

THINKING INSIDE THE BOXES:
THE IMPORTANCE OF COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS IN VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION

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THESIS

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Abstract

For most of the 20th century, comics and graphic novels have not been considered worthy of inclusion in curricula by Educators. Comics have been blamed for juvenile delinquency and poor literacy skill acquisition (Wertham, 1954; McCloud, 1993, 2000). Yet recently educators have taken comics into the classroom instead of to the incinerator. Comics are now considered by educators to be useful for a variety of reasons (Jacobs, 2007). This paper will explain why narrative art is important for visual arts education. Then it will discuss how comics have been treated by educators in the 20th century. a brief discussion of how literacy educators now advocate inclusion of comics as a scaffold for traditional literacy education will follow. The paper concludes with an exploration of comics as an application of the theory of multiliteracies and gives practical implications for art educators.

Keywords: comic books, graphic novels, mutliliteracies

For Gabritelle and Genevive

You are my joy and my song

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have come to fruition if my advisor Dr. Elizabeth Delacruz had not given me the idea to pursue my research as a comic book, which can be found at the conclusion of this paper in Appendix A. I am a better teacher and artist because she encouraged me to push my limits as an artist and delve into a topic so close to my heart and the hearts of my students. Thank you to Dr. Michael Parsons for his thorough reading of my paper in various drafts and for his kind encouraging words. Thank you to Matthew Young who reminded me six years ago that I loved making comics as a child and could still enjoy and make them as an adult. Thank you to Cathy Mannen for reading several drafts of this paper and for helping me get my head around the current best practices in literacy education. The title of this thesis came from one of our many teacher's lounge brainstorming sessions.

Finally, thank you to my wife, Traci, who bore with me as I found my way as a cartoonist and took me to New York city when my comics were on display at CUNY. She repeatedly cheered me on to the finish line as I sat exhausted after a long day of teaching and raising infant twin girls.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Fisher (1987) coined the phrase, *homo narrans*. Fisher believes to be human is to be a storyteller. He theorizes that all communication is a form of narrative. Bruner (1991) theorized that we organize our experiences and memories mainly in the form of narrative, such as stories, myths and explanations. Clark (2010) goes further and says we learn narratively; first, by hearing stories, second, by telling stories. She writes, “Narrative and sense making and learning are all connected” (Clark, 2010, p. 6). If Fisher’s belief that all people are storytelling creatures, we must nurture the storytelling in our students to help them discover their own humanity and the humanity of others.

CHAPTER 2

THINKING INSIDE THE BOXES

Comic books offer a unique way to tell stories, because they are temporal in nature. Comics create a sense of time passing through the juxtaposition of images. The reader can follow the story at their own pace—lingering on images or phrases as they choose. In this way, comics have more in common with Giotto's sequence of frescos in the *Arena Chapel* that depict the life of Christ than with film that projects each image at a standard twenty-four frames per second.

Up until very recently, comics were not considered worthwhile for use in the classroom. In the early part of the new century, waves of articles were published linking comics to helping students read traditional prose. Jacobs (2007) states, “in emphasizing the motivational, visual permanency (in the way it slows down the flow of information), intermediacy, and the popular, such approaches inadvertently and ironically align themselves with Wertham's ideas about the relationship between word and image, even while bringing comics into the mainstream of education” (p. 20).

To relegate comics to just a way to motivate reluctant readers because they are easier to read or appear more interesting, is to only use a fraction of their potential. “Reading can involve the reading of written text, interacting and responding as well as viewing and listening, while ‘writing’ can involve talking, interacting designing and producing” (Walsh, 2008, p. 102).

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

Educators' belief about the impact comics have on learning has changed significantly throughout the last century. Comics were once considered a menace to traditional literacy skills acquisition. However, more recently, comics have been appreciated as a legitimate text to include when teaching traditional reading and writing. As hybrid texts become a more prominent form of communication, comics will be a rewarding way to teach students to navigate these texts. The making of comics will be an occasion to give voice to their own multimodal stories to share with the world. A multimodal comic book text is contained in Appendix A and further outlines my argument for its importance and inclusion in visual arts education.

References

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APPENDIX A:

Thinking Inside the Boxes:**The Importance of Comics and Graphic Novels in Art Education**

Abstract:

For most of the 20th century,

COMICS AND GRAPHIC

NOVELS¹ HAVE NOT BEEN CONSIDERED WORTHY OF INCLUSION IN CURRICULA BY EDUCATORS.COMICS HAVE BEEN BLAMED FOR
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

AND

poor literacy skill acquisition

(Wertham, 1954; McCloud, 1993, 2000).

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YET RECENTLY EDUCATORS HAVE TAKEN COMICS INTO THE CLASSROOM INSTEAD OF TO THE INCINERATOR. COMICS ARE NOW CONSIDERED BY EDUCATORS TO BE USEFUL FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS (Jacobs, 2007).



THIS PAPER WILL EXPLAIN WHY NARRATIVE ART IS IMPORTANT FOR VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION. THEN IT WILL DISCUSS HOW COMICS HAVE BEEN TREATED BY EDUCATORS IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF HOW LITERACY EDUCATORS NOW ADVOCATE INCLUSION OF COMICS AS A SCAFFOLD FOR TRADITIONAL LITERACY EDUCATION WILL FOLLOW.



THE PAPER CONCLUDES WITH AN EXPLORATION OF COMICS AS AN APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF MULTILITERACIES AND GIVES PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATORS.

The Narrative Paradigm

FISHER (1987) COINED THE PHRASE



homo narrans.

FISHER BELIEVES TO BE HUMAN IS TO BE A STORYTELLER. HE THEORIZES THAT ALL COMMUNICATION IS A FORM OF NARRATIVE.

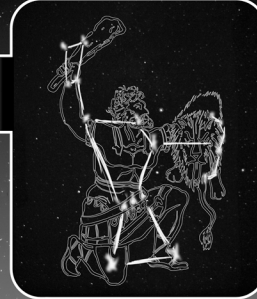


BRUNER (1991) THEORIZED THAT WE ORGANIZE OUR EXPERIENCES AND MEMORIES MAINLY IN THE FORM OF NARRATIVE,

SUCH AS STORIES,

MYTHS

AND EXPLANATIONS.



