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Edited by Adam I. Attwood

Comics and Graphic Novels - International Perspectives, Education, and Culture

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Preface

Comics and graphic novels have become more popular since the mid-1900s with increasing numbers of television and movie adaptations. Engaging readers in various sociocultural issues through multimodal approaches can increase the reader's understanding of the given topics. The modality of comics and graphic novels has also been further adapted into computer games and other visual media to enhance the audience's engagement with the concepts, stories, ideas, and characters. Sometimes comics and graphic novels are focused on fantasy, sometimes on historical figures and issues, and sometimes they are focused on issues in readers' lived experience. These can address sociopolitical issues, cultural questions, and ideologies, and these can sometimes challenge readers to grow in their awareness of the given topic and reflect on the historical and contemporary understanding of those topics across time.

The chapter authors address various ideas through the lenses of comics and graphic novels from both historical and contemporary perspectives. There has also been an increase in overlap in the 2000s to 2020s between comics and graphic novels with interactive multimedia such as computer games and other software animation modalities. The Internet has substantially expanded international and intercultural exchange through these media, making comics and graphic novels more widely accessible. As comic book characters become an interactive experience with computer games, the audience has been able to take an active role in the stories and storytelling process. These stories also sometimes focus on histories and historical figures as ways to prompt reflection and discussion. Through these perspectives, the influence of comics and graphic novels internationally comes into focus.

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Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter: Multimodal Storytelling Literacy with Comics and Graphic Novels

Adam I. Attwood

1. Introduction

Part of the appeal of comics and graphic novels is in their storytelling. Effective storytelling includes engaging the reader in compelling characters, character development and story arcs that engage relatable emotions and emotional investment in the characters. They engage audiences in both personal and larger sociocultural contexts. When a comic book or graphic novel is a bildungsroman, it can be particularly effective at engaging readers in the story. This genre offers the coming-of-age narrative or the stories of personal development from childhood to adulthood. It features stories of how someone became who they are and where they are now going and has been a feature of computer gaming culture since the first-person format emerged [1, 2]. The engaging format of the bildungsroman can be seen in computer games structured on the first-person storytelling adventure model. Examples such as *Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order* and its sequel *Star Wars Jedi Survivor* are examples of the bildungsroman genre through first-person narrative. Computer games such as these and others are also an adapted form of the graphic novel or comic book that situates the reader into an experiential narrative—making them an active observer or actor in the story [3].

2. Multimodality in storytelling

Comic books and graphic novels engage readers in multimedia ways to see the full richness of the story and characters. As such, this multimodality is a type of storytelling literacy. Computer games engage people in a way to experience the story as a player. This is an important advancement in the graphic novel format in that people become a part of the story to experience the characters' perspectives and relationships. This is an example of experiencing the culture of the story in a personal way. The reader becomes a player, an actor in the story who has agency in the decisions and the relationships. It is in these virtual relationships that comic books and graphic novels—especially when in the interactive computer game format—provide a powerful literary framework unlike any other.

The format of the graphic novel has become increasingly immersive with advancements in computer gaming technology. Stories, storytelling, and narrative can be experiential with computer games in a way that elevates the richness of the graphic novel. Comic books and graphic novels as a format elevated storytelling in engaging

ways even before computer game technology. With the increase in popularity of comic books and graphic novels during the twentieth century merged with advancements in computer technology, there have been some studies that study gaming culture as these communities are built upon comic books and graphic novels. Sometimes people approach this format in ways that seek to test ways of seeing themselves or test out identities within the ostensible safety of the virtual world [2, 3]. Comic books and graphic novels are written for various age groups, and it is in the bildungsroman genre that the most power in individual formation can be seen and engages all age groups because of its emphasis on stories of personal development, the coming-of-age narratives, and the emotions of adolescence and young adulthood. Such narratives are remembered years later in remembrance, reminiscing, and in how someone became who they are. The narrative of formation is featured in nearly every culture and has resonance across time and place [1].

Comics and graphic novels engage their audience through the combination of modalities of text and visual arts. Audio reading is often a third modality added to the text and visual arts as comics and graphic novels may also be audio books. Live action role-playing (LARP) has also been known to become a fourth modality as fans of comics and graphic novels become inspired by the stories [4]. There are various conventions that bring together various comics and graphic novel enthusiasts, such as Comic-Con International in San Diego, California. This multimodal aspect is an expansive example of the combination of esthetics and literacy that puts into practice the concept of audience-centered esthetic literacy.

