


Words and Images: The Craft of Comics Narration

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ABSTRACT

When adapting comics, the narrative in comics really shines through as the most powerful and unique combination of words and pictures to tell a story. What began as the simple leaflets of the early 20th century has broken new ground in its artistic variety of autobiographical broadsides, superhero epics, and heady graphic novels, making comics the medium at its most malleable. By combining the ancient crafts of written language and visual art, comics offer a unique form of storytelling that directly involves the reader in an interchange between words and pictures. Comics are unique as a storytelling medium because unlike purely prose or traditional visual art, they incorporate both aspects in to a complete, unified whole. In this article, the paper author chose to answer these questions with a study on a narrative medium: comics (more specifically comics). This may beg consideration of which attic studio artifacts result from the struggle of pop idols to maintain commercialize their work and their audience but still make an impact with high art. The paper examines the new ways in which producers are engaging viewers by looking through the lens of technologies through storytelling and visual style analysis. It also talks about how webcomics have changed over the years and how webcomics effect accessibility and reader engagement. In the end, this research is specific about not only the creative capabilities of comics as a narrative form but also how these new narratives/allegories change the way we conceive of what comics can do.

Keywords: *Comics, Storytelling, Images, Composition, Narration, visual style.*

The narrative in comics is unique and potent because the medium relies on a marriage of words and image to tell a story. Comics—traditionally defined as small, narrative, staple-bound strips generated in the wee hours of the early 1900s—have evolved in genres as wide-ranging as autobiographical sketches, superhero sagas or complex graphic novels and webcomics. By blending the two traditional forms, an unique hybrid narrative style is born, the advantages in both written and visual languages exploited to fuel an interactive dynamic and engage the readers in an array of different manners. Therein lies comics narrative, the synergy between word and picture, the push as it grabs, moves on, pushes again. Unlike traditional visual art

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which relies purely on visuals or pure prose which narrates the story through words, comics integrate these to create a well-knitted narrative. Though the text consists of dialogue, thoughts, and key story information, the images add the backdrop, where it is all taking place, and the emotion. Especially this mixed with one another allows us readers to be closer to the character — to be able to see feeling and action with speech and thought, all but a single step removed from the sound of the voice processing the thought. Panel layout and composition are crucial in comics storytelling. Also, the composition of the panels guides the reader's eye, and that guides the reader's mind, changing the pace and flow of the story. When it comes to building suspense, showing significant moments, or displaying a series of events quickly, artists use different panel sizes, shapes, and placements. Color, shading, and line work all help to flesh out the look of the comic, and thus draw the reader into the universe of the comic, and overall help to better express the atmosphere and the tone of the story.

The narration of comics is a book, and a comic book is a collaborative medium; usually, this collective also includes authors, colorists and letterers. They both bring their skills to the table to ensure the end result is a seamless blend of engaging tale and eye-pleasing visuals. This approach is important because it ensures the best presentation and success of the story. Comics distinguish out in a time when multimedia storytelling is becoming more and more common by retaining their own personality. They provide a unique method of interacting with tales, emphasizing the ability of words and visuals to work together to produce something more powerful than the sum of their parts. Comics narration is a complex and diverse art form that tells stories via the combination of words and graphics. Its origins can be found in the sequential art used to tell stories about myths and happenings in ancient cultures. Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Bayeux Tapestry, which used a combination of pictures and succinct text to record important events, are two early examples. “As much recent research suggests, comics are increasingly recognized as a medium, or form of art and literature that is worthy of narratological attention in its own right.” (Micconane 7)

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of the contemporary notion of comics. *The Yellow Kid* by Richard F. Outcault, which debuted in the New York World newspaper in 1895, is among the first comic strip examples. During this time, comic strips, which featured amusing or daring stories, began to appear in newspapers and become a popular form of entertainment. The art of comics narration saw a substantial shift throughout the Golden Age of Comics (1930s–1955). This is the era in which we got Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman,

and other iconic superheroes. Told using a mixture of vibrant imagery and compelling storytelling, their tales. The standardization of speech bubbles, subtitles and onomatopoeia made a significant difference in storytelling that could now not only become more elaborate, but also livelier. The graphic style was also changing, with artists like Jack Kirby and Will Eisner pushing the boundaries of what could be done with sequential art.

