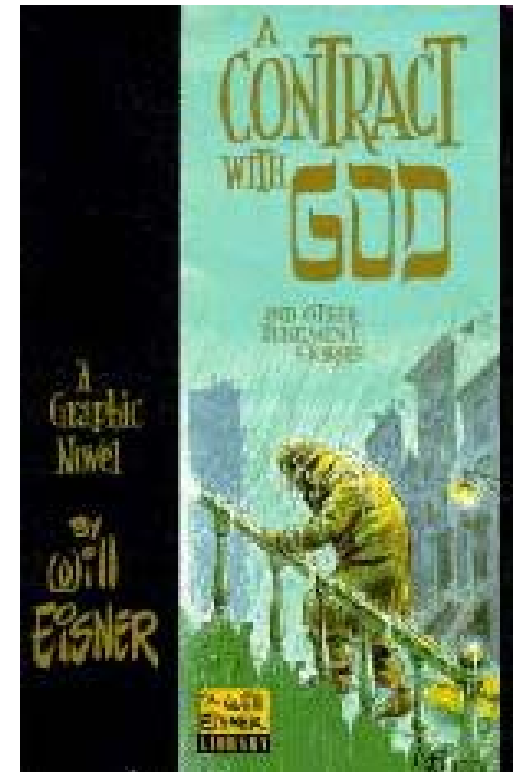
The balloon is used to express the character's thoughts and words. The shape of the balloon varies depending on what situation is being illustrated.

And now for a little history



The history of Graphic Novels

- 1954 – *Seduction of the Innocent* published; Comics Code Authority created
- 1978 – *Contract with God* by Will Eisner
- 1986 – Frank Miller writes *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*
- 1987 – Alan Moore writes *The Watchmen*
- 1992 – *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman wins a Pulitzer Prize



Names to Know

Eisner Awards & Harvey Awards (Formerly the Kirby Awards)



The Oscars of the Comics/Graphic Novel Industry, these organizations recognize the year's best writers, artists, publications, inkers, stories for specific audiences...

To find good reading, try starting here.

[Eisner Awards](#)

[Harvey Awards](#)



Names to Know

Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

- Founded in 1989
- Non-profit concerned with defending free speech (through helping with legal costs)
- Members include: Creators, retailers, and readers.



<http://www.cbldf.org/membership.shtml>

Publishing Companies

MARVEL

&

DC

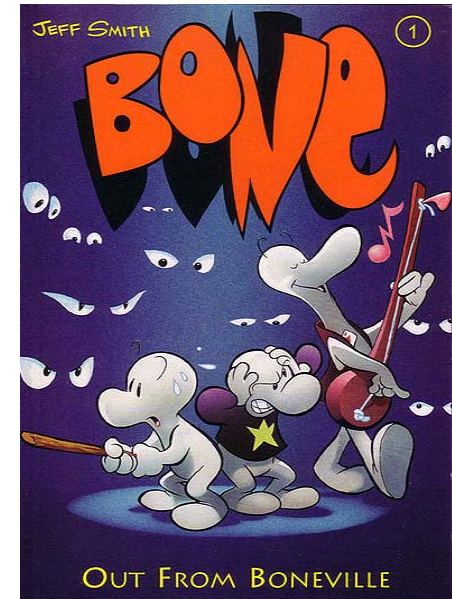
But wait! There's more!



Or do it yourself.