Teaching literacy through comics and graphic novels can be done at every grade level. Graphic novels such as *Algeria is Beautiful Like America* and *Puerto Rico Strong: A Comics Anthology Supporting Puerto Rico Disaster Relief and Recovery* are examples that could be used in curriculum to provide ways to teach students about historical and contemporary events. Using graphic novels and comics can engage higher level thinking skills through text, visual imagery, and overall vivid storytelling from several perspectives. Graphic novels can provide ways to elucidate perspectives through engaging in individual narratives. They can also present multiple narratives in an intertwined and interactive way that engages the audience to enter the story with the writer and illustrator in an active, generative experience that promotes literacy skills and intercultural communication [5].

For example, if teaching a unit on the history of France or Algeria, a graphic novel such as *Algeria is Beautiful Like America* could be used for discussing a fascinating journey of a search for identity from the point of view of Olivia Burton who was born in France of a French settler family from Algeria [6]. Her family were known as *Pieds-Noirs* ("Black Feet"); this is the name for French settlers and those born to French settlers in Algeria. This engaging English translation of the original French story discusses several generations of Olivia's family from 1898 to 1962 and their lives in Algeria. She explores her family's roots in France and Algeria, their decision to leave Algeria for France, and the remarkable hospitality she received during her search of family identity in Algeria four decades after her grandparents and mother left Algeria for France. This engaging story prompts questions about identity and cultural place, belongingness, and intriguing intercultural comparisons between the frontier expanse of Algeria beyond the Mediterranean coastline with the frontier expanse of the inland American West during colonization.

Another example, if teaching about the history of Puerto Rico, is a graphic anthology such as *Puerto Rico Strong* that engages all levels of readers to interact with the

stories of, for, and about Puerto Rico [7]. The illustrated short stories form a mosaic of myths, histories, and traditions of the various peoples of Puerto Rico. Various drawings, paintings, and other artworks are included with the stories to further highlight cultural context. This anthology is a way for students to discuss Puerto Rican history and establish context for discussing the effects of Hurricane Maria (2017). There are many examples of graphic novels that can be used in social studies and humanities courses to teach literacy skills and history.

3. Social esthetics of multimodal storytelling

John Dewey emphasized the participatory possibilities of esthetics as there are "multitudes of ways of participating in it … through imagination and the emotions they evoke, into other forms of relationship and participation than our own" ([8], p. 347). From a Deweyan perspective of esthetics, it could be argued that comics and graphic novels are an example of experiencing art, that LARPing at comic conventions and playing a computer game two-dimensionally or in three dimensions with a virtual reality headset are examples of art as experience. This is part of the power of multimodal literacy is that students or other audiences are learning through a type of immersive experience [1, 4]. This provides students or other audiences that use comics and graphic novels both for reading and for interactive games to shift psychological place, if only temporarily, to experience storytelling in substantially engaging ways.

There is a combination of the subliminal and the liminal as well as the whole self with its constituent parts of the psyche that influence a person's approach to comics and graphic novels. The activation of multiple senses—the textual, the visual, and the aural—can activate people's subconscious and conscious in ways that resonate emotionally with the story. The reader may think about their own life, the people they know, and the type of person they want to be while reading comics and graphic novels. This graphic novel and the comic book can evoke generative understanding and interest in the story, the characters, and their relationships [5].

The social context of comics and graphic novels is important for how audiences engage with the stories and situate themselves relative to those stories. Movies adapted from comic books, such as *Black Panther*, include social commentary embedded into the story and characters' decisions which affect popular cultural perceptions of social and material culture that are reflective of the past and present [9]. They prompt discussion. Meaning-making is a shared process in this multimodal literacy in which engagement is dynamic. Memories are co-constructed within the frameworks of textual-visual media. When music and other audio is added, the comics and graphic novels become further amplified in their potential resonance with audiences. This is a form of social ecology in that individuals interact with comics and graphic novels within cultural contexts in which they participate in the meaning of the stories—that are in part through interpretations of memories—especially when these stories are part of literacy instruction or related literature or humanities classes [10]. These components of multimodal literacy that comics, graphic novels, and their digital equivalents feature can often be influential starting in early adolescence with long term implications into adulthood for how some students see themselves and engage in reflective practices of individuation [11].