By the ensuing Silver Age (1950–1970) and Bronze Age (1970–1980), comics had become both more popular and more complex. Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko stylized to create the Marvel Comics which is more relatable and realistic to the spirit of superhero culture. At that time, underground comix appealed, which usually provided the counterculture and from time-to-time controversial point of view that expanded the medium's topic range. Digital technology has altered comic book storytelling more over the last few decades than at any time since the advent of sequential storytelling. Not so much within their pages (although that, too, for sure), as in the form of how, in the digital era, every push has always been a shove when it comes to comic creation and distribution, and we're in the midst of writing a new litany of voices and means with which to tell a story. Adding interactive elements and multimedia components, which merge the digital storytelling capabilities with traditional comics, has expanded the scope of the medium.

The Symbiosis of Words and Images

The way it makes words and visuals coexist — and the specific way words and visuals are interwoven...different from all other narrative formats This singular interaction enhances the storytelling by allowing for a profound and complicated relationship that is impossible with simply words or visual art. At its core, the symbiotic relationship between words and visuals in comic books is about where these strengths meet in middle ground. They are images in comic books that give the viewer a picture of the characters involved, as well as the settings and the action. They can depict emotions, build atmospheres, and exhibit motion that words will never express. A detailed paragraph of prose describing an emotion cannot portray a complex emotion as quickly or as viscerally as a single panel that shows face expression of a character holding same emotion. Words, however, give these images even more layers of meaning and significance. Motive can be gleaned from thought bubbles and captions, there can be some interaction or dialogue of some kind. If you do not understand events, they can explain them, they can progress the story, and they can create backstory. Use of text in narration to comics

are to enhance and compliment the images, not repeat something that is already shown. A well-captured image of a character taking off in a hurry may be subject to another layer of storytelling by placement of a caption conveying the urgency or inner turmoil, thus adding another dimension to the visual narrative.

Comics are the perfect medium for this symbiosis in layout and art. Panel layout affects the path the eye guides over the page, framing the speed of the narrative. Author and artist communication (often passing along verbal and visual cues from the artist) will not only keep the overall story unbroken and easy to read, but make sure panel backgrounds and focal points mirror. The comic chooses the placement of its speech bubble and captions carefully, allowing the clarity and narrative of the placements to improve. Moreover, the themes and sombreness of the story can be echoed and intensified through the coloring, line work, and stylistic choices in the artwork. Vibrant colors and soft, rounded lines, on the other hand, can imply a more whimsical or light-hearted tale. For instance, dark, subdued colors and sharp, angular lines might be employed to depict the tense, gloomy mood of a story. These graphic components work together with the written story to produce a cohesive look that enhances the reading experience.

The symbiotic link between symbolic images and metaphors in comics is also apparent. Visual metaphors are a fast and efficient way to convey complicated ideas while enhancing the textual story by adding new levels of meaning. N. Jenipha says right, “Objects such as clocks, calendars, hour glass, the position of the Sun, the size of the Moon, cloud, lighting candle, stars and shadows aid the reader to know the specific time period. Hands of clock, weather change, melting candle, dead flowers show the passing time. Ruins of buildings, wrinkles in character faces, ancient antiques, demolished sites, flowing of river and growth of plants and trees project the shift in time. Portrayal of time through objects reflect the mood of the story.” (Jenipha 318) Recurring visual patterns, for instance, might represent a character's inner conflicts or plot components, giving readers more room for interpretation. Essentially, comics narration is a craft that depends on a symphony of words and visuals, each of which complements and strengthens the other. The interplay between these elements produces a dynamic and engaging storytelling experience that captivates readers' attention and engages them on several levels, showcasing the special narrative power of comic books.