CLARK (2010) GOES FURTHER AND SAYS WE **LEARN** NARRATIVELY; FIRST, BY HEARING STORIES, SECOND, BY TELLING STORIES.

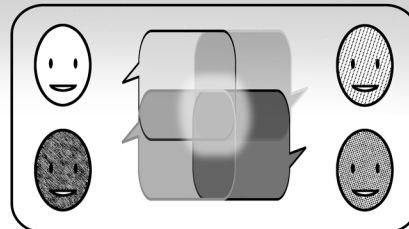


SHE WRITES,

"NARRATIVE AND SENSE MAKING AND LEARNING ARE ALL CONNECTED"

(Clark, 2010, p. 6).

IF FISHER'S BELIEF THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE STORYTELLING CREATURES, WE MUST NURTURE THE STORYTELLING IN OUR STUDENTS TO HELP THEM DISCOVER THEIR OWN HUMANITY AND THE HUMANITY OF OTHERS.

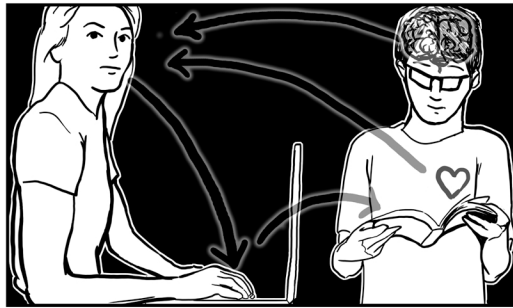


**NARRATIVE IS A
WAY OF
UNDERSTANDING
OURSELVES
AND OTHERS**

(Cottle, 2002; McKeough,
Wigmore-MacLeod, &
Genereux, 2003).

COTTLE (2002) SAYS, "HEARING THE WORDS OR
EVEN READING THE WORDS OF ANOTHER ON A
PAGE, IS ESSENTIALLY AN ENCOUNTER, AN
INTERCHANGE OF SORTS WHEREIN WE RESPOND
NOT ONLY TO THE WORDS OF THE OTHER. . .
BUT TO OUR OWN RESPONSES TO THESE WORDS"

(p. 535).



UNDERSTANDING OTHERS DOES NOT NEED TO BE LIMITED TO
READING AND VIEWING TRUTHFUL ACCOUNTS. SHAUN TAN USED THE
ARRIVAL TO UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES IN HUMAN MIGRATION (Jordan & Tan,
2010).



2

TAN SAYS,



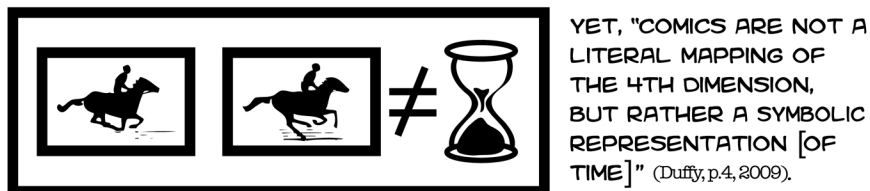
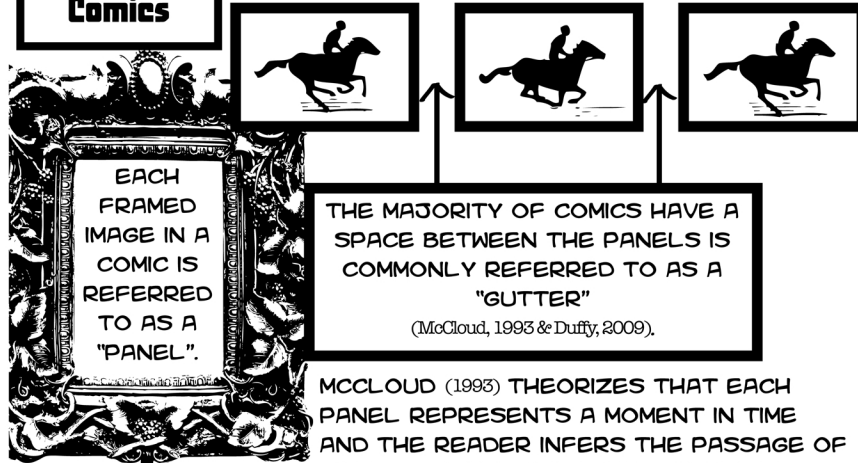
"MORE AND MORE I
SEE FANTASY
WORLDS - AS IN *THE
ARRIVAL* - AS A WAY
OF TAPPING INTO
THE REAL WORLD,
OF TRYING TO
UNDERSTAND
REALITY BETTER
THROUGH A
SPECULATIVE LENS"

(Jordan & Tan, 2010 para. 11).

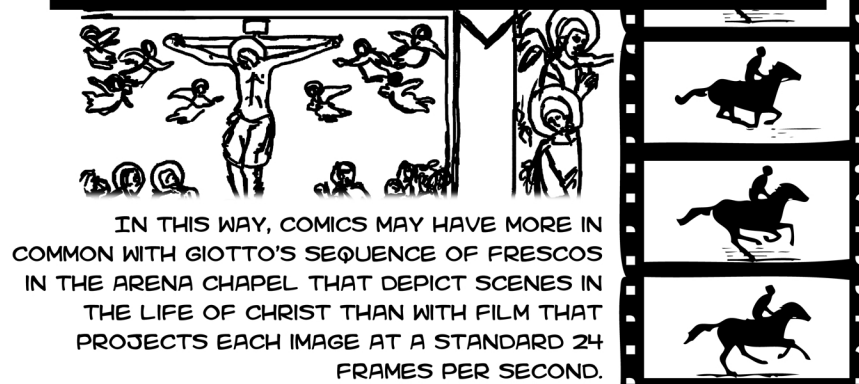


The Temporal Nature of Comics

COMIC BOOKS OFFER A UNIQUE WAY TO TELL STORIES, BECAUSE THEY ARE TEMPORAL IN NATURE. COMICS CREATE A SENSE OF TIME PASSING THROUGH THE JUXTAPOSITION OF IMAGES.



THE READER CAN FOLLOW THE STORY AT THEIR OWN PACE—LINGERING ON IMAGES OR PHRASES AS THEY CHOOSE.