Comics and graphic novels are part of social esthetics in that they use the visual arts and literary arts to engage audiences in historical, contemporary, and potential future concepts, cultural constructs, and characters. These can and have been adapted into audio versions, television series, and movies that have had broad implications in popular culture. When considered through the lens of archeophisomorphic theory [12], many of the stories in comic books and graphic novels allude to change and continuity over time of cultural values and to the social artifacts of the individual and collective psyche or *zeitgeist*. Values are frequently featured in the nuanced dramas of comic books and graphic novels that place protagonists in positions of having to make difficult decisions and whose choices may have complicated consequences that leave room for debate from the audience as to how the protagonist's choices affected them. The comic book or graphic novel can prompt the reader to consider various points of view on challenging concepts in the changes and continuities across time affecting individuals and groups of people [13].

4. Combining esthetics in multimodal storytelling

Comics and graphic novels can be used for teaching various literacy skills in addition to cultural content knowledge and related social studies content [14]. As seen in **Figure 1**, this color pencil drawing—of a sunrise in the background and an oak tree and owl in the foreground—could be the start of a comic book on teaching elementary school students about literacy through a story format. This cartoon art genre suggests an inviting approach for students to engage with the story in achieving the learning objectives. The art style or genre suggests what the audience should or may expect. By adding a poem to **Figure 1**, a story emerges: *Consilio the owl did say / hello to you this bright and sunny day! / I will be your guide by your side / navigating this path illuminated by the Sun / learning lots of new vocabulary will be fun! / let us start with verisimilitude / to understand this word we shall need to have a good attitude*.

That short poem invites the reader into the illustration. The text and the visual art together prompt a multimodal reinforcement of the new vocabulary terms that are being conveyed. This basic example introduces the concept of multimodal storytelling literacy in which the text and the visual art may accomplish more when combined than when they are separate [5]. The audience may be more likely to engage with the text because of the visual art and more likely to engage with the visual art because of the text. This foundational understanding of multimodal storytelling then, forms the basis for advanced storytelling in comic books and graphic novels in young adult literature and in adult nonfiction and fiction graphic novels.

Computer games are the next iteration of this multimodal storytelling in that the storytelling in computer games engages audiences as participants in the story. Such an immersive process can be reinforced by movies as the screenplays animate the stories. The participatory nature of computer games takes the graphic novel and the comic book to another level of psychological resonance both for the individual participant and for their community. The simulation aspect of the computerized comic book or graphic novel can, in part, reify the imagination of the participants. The implications are substantial in that participants may engage with story at a deeper psychological level [1, 4, 11].