Visual Storytelling Techniques in Comics Narration

The core of comics narration is visual storytelling, which uses a variety of methods to convey stories efficiently and dynamically. Panel composition, layout, color utilization, line work, and character and setting description are all examples of these methods, and they all add to the overall storytelling experience. The panels' layout and style play a crucial role in directing the reader's progress through the narrative. Panel forms and sizes can change to match the narrative's tempo and intensity. Scanning Pratt's article (2009) on narration underpins this idea to all comics lovers. (Pratt 107–117) Large, broad panels can be utilized to express quick action or a sense of urgency, while smaller, more closely packed panels can be used for major, dramatic moments, allowing the viewer time to take in the details. These panels are arranged on a page in a way that guides the reader's eye movement and produces a visual rhythm that improves the narrative flow. Artists defy convention and highlight important plot points by employing strategies including overlapping panels, unusual forms, and borderless pictures.

A comic's tone and atmosphere are greatly influenced by color. Different color schemes may conjure up different feelings and settings. In contrast, dark and muted tones may indicate danger or distress while bright and glowing colors can signal energy and joy. Shading techniques provide the art more depth and dimension, helping focus on certain areas and provide a sense of space and volume. The emotional atmosphere by which a tale is sustained can be gently advanced with colour contrasts and fades, which again, helps to control the reading path.

Characters convey emotion and plot effectively, through both facial expression and body language. One face, from happiness and surprise to fear and rage, can show a variety of mixed emotions simultaneously. Artists are very meticulous with these aspects in order to ensure that viewers can infer character's emotions without much of the textual explanation. It is the same with the movement in body language; it will express what the character wants and it will also enrich your story with another level of connotation + mood. Background, settings, add to the setting world building place Story dose not stand alone on page Beautiful backdrops skillfully offer a sense of the world where the tale is set, hinting to either the place, historical moment and context. They may additionally reflect the intellectual feelings of the characters and matters of the story. Thus a disorganised, busy setting may mirror a characters chaos and inner turmoil, whereas a calm, peaceful setting could signify peace and resolution.

Using metaphors and visual symbols helps telling a better story and adds a layer of meaning to it. In turn, recurring themes may symbolize greater topics or character arcs. The best ones can be practiced with colors, objects, patterns and so on. These visual elements help to draw the reader into the narrative, to make them more participatory or interpretive, and thus deepen their comprehension. Comics to express movement and action, use many different techniques such as motion lines, repeated pictures and dynamic poses. These Actors basically animate and bring life to the Scenes, which make them seem move and alive. We see strong and active involving scenes, and hints within the visuals draw the reader by way of what happened. This is why comics are such a powerful and engaging way to tell complicated stories with both high emotional stakes, and also high immediacy, callback, these tools, they are all visual storytelling techniques. Comic book storytelling depends largely on dialogue and text and both compliments the visual story-telling. By adding text components, to the narrative, which are significantly supported by the visuals, a more immersive and complex reading experience is created.

In comics, dialogue is the verbal or word-based exchange between two or more characters. Those balloons have been meticulously placed in order to direct the reader's attention during the panels and make sure the conversation flows nicely. The dialogue in comic books can tell a story at a pace that does not overwhelm the visuals but it also has to be short and snappy. Writers often use slang, idioms, and peculiarities in speech as to separate characters from one another, not because characters themselves are using them, but because they reflect a genuine and evocative style.

Captions are another critical part of the written content which provide additional background, context, and narrative interpretation. A caption can represent a narrator, speech other than what is emanating from the mouths of participants in a scene, like an internal monologue or related text, in distinction to spoken dialog, the latter emanating from the mouths of characters. They also help convey specifics such as inner monologues, emotions, or backstory that might be more difficult to represent with just pictures. To ensure, the reader entirely understands the scope of the story, the captions are used to catch up the visual narrative.