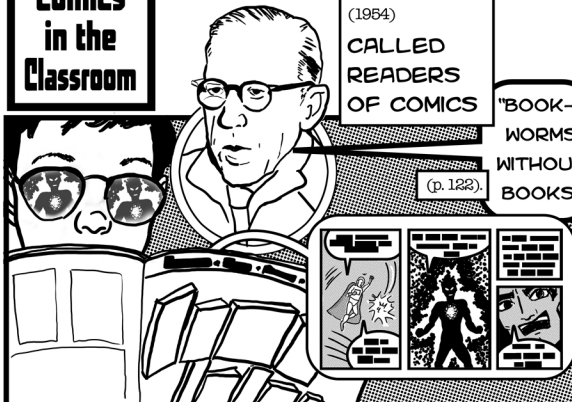


A Brief History of Comics in the Classroom

FOR MOST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, COMICS WERE EITHER VIEWED AS JUVENILE (McCloud, 1993; 2000), LEADING TO DELINQUENCY OR CONTRIBUTING TO ILLITERACY (Wertham, 1954).

WERTHAM (1954) CALLED READERS OF COMICS "BOOK-WORMS WITHOUT BOOKS" (p. 122).

HE BELIEVED THAT WHEN A CHILD READ A COMIC, THEY MERELY LOOKED AT THE PICTURES AND DID NOT ENGAGE WITH THE TEXT, WHICH WERTHAM BELIEVED TO BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE IMAGES (Jacobs, 2007).



UP UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, COMICS CONTINUED TO NOT BE CONSIDERED WORTHWHILE FOR USE IN THE CLASSROOM. IN THE EARLY PART OF THE NEW CENTURY, WAVES OF ARTICLES WERE PUBLISHED LINKING COMICS TO HELPING STUDENTS LEARN TO READ TRADITIONAL PROSE. MOST DESCRIBED USING COMICS TO MOTIVATE RELUCTANT LEARNERS—ESPECIALLY BOYS—AND AS A SCAFFOLD TOWARDS READING PROSE (Jacobs, 2007). 3

I HATE READING!

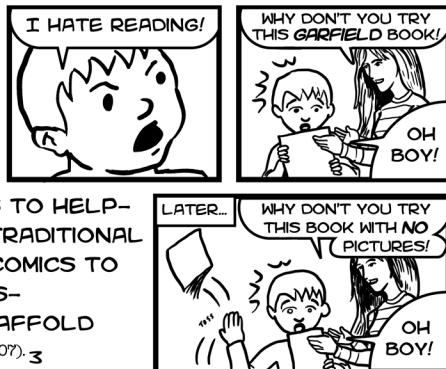
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THIS GARFIELD BOOK!

OH BOY!

LATER...

WHY DON'T YOU TRY THIS BOOK WITH NO PICTURES!


OH BOY!



PROPOSERS OF USING COMICS TO TEACH READING TRADITIONAL PROSE SAY THAT STUDENTS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN PICKING UP COMIC BOOKS TO READ THAN TRADITIONAL BOOKS. THUS COMICS CREATE A MOTIVATION TO ENGAGE WITH THE WORDS AND INCREASE READING COMPREHENSION (Ranker, 2007-2008).

BITZ (2004) SAYS, "INFUSE A COMIC BOOK STORY INTO A GRAMMAR EXERCISE, AND CHILDREN MAY WORK ON THE EXERCISE...AT LEAST A FEW SECONDS LONGER" (p. 576).

ADVENTURES OF SUPER DUPER ADJECTIVE MAN!



Jacobs (2007)
STATES,

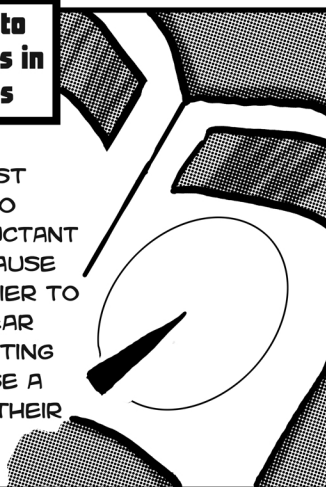
"IN EMPHASIZING THE
MOTIVATIONAL, VISUAL
PERMANENCY (IN THE WAY IT SLOWS
DOWN THE FLOW OF INFORMATION),
INTERMEDIACY, AND THE POPULAR,
SUCH APPROACHES INADVERTENTLY
AND IRONICALLY ALIGN THEMSELVES
WITH WERTHAM'S IDEAS ABOUT THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORD AND
IMAGE, EVEN WHILE BRINGING COMICS
INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF EDUCATION"

(p.20).

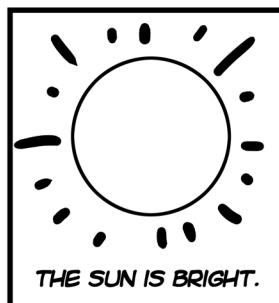


Using Comics to Engage Learners in Multiliteracies

TO RELEGATE
COMICS TO JUST
BEING A WAY TO
MOTIVATE RELUCTANT
READERS BECAUSE
THEY ARE EASIER TO
READ OR APPEAR
MORE INTERESTING
IS TO ONLY USE A
FRACTION OF THEIR
POTENTIAL.



COMICS ARE MORE
THAN ILLUSTRATED
WORDS OR CAPTIONS
FOR IMAGES. THE SUM
IS GREATER THAN THE
PARTS.



THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TEXT, LITERACY AND WRITING
ARE BLURRED AS NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE EMERGE (Walsh, 2008).



YET MANY IN EDUCATION STILL
SEE LITERACY PEDAGOGY IN ITS
TRADITIONAL DEFINITION,
MEANING "TEACHING AND
LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE
IN PAGE-BOUND, OFFICIAL,
STANDARD FORMS OF THE
NATIONAL LANGUAGE"

(New London Group, 1996, pp. 60-61).

THERE ARE MULTIPLE MODES OF
OBTAINING INFORMATION (New London
Group, 1996). MOST INFORMATION COMES
TO US IN THE FORM OF "HYBRID
TEXTS" AND WE MUST ENGAGE SEVERAL MODES SIMULTANEOUSLY TO
UNDERSTAND THESE "TEXTS" (New London Group, 1996; Duncum, 2004; Walsh, 2008).