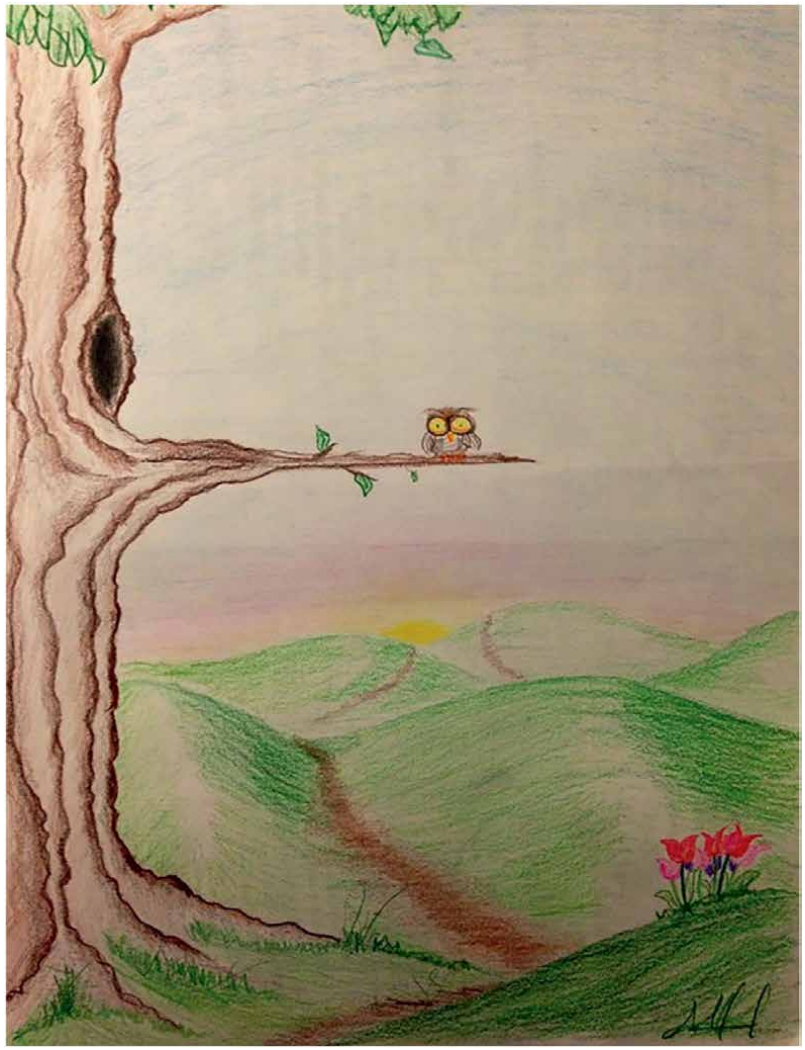

Figure 1.
"Oak forest sunrise with owl 1" (2012) by Adam I. Attwood.

5. Conclusion

Comics and graphic novels are a substantive way to communicate complex topics across international perspectives, educational settings, and cultures. Various perspectives on the roles of comic books and graphic novels provide opportunities for readers to engage with stories at multiple cognitive levels. These perspectives introduce the various ways that this multimodal storytelling genre affects cultures, promotes learning and intercultural exchange, and inspires people to explore their own identities, the identities of various cultures, and individual understandings of the power of storytelling. Fiction and non-fiction comics and graphic novels prompt creative ways to explore individual identity and communities from across human geographies.

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Chapter 2

Perspective Chapter: Visual Science Communication – Complexity to Comprehension of Marine Ecosystems

Avi Litwack and Jason S. Link

Abstract

In the realm of science communication, challenges occur in translating intricate concepts into easily digestible information. This paper delves into the pivotal role of visual presentations in this process, drawing from the psychology of image processing which posits that a picture can convey volumes of information more efficiently than the proverbial thousand words. We examine tools like cartoons, infographics, and other visual depictions in summarizing and synthesizing complex scenarios within marine ecosystem science. This paper offers a nuanced exploration of the power of visual science communication in bridging the gap between complexity and comprehension. Through illustrative examples, we juxtapose text with imagery, documenting the scientific message and the diverse reactions evoked. This paper recommends best practices to establish guidelines and recommendations for visual scientific communication.

Keywords: visual science communication, marine ecosystem science, information visualization, science visualization, science communication

1. Introduction

Some of the earliest known visual representations rendered by humans are cave paintings [1]. These visual representations of the world around our proto-human ancestors often depict wild animals. It can be argued that these capture a fair representation of the animal, at least enough information to identify the species, and often actions associated with those animals (e.g., hunting, attacking humans, etc.). While these are often referred to as artistic expressions, there is information conveyed and the audience can identify the objects and scene presented as having a real-world correlation.

Communication, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the imparting or exchanging of information" [2]. Science, defined by the same resource, is the "systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation, experimentation, and the testing of theories against the evidence

obtained" [3]. Notably, visuals emerge as a science communication tool bridging intricate concepts with the audience's understanding.

Scientists routinely engage in theories, practices, processes, and procedures. It is of critical importance to convey this work to a wide-range of audiences. In fact, many critical decisions are based off of this scientific information. To aid in the understanding of the scientific message, visuals are often employed to provide further understanding for the audience. They can provide the means by which the audience can connect to an abstract idea or concept using familiar imagery to evoke a response. The capacity of users to interpret an image that faithfully conveys the scientific message is imperative. Within this context, this paper can function as an introductory guide to visual science communication, catering to the needs of both scientists and science communicators endeavoring to engage audiences, whether well versed or unfamiliar with intricate scientific concepts.