Sound effects ES: Written sounds are terrific- onomatopoeia. These elements lend the story a sensory richness that enhances its verisimilitude. Onomatopoeia sound effects like “BAM,” “CRASH,” or “WHIRR” make the verbal incarnation of sounds graphic and further add to the

activity and the setting of the story. The stylistic presentation of sound effects, which can also inflect what type of noise and how loud/soft it is, which includes the font choice, size, and placement, to get the reader more involved. Comic book text font and lettering are meticulously designed to improve readability and visual appeal. Letterers are responsible for making sure that the language serves to elevate the art but never take over. Use different typefaces and styles to convey mood and emotion. For example, attractive, peaceful or refinement representative cursive typefaces, then will give a sense of hurry or wrath. This ensures the text remains readable and therefore engaging while maintaining a narrative flow.

The finest comics bring text as well as graphics with each other in a manner that allows them to tell the tale all at once. This is rhythm and tempo, leading the reader through the story. Text emphasizes subtext, contrast of meaning, and accentuates visual elements. For instance, a frame that is visually tense may be so much more impactful when given caption that reflects a character's anxiety. Conversely, images can intensify textual meanings by making the intangible more tangible, more experientially relatable. Dialogue and text are great tools for developing character and emotional nuance. The more articulate things a character thinks and says, the more sympathetic and three-dimensional (not to mention convincing) they are. Captions that voice the thoughts inside a character's head could add layers to the character by revealing its inner desires and obstacles. This adds to the reader's depth of engagement with the narrative as it allows them to empathize with the characters better. Dialogue and text are what make comic book narration more powerful as tools of storytelling. They promise to maintain that it will not only be a next-level multimedia but will provide clarity, context, and depth of feeling to the story. The story you can only tell in a comic book is lush and harmonious in an interwoven mesh of words and ink.

Symbolism and Metaphor in Comics

In comics, symbolism and metaphor are potent storytelling devices that enable authors to portray difficult concepts, topics, and feelings subtly but effectively. By offering more nuanced levels of meaning and encouraging readers to interact with the tale on a more interpretive level, these literary techniques enhance the storytelling experience. Comics run on symbolism and metaphor and are an excellent way to communicate difficult ideas, themes, and emotions in a subtle but powerful manner. These literary techniques, by way of offering more nuanced layers of meaning, enable the reader to engage more deeply with the story, thus enriching the

roundness of the storytelling experience. By providing physical examples of abstract concepts, these visual clues enhance the narrative's emotive and thought-provoking qualities. J. J. Fall states, “they are also beautiful, aesthetically pleasing objects makes them all the more potent.” (Fall 91-108)

Symbolic components are frequently used in character design to represent a character's personality, role, or storyline. For example, superheroes usually dress in costumes that represent their abilities or values. Superman's "S" symbol represents strength and hope, and Batman's ominous, bat-themed clothing symbolizes his affinity for the night and his duty as a ferocious vigilante. Artists are able to convey crucial facets of a character's identity through these designs without having to give a clear explanation. Comic book metaphors enhance the story by suggesting and associating seemingly unrelated ideas via the use of verbal and visual components. The idea of a visual metaphor may be illustrated by a scene where a character is depicted as physically carrying a heavy burden, representing their responsibilities and troubles. While a storm can be symbolic of chaos/creativity, a traveller through a storm can symbolize a mental spirit or a dark time in a person's life. These visual metaphors are understandable because of the realistic imagery and because they formed the way the reader understood the feelings and situations.

Comic locations may also be used as a form of metaphor. A lush, vibrant forest could denote growth, restoration, and the wilderness, while a post-apocalyptic cityscape can symbolize decay, decadence, and cynicism. If they are compatible with the concepts of the story and the overall tone, the settings serve to flesh out the world living inside the world, which rightfully adds to the verisimilitude of the narrative when juxtaposed with the background in which the action is backgrounded. Graphic patterns and symbolic sequences may be repeated so that a comic can establish a coherent thematic thread. Where a flower is featured in correlation with a specific symbol like someone or thing the cost of that flower can grow as the narrative unfolds and can signify reality like or memories. Those sets of themes can keep that enigmatic ability and reinforce the reader's compulsion to draft patterns and links across its disparate parts. Textual elements like comic book dialogue or captions can be written in metaphors and symbolism as well. A character may employ language of the metaphor to communicate her inner state, or to signify what is occurring to her. For instance, they might say that they feel “like a caged bird” to describe how cut off they feel. Captions using metaphors will provide storytelling depth and will augment the narrative experience for the reader.