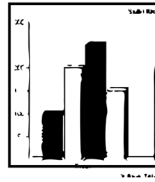
The Hybrid-Text Times

Even A "Traditional" Newspaper Page is a Hybrid-Text

This newspaper page contains a combination of text, maps, charts, graphs and photographs. The reader must also understand the hierarchy of information presented (i.e. if the headline is more important to read than the advertisement. Photographs and advertisements can include body language and color that must be interpreted for meaning.



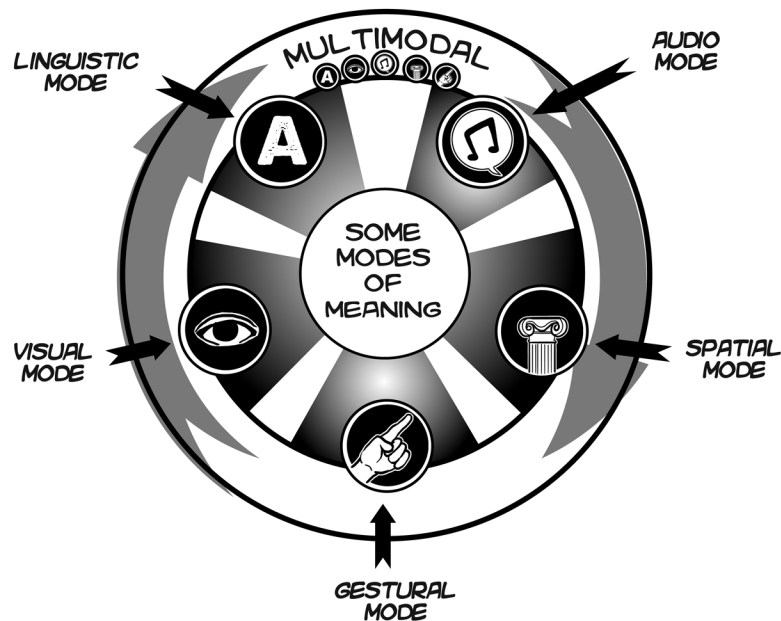
A caption usually accompanies a photograph and adds another layer of meaning to the image presented.



"READING" CAN INVOLVE THE READING OF WRITTEN TEXT, INTERACTING AND RESPONDING AS WELL AS VIEWING AND LISTENING WHILE "WRITING" CAN INVOLVE TALKING, INTERACTING, DESIGNING AND PRODUCING"

(Walsh, 2008, p. 102)

THE NEW LONDON GROUP HAS IDENTIFIED SIX MODES OF MEANING WITH CORRESPONDING "DESIGN ELEMENTS" OR SEMIOTIC GRAMMARS. THE FIRST FIVE MODES ARE LINGUISTIC, VISUAL, AUDIO, GESTURAL AND SPATIAL. 4

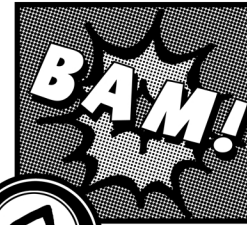


THE SIXTH MODE IS A MULTIMODAL ELEMENT THAT NEGOTIATES THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN THE OTHER FIVE MODES
(New London Group, 1996).

SOME ELEMENTS OF LINGUISTIC DESIGN

- DELIVERY
- VOCABULARY & METAPHOR
- MODALITY
- TRANSITIVITY
- NOMINALIZATION OF PROCESSES
- INFORMATION STRUCTURE
- LOCAL COHERENCE RELATIONS
- GLOBAL COHERENCE RELATIONS

*hase thee to a sus
e lovely and more
do shake the darle
ee's leave hath all
a hot the eye of he
is gold complexion
ie from fair some
ature & changing*



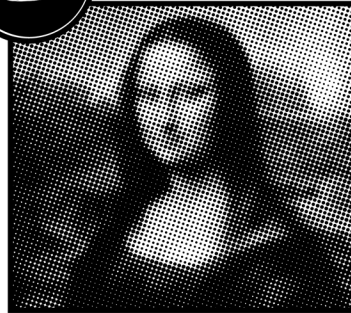
SOME ELEMENTS OF AUDIO DESIGN

- MUSIC -
- SOUND -
- EFFECTS



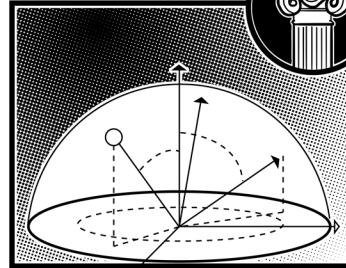
SOME ELEMENTS OF VISUAL DESIGN

- COLOR
- PERSPECTIVE
- VECTORS
- FOREGROUND & BACKGROUND



SOME ELEMENTS OF SPATIAL DESIGN

- ECOSYSTEMS AND GEOGRAPHIC MEANINGS
- ARCHITECTONIC MEANINGS



SOME ELEMENTS OF GESTURAL DESIGN

- BEHAVIOR
- BODILY PHYSICALLY
- GESTURE
- SENSUALITY
- FEELINGS AND AFFECT
- KINESICS
- PROXEMICS



COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS OFTEN INCLUDE VISUAL, GESTURAL, SPATIAL AND LINGUISTIC DESIGNS AND FREQUENTLY EMPLOY THE USE OF THE MULTIMODAL DESIGN TO CREATE MEANINGS THAT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITH THE USE OF A SINGULAR DESIGN (Jacobs, 2007).

COMICS MOST OFTEN USE THE MULTIMODAL MODE TO VISUALLY SIMULATE OTHER MODES, WHICH IS AN ISSUE THAT IS NOT JUST IMPORTANT TO COMICS, BUT VISUAL ART IN GENERAL. I BELIEVE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE OVERLAP BETWEEN THE CONCEPT OF METAPHORICAL SYNAESTHESIA AND THE NEW LONDON'S MULTIMODAL MODE.

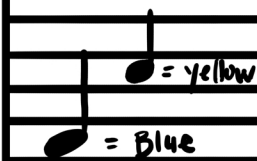
BIFF!!