2. Visuals: key components in communication

For the purposes of this paper, visual communication can be defined as the process by which one party conveys information to another and their ocular receptors receive this information. Visual representation of scenes includes many elements that the user perceives and processes to form a representation in the user's mind. A scene can be distilled into visual elements that trigger recognition. These include: color, contrast, size, and movement. These elements determine where the user focuses their attention and can aid in scene recognition.

Objects in a scene can be arranged by foreground and background. Space can be defined as positive and negative space. Positive space in a scene is represented by objects. Negative space is the absence of an object. Objects can be rendered via basic geometric shapes. For example, a house can be represented as basic triangles, squares, circles, and rectangles. Text is a visual representation of unique shapes representing an alphabet. Typography can be seen as unique geometric shapes that form letters. The linguistic component married with visuals is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the receiver's ability to process messages via the size of textual objects may have an impact on scene and object relevance. The means of communicating via visuals has evolved quite rapidly. Within the past 200 years our means of visual input has transformed from static to dynamic motion. Information dissemination has migrated from pamphlets and newspapers to digital media. As an example of this rapid shift: "Estimated Newspaper Publishers revenue dropped by 52.0%" and "estimated revenue for periodical publishing, which includes magazines fell by 40.5%" between 2002 and 2020 [4]. Visuals that were once restricted to monochromatic schemes now benefit from full chromatic high-definition viewing. Animation and video have led to virtual and augmented reality. What is in store for the rendered visual world in 10 years will likely look vastly different than what is currently available today. However, understanding how images are perceived can lay the foundation for effective visual communication.

3. Role of visuals in marine ecosystem science

Marine ecosystem science epitomizes a complex interdisciplinary undertaking, requiring macro and micro perspectives. We have particularly focused on marine

ecosystems as that is primarily the mission area in which we work, but the concepts noted herein are more broadly applicable. Exploring the intricacies of this scientific field necessitates a detailed examination of the interactions between various organisms, their environment, and external impacts that include human activities. The scientists that undertake this endeavor embark on a mission to understand this constantly changing environment, leveraging the latest scientific research and findings.

Communicating the complexities of ecosystem science presents challenges. How does the scientist convey a complex message? The ecosystem science community has scientists that produce highly technical information. Quite often, this information needs to be conveyed to parties without this knowledge and it is imperative for them to understand not only basic and foundational concepts but more elaborate and intricate ideas. Vying for an audience's attention in an oversaturated, information-rich world is a modern challenge. Conveying technical knowledge compounds this issue. Overly detailed messaging can lose the audiences that have limited time to perceive a concept. In contrast, an oversimplified message can render the original message at best incoherent and at worst incorrect. Therefore, collaboration between the scientist and science communicator, facilitated through listening sessions and an iterative feedback cycle, becomes essential for capturing and effectively relaying this intricate information.

Presenting the information via text alone will reach a particular audience but may miss an entirely different audience. Additionally, relying on the reader's ability to perceive the concept may be limited by their understanding of the material. The need for alternative communication methods becomes apparent.

Visuals of marine ecosystem science can potentially reach a broader audience as they are easier to share and require less time to perceive than paragraphs of text. Written explanations that accompany graphics can further explain and potentially enhance the scientific message conveyed within the body of text. Ecosystem science presented in the following examples will illustrate the visual representation of these concepts. But first we need to understand how the image is processed by the brain.

4. Visual perception and psychological impressions

The role images play and how a scene is perceived and processed by the brain is critical to the understanding of the visual message. A few papers are presented here to start to understand visual perception by the viewer.

In "The ingredients of scenes that affect object search and perception" [5] the authors outline essential elements or "ingredients" of a scene that capture the brain's attention [5]. Comparing studies, the authors looked at the components of a visually perceived scene that becomes stored in long term memory. The authors investigated the role of objects that compose a visual scene and the hierarchical nature of these objects. Anchor objects are typically large, stationary objects that guide the brain's search process and expedite decision making, ultimately guiding the user to the next local objects in a scene and aiding in their search for their target goal [6]. An example used in the case of a kitchen scene is that "the table may predict the position of a chair, a glass of water, and the salt" [5]. Relevant anchors, appropriate to a scene, reduced search time and recognition [5].