The composition of that panel can be meaningful. A small and crowded grid could be used to represent a feeling of imprisonment or restriction while a large, empty single panel could represent an idea of freedom and opportunity. The arrangement of the panels and their 'framing,' also have their effect on the reading of the story, hopefully increasing the emotional and thematic impact. In simple terms, comics lean on a lot of symbolism and metaphor to communicate complex ideas and emotions in an easily understandable and engaging way. By incorporating both text and visual components, creators may add layers of depth to their stories and allow readers to immerse even deeper into the story. Books may utilize these tropes, but the comics use the tropes as tools to make it a more powerful and adaptable story-telling medium.

Comics Narration: Developing a Character by Visual

Character advancements in the narrative of shield cautiously help them well in the comedian as they can be observed and determined upon their appearance, activities, and expressions. Unlike prose where character traits are told, not shown — comics can show these things in images and get them across with an efficiency and immediacy prose doesn't allow. The original designs of characters, from everything to what they wear, to what they look like, to in general their style and pretty much tell you everything you need to know about them from appearance alone. Classic costumes and emblems which heroes often use to represent their heroics and ideals include superman cape and insignia; represent justice and hope. Villains might have evil designs that suggest their sinister schemes. Thanks to these visual clues, the characters have been identified throughout the series, some of them at a glance. Mostly Character emotions and correct reactions are shown through his/her body language and facial expression. One may express determination and havoc as well as peace or joy, anger, in a clenched fist, a furrowed forehead, or an open posture. With very little speech, even without explicit narration, readers will be lead to believe what the characters are thinking and feeling because of these subtle visual clues. Constant visual signals make characters more relatable and gives tangible emotional journeys.

Character development and visual evolution over time can also compliment one another (ala Meg and Marty). A new look in clothing, hairstyle, or body image, for example, can reflect internal changes, like gaining confidence, surviving a life challenge, or maturing. Spider-Man himself goes from a rag tag makeshift outfit to a more polished spidey-suit that represents his

own progression from amateur to experience hero. These are edits to highlight the character arcs, the pivotal moments in growth within scenes. After all, character development is based on how they interact with the world as much as the world created around them. So, for instance, a character who is always in dark, dingy settings or lighting conditions may be a metaphor for depression or despair, while another character, who is frequently placed in bright, open locations can be a symbol of optimism or emancipation. The more these contextual images assist the characters in their development and emotional states, the better the story should become.

In comics storytelling these are visual conventions that convey the physicality of the characters on the page that provide dramatic information at a crucial moment visually that might otherwise be revealed through clunky and/or gradual narrative delivery in film or on the stage. Those things deepen the emotional engagement of the characters in the story, and those things assist readers in relating to those characters faster all of which adds impact to the story.

World-Building in Comics

World-building is a complex, detailed and layered process in the funny book world which gives a deep and believable context for storytelling. When incorporating them, they are framing macroenvironments of textual and visual elements, place, social systems, culture, history...and are constructing these things before your very eyes. The rich universe gives the narrative plenty of meat for a background, which propels character growth and story arc. For a comic book universe, visual representation of Places are the cornerstone for world-building. Whether landscapes, cityscapes, or interiors, these usually intricate sets are designed by artists to spot where the story unfolds in place. Those themes are echoed in the colourfully repurposed sets, as are the fantasy language and theatrical style of the story. Dark narrow alleyways, broken down buildings, looming architecture, with a feel of decay and despair, is exactly how one would imagine a dystopian city. In contrast amongst the elements found in a fantasy world such as more vibrant woods, soaring castles, and an ethereal sky that inspire wonder and adventure. Uniform visuals and ornate settings help readers immerse in the story's environment World building does not stop at creating a plausible societies with fully developed cultures, traditions and social class systems. Real-world examples would be fashion styles, architectural structures and public spaces that reflect cultures. These societies are further fleshed out with elements like text, such as signs in a fictional language or the dialogue making references to cultural

practices. The different locales of Gotham City in the Batman comics — even the district known as Crime Alley on Coates Island that has been all but abandoned — have individual spec traits that show the socio-economic range and cultural dynamism of the city.