"THE CONDITION OF SYNAESTHESIA... IS ONE IN WHICH A STIMULUS RECEIVED IN ONE SENSORY MODALITY GIVES RISE TO AN EXPERIENCE IN ANOTHER" (Harrison & Baron-Cohen, 1994, p. 334).



THOUGH GENUINE SYNAESTHESIA IS CONSIDERED A MEDICAL CONDITION, THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF META-PHORICAL SYNAESTHESIA IN WHICH VISUAL ARTIST HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FIND VISUAL EQUIVALENTS OF OTHER SENSES (Harrison & Baron-Cohen, 1994 and van Campen, 1999).

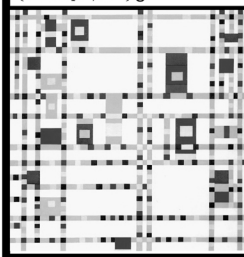
THE GREEKS BELIEVED THAT COLORS AND TONES WERE CONNECTED (van Campen, 1999)



AND KANDINSKY EXPERIMENTED WITH TRANSLATING MUSICAL SOUNDS INTO COLORS (Chipp, 1968). 5

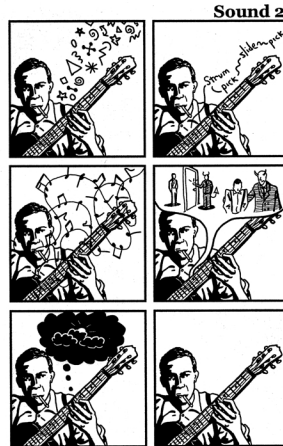


MONDRIAN ASPIRED TO VISUALIZE RHYTHM AND THE NAMES OF HIS COMPOSITIONS SUCH AS, BROADWAY BOOGIE WOOGIE, ALLUDE TO THE TITLES OF JAZZ COMPOSITIONS (van Campen, 1999). 6



MOST OF THE COMICS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED PICK UP WHERE KANDINSKY AND MONDRIAN LEFT OFF AND DEAL WITH VISUALLY SIMULATING SOUND THROUGH ABSTRACT SHAPES AND FREQUENTLY INTEGRATE ONOMATOPOETIC TEXT.

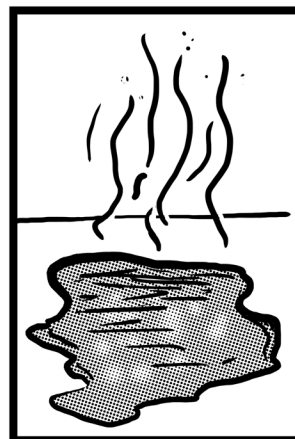
BADMAN'S EXPERIMENTAL SELF-PUBLISHED MINI-COMIC CATALOGS VARIOUS ATTEMPTS TO VISUALIZE A ROBERT JOHNSON SONG (Badman, 2007). 7



THOUGH SOUND IS THE USUAL SENSE ALLUDED TO, THERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF COMICS SIMULATING OTHER SENSES. LARSON (2006) USES LINE AND CALLIGRAPHIC TEXT TO STIMULATE THE SMELL OF THE TACOS.⁸



AND MOST OF US ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CLASSIC "STINK LINE" RISING FROM SOMETHING SMELLY.



Comics and Postmodern Art Education

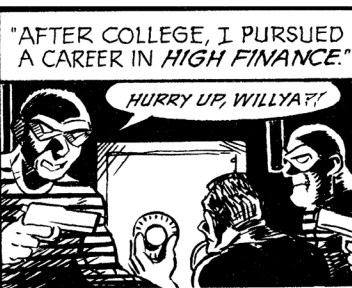
GUDE (2004) SUGGESTS THAT THERE ARE NEW ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY ART EDUCATORS AS WE BEGIN TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE ISSUES THAT ARISE FROM LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY. MANY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF COMICS ARE DIRECT APPLICATIONS OF GUDE'S (2004) "POSTMODERN PRINCIPLES" (P. 8).

"Interaction of Text and Image"

(Gude, 2004, p. 10).
THOUGH IS NOT ALWAYS PRESENT IN COMICS (AS IN TAN'S *THE ARRIVAL*), THE MAJORITY OF COMICS INTEGRATE TEXT AND IMAGE EITHER THROUGH SPEECH BUBBLES OR THROUGH ONOMATOPOEIA.



MANY OF THE MORE INTERESTING TEXT AND IMAGE INTEGRATIONS CREATE A DEEPER LAYER OF MEANING BY BEING INCONGRUENT WITH EACH OTHER AND COULD EASILY BE USED TO ALLOW STUDENTS TO "LEARN NOT TO DEMAND A LITERAL MATCH OF VERBAL AND VISUAL SIGNIFIERS, BUT RATHER TO EXPLORE DISJUNCTURE BETWEEN THESE MODES AS A SOURCE OF MEANING AND PLEASURE" (Gude, 2004, p. 10).⁹



FOR INSTANCE, THE TEXT FOR AN INVITATION IS RENDERED BELOW IN TWO DIFFERENT FONTS.

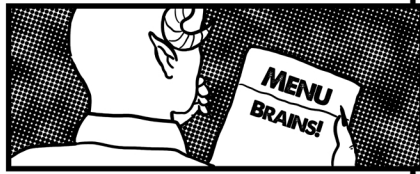
THIS RENDERING SUGGESTS AN ELEGANT PARTY WITH ITS FORMAL SCRIPT.

*You are
cordially invited
to an evening
of dining and
celebration*

THE RENDERING OF THIS INVITATION CONVEYS A LAYER OF IRONY WITH THE FONT CHOSEN. PERHAPS THIS IS FOR A COSTUMED HALLOWEEN PARTY.

**YOU ARE
CORDIALLY
INVITED TO AN
EVENING
OF DINING AND
CELEBRATION**

THE GORY FONT PAIRED WITH THE FORMAL LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT CREATES A HUMOROUS TWIST TO THE INVITATION.