In "Affective Perception: The Power is in the Picture" the authors discuss the ways emotional scenes are perceived and processed [7]. The authors discuss that images activate the neural pathways in subcortical and cortical regions and aid in recollections associated with memory. The authors present studies conducted using

emotionally evocative images while monitoring reactions. These studies employed measures such as skin conduction and pupil dilation [7]. Pictures included neutral and evocative imagery, spanning categories like erotic, romantic, adventure, sports, family, food, and nature [7]. The authors identified two emotional systems engaged; the defensive system, associated with fight or flight responses, and the appetitive system, centered around actions promoting survival, such as sustenance, procreation and nurturance. In both the skin conductance and pupil dilation studies, it was observed that both pleasant and unpleasant scenes elicited strong reactions [7]. Additionally, participants were tasked with recalling a scene, through written word or brief phrase, within 5 minutes time allotment, and it was found that improved memory performance in complete recall was attributed to scenes of a pleasant and unpleasant nature, including those portraying romance or threat [7].

In "Cue dynamics underlying rapid detection of animals in natural scenes" the authors focused on the rate of visual detection of animals in a scene [8]. They considered four cues; two-dimensional boundary shape, luminance, color, and texture. Images were manipulated in order to understand the role these cues play in the brain's ability to rapidly identify targets in a scene. While color and luminance contain information that could be useful in determination, their role is relatively minor. Instead, shape and texture played a more significant role in identifying an animal in a scene [8]. The study showed the brain was particularly efficient in extracting shape information, even more so than texture. Remarkably, 12–17 msec of exposure was sufficient for the brain to gather information relevant to the task of identification [8].

In "Diagnostic Colors Mediate Scene Recognition" the authors looked at color cues to aid in scene and object recognition and identification [9]. They employed the L*a*b* color space to enhance control over the diagnosis of scene colors "and the conditions under which stimuli are visually presented" ([9], p. 180). Lab "separates luminance (L*) on a first dimension from Chroma (a*b*) on the two remaining dimensions. This enables a formal transformation of colors which has little effect on luminance information. Second, a*b* represents colors along two color-opponent dimensions: a* extends from green to red and b* from blue to yellow." ([9], p. 180). By utilizing L*a*b* the authors manipulated the a* and b* axes, creating a new image with altered color while preserving luminance. ([9], p. 180). For instance, "if a* represents the green-to-red spectrum and b* represents the blue-to-yellow-spectrum, a swap of two axes (L*b*a*) would change the color of a beach from yellow to red." ([9], p. 180). Additionally, inverting values along the a* and b* axes is another operation. ([9], p. 180). "For example, an inversion of b* would create a blue beach" ([9], p. 180). Through a series of experiments, using combinations of swap and invert operations of L*a*b*, they found that color recognition of scenes is aided when the color cues are relevant to a scene. Colors associated with scenes stored in memory influence the recognition process ([9], p. 199). Normal colors, expected in the physical world, added to scenes without color, assisted in the correct naming of a scene while abnormal colors, through swapping and inversion of (a*b*), interfered. In non-diagnostic scenes, color had no observable effect ([9], p. 199). The authors concluded that appropriate color associated with memory aided in scene recognition.

In "Combination of texture and color cues in visual segmentation", the authors looked at detection and identification of object edges [10]. Multiple cues can be used to aid in the partitioning of a scene between foreground and background [10]. These can include contrast, light, color, texture, motion and depth [10]. The authors looked at color and texture and the combination of these cues in detection. They found that processing of each cue is not independent and that there is a synergistic effect when

combining cues, leading to higher performance than if each cue was independent. The larger the differences the easier it is to distinguish these edges [10]. The authors found through experiments with color and texture cues that segmentation was better when both cues were present and aligned than in conflict and misaligned.

In "The universal and automatic association between brightness and positivity" the authors examined color brightness and its universal association with positivity [11]. High overall brightness and its association with positivity was strong and quick [11].

Images can also be an effective tool in conveying information and visual scientific information is already recognizable to the general public. In "Visual science Literacy: Images and Public Understanding of Science in the Digital age" the authors tested empirical indicators of visual science literacy in surveys [12]. They included scientific images like a DNA Double Helix, Albert Einstein, *in vitro* fertilization, and the Earth from the Moon. They found respondents fared better recognizing these images than textual questions on the same subjects [12]. Visual literacy demonstrated here is the ability to read and comprehend information presented through pictures and graphic images. Complex scientific messages can benefit from information presented through visual means to build understanding and literacy.