The past is a rich landscape to draw from in understanding our present circumstances in a developed world. Characters within the story, lore and flashbacks – all may contribute to the story of the world. Visual storytelling is a good approach, in the form of nudity banners, walls, memorial, ruins etc. — providing the clue to past, but who could contextualise their association in the society we all live in. The story has an added depth due to this historical context, and the scene, therefore, feels like a lived-in, bustling one. The best world-building in comics is so inseparable from the story being told. The environment should have an impact on the story and the characters, and they should in turn impact the environment. The plot progresses thanks to environmental hazards, cultural conflict, and social norms can create relationships of significance. But, say, the galaxy enmeshed in politics and all sorts of planets are integral to the main plot and character journeys in Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples "Saga." Symbolism can be part of the world-building that support themes and character arcs. A growing garden thus implies optimism and regeneration while a desolate wasteland can represent a dark moment in a character's mind. The use of symbolic places gives readers additional layers of meaning to glean, which greater impact its message to the story.

Consistency in the text and the art style are key to this sort of world-building. It must be linked with SI units, to reveal the laws and reasoning of universe to the readers. Careful mapping, frequent cultural references, and consistent architectural design produce a coherent, believable setting. An eye for detail adds even more authenticity and depth to the setting: remembering indigenous wildlife, languid weather, and techno-progressivism. In simplest terms, world building in comics is the careful construction of detailed, immersive landscapes that underpin and complement the narrative. Authors create worlds filled with symbolic elements, historical background, cultural and socioeconomic structures, and visual design that pull readers in and heighten the storytelling experience.

The obstacles as well as chance for the comic artists of today is varied fairly extensively. One of the biggest obstacles is the rapidly changing world of distribution in which webcomics and digital platforms are altering how comics are both read and shared. While this has made information more accessible to viewers anywhere the world over, it has also made it harder to

monetize and be seen amidst the glut of online content. At the same time, calls for better-to more inclusive-narrative and various characters representing human experience have made diversity and representation necessary.

Conclusion

It is very hard for artists to walk that fine line of making sense as a viable product while trying to constantly push the boundaries of their medium as well as please their audience. In response to this, producers are exploring new narrative techniques visual styles and storytelling forms in order to hook the viewers in fresh and exciting ways. With storytelling never been more innovative, creators are altering how people view webcomics, pushing the boundaries of the affordable medium and expanding its reach. With comics and VR or comics and animation paired together it opens up a new level of audience interaction and narrative, respectively. The fate and...) survival and relevance of comics today rest upon an ability to move the medium forward through [shrug] more creative means at overcoming these obstacles. The problems and breakthroughs all present in current comics are a testimony to the constantly changing nature of the field. In addition to facing challenges related to diversity, distribution, and striking the right balance between creative vision and financial success, creators welcome the chance to learn and grow. The emergence of webcomics and digital platforms has increased comics accessibility, but it has also created new challenges for their visibility and revenue. Umberto Eco wrote, “It is not true that comic strips are a harmless amusement, which, though created for children, can also appeal to adults, seated in their easy-chairs after dinner, a bit of escapism to be enjoyed without harm and without gain. The mass culture industry produces comics on an international scale and distributes them on every level..” (Eco 36-44)

Nonetheless, the current digital environment also promotes creativity, as producers experiment with novel storytelling methods, artistic approaches, and cooperative endeavours. The possibilities of the medium are constantly being redefined and pushed by contemporary comics, which feature varied representation and experimentation with storytelling styles. “Comics have a unique capacity for holding visual and verbal modes together in a single form.” (Irwin 226) Through creative problem-solving and adopting cutting-edge strategies, comic book authors guarantee that comics will always be a lively and contemporary narrative medium for readers everywhere. The medium's versatility and tenacity as it develops offer both readers and artists intriguing new opportunities in the future.

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