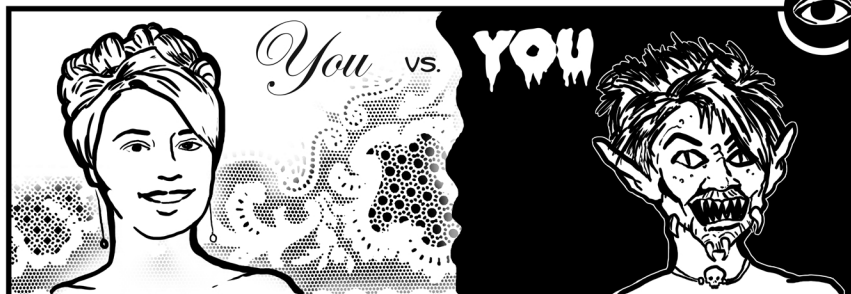


THE TEXT ALONE REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF THE LINGUISTIC MODE.

ou are cor
nvited to a
ing of
celebrat



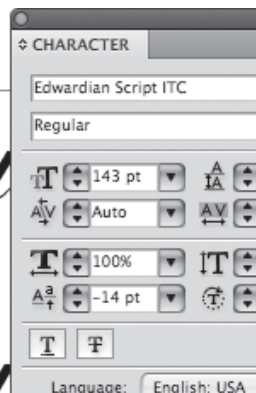
THE TYPEFACE ADDS A NEW LAYER OF MEANING TO THE WRITTEN TEXT AND THUS INCORPORATES THE VISUAL MODE OF MEANING.



WE COULD BEGIN TO ENGAGE THE SPATIAL MODE IN CONCERT WITH THE LINGUISTIC AND THE VISUAL MODE IF WE BEGAN TO CHANGE THE SIZES OF VARIOUS WORDS, CHANGED THE KERNING BETWEEN LETTERS OR LEADING BETWEEN LINES OF TEXT.

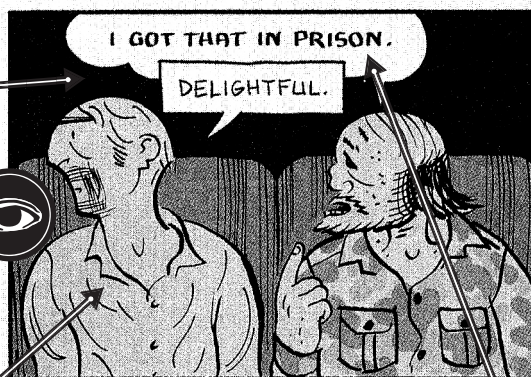


edially



WE ALREADY HAVE THREE MODES AT WORK TO CREATE MEANING THAT SURPASSES THE WRITTEN TEXT, AND WE HAVE NOT EVEN INCORPORATED IMAGES WITH THE TEXT.

IN THIS PANEL FROM DAVID MAZZUCHELLI'S *ASTERIOS POLYP* (2009), SEVERAL DESIGN ELEMENTS ARE USED TO ENGAGE VARIOUS MODES OF MEANING. IT USES VISUAL DESIGN ELEMENTS SUCH AS LINES TO DESCRIBE THE FIGURES AND COLOR TO CONVEY THE LIGHTING ON THE BUS.



THIS PANEL ALSO EMPLOYS GESTURAL DESIGN TO SHOW ASTERIOS TURNING AWAY FROM THE BUM IN DISGUST.

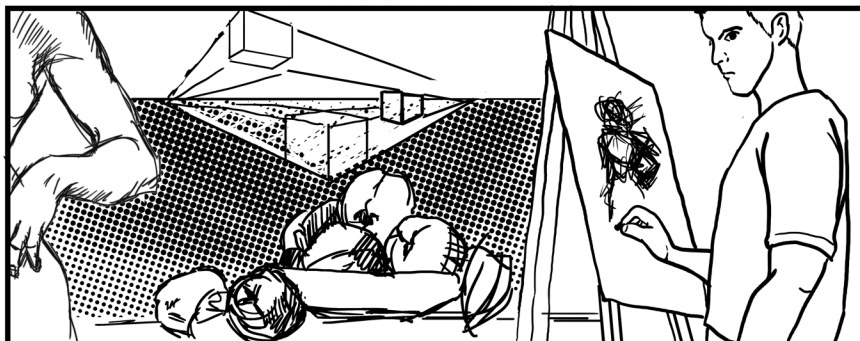


FINALLY, IT COMBINES THE VISUAL, LINGUISTIC AND AUDIO DESIGNS BY USING DIFFERENT SHAPED SPEECH BALLOONS AND FONTS TO GIVE A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF WHAT TWO DIFFERENT VOICES SOUND LIKE.

WHILE MOST COMICS DO NOT EMPLOY AS MANY DESIGNS AS THIS PANEL, OR AT LEAST NOT CONSTANTLY, I USE IT TO ILLUSTRATE HOW MUCH INFORMATION IS PACKED INTO ONE SMALL SECTION OF A PAGE.

Practical Implications for Art Education

SOME OF MY EARLY TRAINING AS AN ARTIST CONSISTED OF ENDLESS HOURS OF DRAWING STILL LIFE ARRANGEMENTS, TWO AND THREE POINT PERSPECTIVE EXERCISES, AND SESSIONS WITH MODELS IN LIFE DRAWING CLASSES.

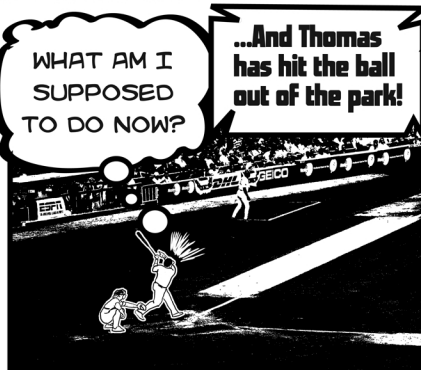


I WAS RARELY GIVEN INSIGHT AS TO HOW TO APPLY THESE NEWLY ACQUIRED SKILLS TO MAKE MEANINGFUL WORKS OF ART. IT WAS LIKE GOING TO BATTING PRACTICE DAY IN AND DAY OUT AND NEVER PLAYING A SINGLE GAME.

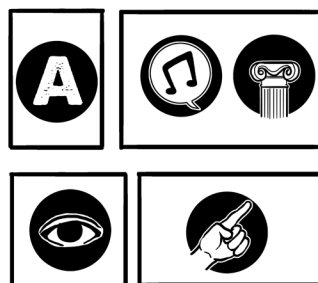


WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED
TO DO NOW?