The salient summation of this brief survey of the psychology of image processing and handling is that there are more considerations in developing visuals than most non-graphic experts realize. There are a few, well-documented tips, "tricks" or practices that can aid in the elicitation of intended responses, and that combining a range of visual stimuli considerations can lead to truly impactful imagery and associated messaging, which can help convey a wide range of information. Thus, we can use the results from these studies to support effective visual design to engage the audience. In particular, shape definition, anchor objects, visual cue distinction, color and brightness, the appropriate combination of color and texture cues, and positive imagery all can aid in scene recognition, understanding and memory recall.

5. Scientific messages

Marine ecosystem science, with its complexity, nuance and evolving nature has in recent years employed various visual aids in the pursuit of information conveyance to various audiences. These images can be found in policy documents, research papers, displays and presentations at science conferences, and websites reaching diverse audiences. Various visual tools are used to convey ecosystem science. These include cartoons, infographics, graphics, motion, static, and interactive tools.

In this section we explore examples of visuals that have been produced for marine ecosystem science. The focus here is on what message was conveyed and what visual cues were used to represent the material. The use of shape, object recognition and relationships are all at play here.

5.1 Cartoons and comics

In the illustrated world of "Science Comics: Coral Reefs - Cities of the Ocean" the author explores the intricate realm of coral reefs, employing a vibrant visual narrative to convey complex concepts [13]. Panels, adorned with a blue gradient background, serve as a canvas for the diverse makeup and classifications of coral reefs. A central character, a fish with a narrative voice, guides the viewer through the vivid scenes. The use of shapes and texture becomes a visual language to distinguish different

coral groups. The life cycles of coral unfold, transitioning from small to large, with stages such as egg, larva, settled larva, polyp, polyp with base, and finally, adulthood. Texture is strategically introduced as the lifecycle nears adulthood, providing clarity in distinguishing early stages.

When breaking down coral groups and types, a blue background is employed, and the main shape is a vivid representation of the described coral. Inset images with zoomed-in views elucidate the intricate structures from macro to micro perspectives. Shapes are used to define the organisms inhabiting these coral reefs, creating a visually immersive experience.

Complex concepts, such as the symbiotic relationship between coral and the algae Zooxanthellae, are clearly portrayed. Here, the green bean-shaped algae affects different coral examples, each represented by distinct shapes and colors. The distribution of coral reefs is displayed on a globe, with many dots highlighting regions like the Greater Caribbean and Indo-Pacific. The representation of deep-sea coral cleverly utilizes contrasting colors against a darker blue background.

Science Comics: Coral Reefs - Cities of the Ocean: Chapter Four [13]. delves into the global ecosystem, exploring human impacts, interactions, and dependencies on the marine environment [13]. Illustrations depict the water cycle with recognizable scenes of land, rivers, and oceans. Bright red arrows in rotating patterns illustrate the processes of evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff, and infiltration. This grounded depiction communicates the intricate natural water recycling process employing a recognizable scene, with a focus on human-induced impacts on runoff.

This work not only educates the user on coral reefs but does so with a visually engaging and accessible approach, making science not just informative but a compelling journey through these underworld cities.

At the 4th International Symposium "Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans", held in 2018 at a gathering of around 650 scientists from across the globe, we employed a cartoonist to render illustrations in real time [14]. These illustrations are collected in the graphic novel, titled "A graphic novel from the 4th International Symposium on the Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans [14]." These images span multiple ecosystem concepts as participants sought to understand and advance their understanding of climate ecosystem impacts as well as opportunities for solutions and positive reports from current action. Rendered through lively comics, complex concepts and issues unique to ecosystems are communicated here using minimal text.

In **Figure 1** [15], the utilization of cartoons simplifies the portrayal of the intricate yet fundamental concepts of an ecosystem and climate-related impacts. The vibrant colors and well-defined shapes set the stage for conveying increased temperature changes in the oceans and subsequent shifting of species. The fish, although not species-specific, are displayed with varying changes in shape and color and are sufficient for the user to recognize these as two different types of fish. The inclusion of a plate and wine glass grounds the scene, providing context and recognition for the viewer.