- Independent Publishing

Jeff Smith & *Bone*



- Online Publishing

Brien Fies & *Mom's Cancer*

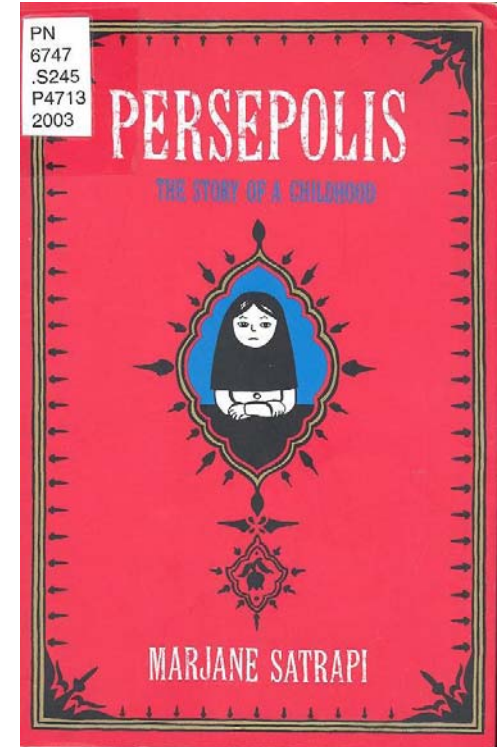
www.momscancer.com



What next?

Further Reading:

- If you liked *Persepolis* (Iran's revolution in 1980)
- Try **Zahara's Paradise** (Iran's election aftermath in 2009)



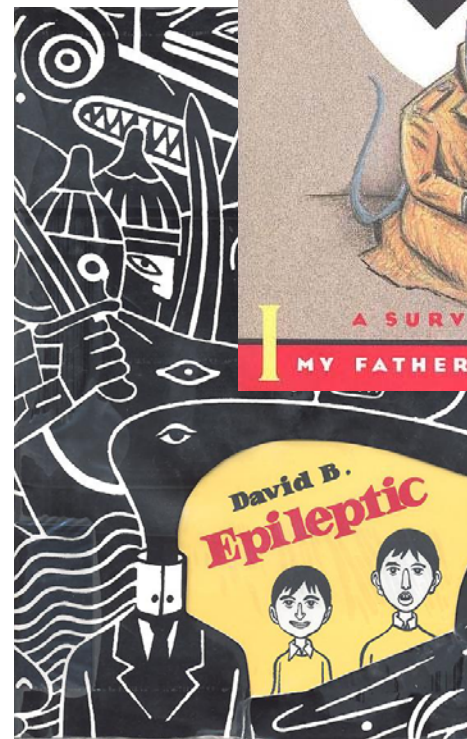
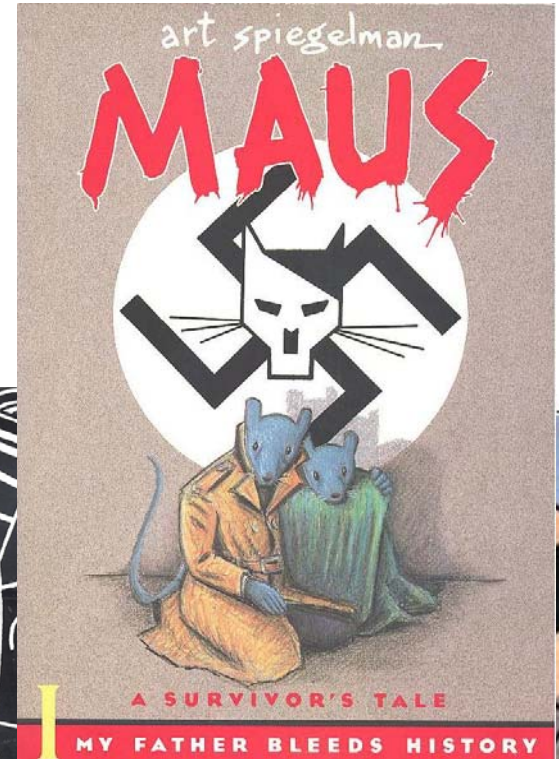
<http://www.zahrasparadise.com>

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Further Reading:

- If you liked *Maus* (A Pulitzer Prize winning memoir about the Holocaust & its repercussions in one family)
- Try *Epileptic* (The struggle a family faces when one son is diagnosed with epilepsy.)
- Or *The Golem's Mighty Swing* (A Jewish baseball team & American History)



Further Reading:

- If you liked *Watchmen* (A multi-layer superhero story by Alan Moore)
- Try *Batman: The Dark Night Returns* (Another superhero story for the mature reader)