...And Thomas
has hit the ball
out of the park!



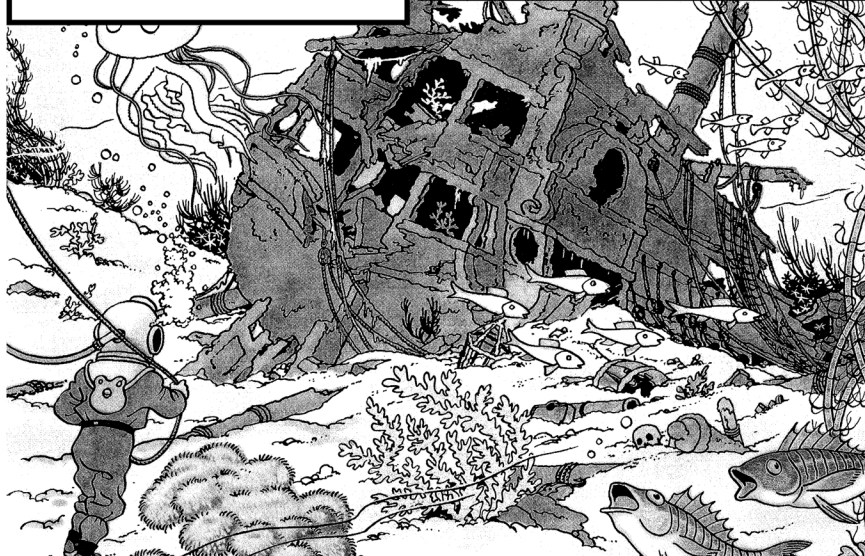
COMICS OFFER A VENUE FOR STUDENTS TO DISPLAY THEIR ABILITY "TO EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY USE A REPERTOIRE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL TO NEGOTIATE A COMPLEX AND MULTISTAGE TASK" (p. 154, Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). EACH MODE OF MEANING OFFERS A CHANCE TO BUILD ARTMAKING SKILLS IN THE CONTEXT OF MAKING VISUAL STORIES.



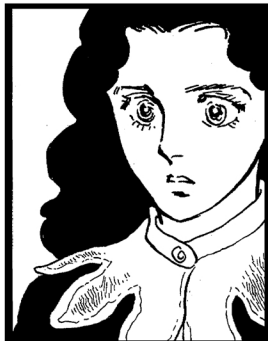
LIFE DRAWING BECOMES NOT ONLY A WAY TO MAKE THE FIGURE LOOK BELIEVABLE, BUT ALSO A WAY TO FLESH OUT CHARACTERS THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE, FASHION, AND PROXIMITY.



PERSPECTIVE DRAWING EXERCISES BECOME A CHANCE TO BUILD WORLDS FOR CHARACTERS TO INHABIT.



PORTRAITURE BECOMES A WAY TO HAVE STUDENTS ACT THROUGH DRAWING TO CONVEY FACIAL EXPRESSIONS THAT REVEAL EMOTIONS, REACTIONS AND PERSONALITY. 10



THE TRADITIONAL SKILLS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY CAN HAVE THEIR RULES SELECTIVELY IGNORED OR EXPRESSIONISTICALLY EXAGGERATED TO FURTHER EXPLORE HUMAN ASPIRATIONS, FEARS, AND FANTASIES.



EXPRESSIVELY DRAWN OR EXAGGERATED FIGURES CAN SYMBOLICALLY COMMUNICATE MEANING BEYOND TYPICAL BODY LANGUAGE. 11



AS CAN EXPRESSIVE QUALITIES OF CARICATURED FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.



DISTORTED PERSPECTIVE CAN BE UTILIZED TO ENHANCE THE SENSE OF DRAMA



THERE CAN BE AN ECONOMIC AND MINIMALIST APPROACH TO SPACIOUSNESS FOR SYMBOLIC PURPOSES.



AND IMPLIED SPACE CAN BE USED TO HEIGHTEN EXCITEMENT.

MAGIC REALISM IS OFTEN EMPLOYED IN COMICS IN A WAY THAT WOULD NOT BE AS BELIEVABLE IN FILM OR PROSE. 12



A MONTAGE OF IMAGES CAN BE USED TO EXTERNALLY EXHIBIT INTERNAL EMOTIONS.

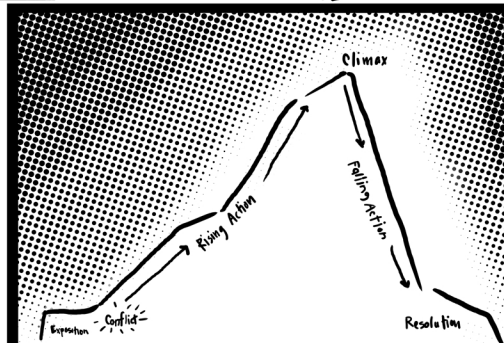


WE NEED TO GIVE STUDENTS TIME TO TELL THEIR STORIES, WHETHER AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EVENTS OR THROUGH THE SPECULATIVE LENS OF FICTION. 13

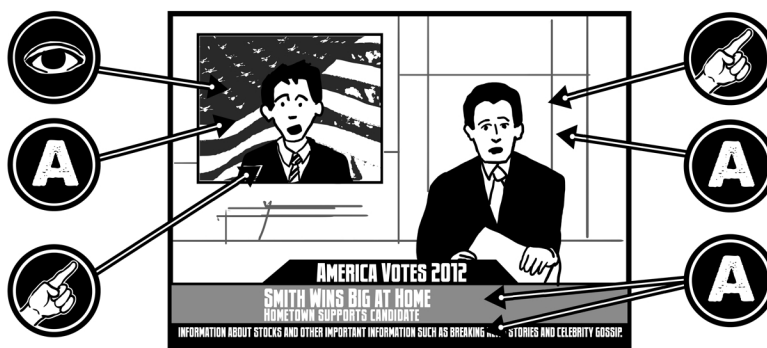


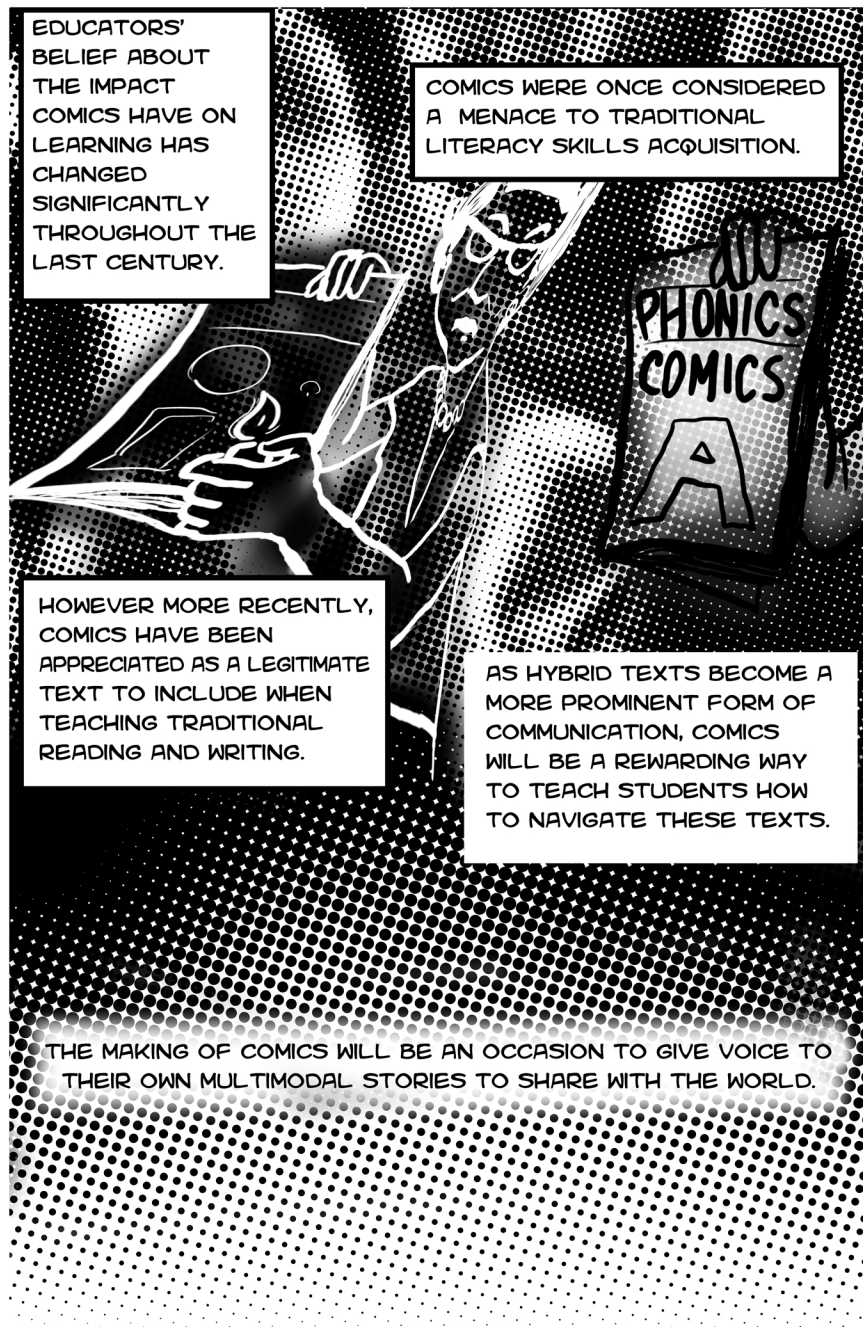
THIS WILL MEAN NOT ONLY ASKING OUR STUDENTS TO USE COMICS AS A MEANS TO DISPLAY A REPERTOIRE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN ARTMAKING, BUT ALSO LITERARY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS SUCH AS ELEMENTS OF PLOT AND CHARACTERIZATION.

IF CONVEYING OUR STORIES IS IMPORTANT FOR UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER, EDUCATORS MUST WORK HARD TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR STUDENTS CAN TELL THEIR STORIES COHERENTLY.



BY PURPOSEFULLY TEACHING OUR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH AND DECIPHER MEANING FROM THESE HYBRID TEXTS, IT WILL HELP THEM TO ALSO UNDERSTAND HYBRID TEXTS THAT THEY ENCOUNTER OUTSIDE OF CLASS.





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ENDNOTES

1. THE MAJORITY OF THE LITERATURE REFERS TO COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS, THEREFORE I HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH THE LITERATURE REFERENCED IN THIS ARTICLE. I FIND THESE TERMS TO BE PROBLEMATIC BECAUSE THEY DO NOT ACCURATELY DESCRIBE THE ARTWORK. MCCLLOUD (1993) PROPOSES THE TERM, "SEQUENTIAL ART", WHICH IS DESCRIPTIVE OF NARRATIVE ART, BUT IS BROADER THAN "COMICS". I PREFER "CARTOONS", BECAUSE THE TERM IS NOT AS EASILY CONFUSED WITH A PERSON WHO TELLS JOKES.

FOR A MORE IN DEPTH DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE FLAWS IN MCCLLOUD'S DEFINITION, SEE HORROCKS (2001) AND COHN (2010). BOTH ARTICLES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE:

[HTTP://WWW.HICKSVILLE.CO.NZ/INVENTING%20COMICS.HTM](http://www.hicksville.co.nz/inventing%20comics.htm)

[HTTP://WWW.EMAKI.NET/READINGS.HTML](http://www.emaki.net/readings.html)

2. FROM "THE ARRIVAL," BY SHAUN TAN, COPYRIGHT 2007, ARTHUR A. LEVINE BOOKS. PERMISSION PENDING.
3. STUDENTS WHO ARE ENTERTAINED BY FAMILIAR CHARACTERS SUCH AS *GARFIELD* ARE MORE LIKELY TO KEEP RETURNING TO BOOKS (McVicker, 2007; Norton, 2003).
4. ADAPTED FROM A CHART ORIGINALLY FOUND ON P. 26 OF NEW LONDON GROUP. (2000). *MULTILITERACIES: LITERACY LEARNING AND THE DESIGN OF SOCIAL FUTURES*. LONDON : ROUTLEDGE.
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