In **Figure 2** [15], the cartoon captures the nuances of changes in carbon cycling. The contrast between clearly defined clouds, representing carbon released into the atmosphere and the lighter background draws attention to the intricate balances of this vital process. The transition of gray-colored carbon to the deeper blue of the ocean creates a visual focal point, symbolizing the transfer of carbon to marine environments. The smaller outlined shapes within the deeper blue background represent photosynthetic organisms affected by these conditions, while the bright, yellow sun

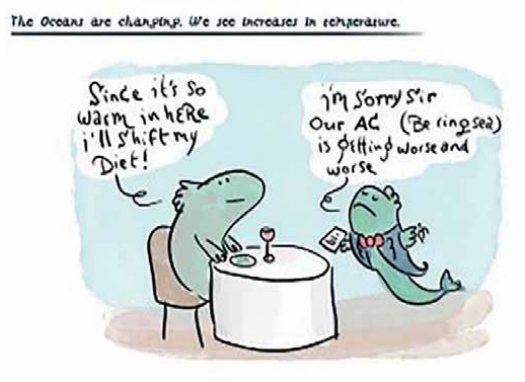

Figure 1.
Temperature changes represented by a restaurant scene with fish. Developed by Bas Kohler as Adapted from [15].

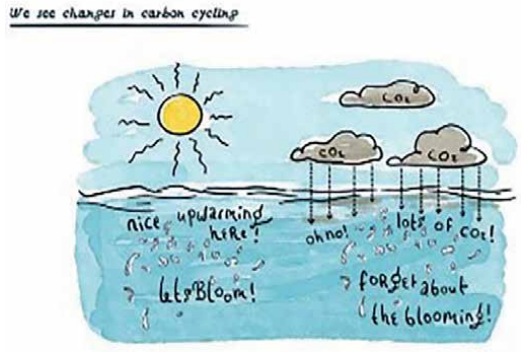

Figure 2.
Changes in carbon cycling depicted by a colorful marine environment. Developed by Bas Kohler Kohler as Adapted from [15].

stands out sharply against the backdrop. This visual narrative communicates the delicacy of the carbon-cycle and its interconnected components.

In **Figure 3** [15], the cartoon communicates the measurements of risk. The two human figures, portrayed through approximations of shape, stand sharply defined against a backdrop of serene blue. Unbeknownst to them, these figures are anchored in their position, unmoving. The looming presence of a large wave to the side serves as a potential metaphor for the impending danger. The graphic employs movement through sharply curved lines and juxtaposition of smaller, equally curved shapes constructing the large wave. In deliberate contrast, other objects in the illustration feature straighter lines, emphasizing the dynamic nature of the impending hazard. This visual narrative conveys the sense of risk and inherent uncertainty associated with it, inviting the viewer to contemplate the challenges faced by the unsuspecting figures.

Finally, in **Figure 4** [15], the visual portrays the utilization of big ocean data. Scale takes center stage here, dominating over half of the composition with the vastness of the ocean depicted through robust curved shapes. Notably, the waves lack traditional color; instead, the waves are filled with a cascade of 1 s and 0 s, symbolic of computer code and more generically data. The infusion of computer code not only imparts a textural quality to the waves but also underscores the vast data collected from the natural realm in the

Figure 3.
Measurements of Risk shown with two figures unaware of a looming wave. Developed by Bas Kohler Kohler as Adapted from [15].

Figure 4.
Big ocean data consumes the entire scene with two figures pulled in. Developed by Bas Kohler as Adapted from [15].

oceans. This texture difference provides an emphasized contrast between foreground and background. Within this expansive oceanic scene, two figures find themselves engulfed by the much larger, undulating shape, conveying the overwhelming and sheer size of ocean data. The absence of color in the waves and the incorporation of binary code contribute to a visual narrative that challenges both the figures within the scene and the viewer to comprehend the magnitude of information represented by big ocean data. It is a stark reminder of the intricacy involved in harnessing and understanding the vast depths of our oceans through data.

5.2 Logos and identifying marks

In the domain of science communication, logos play a vital role as they can accompany programs and create a unified identity for conferences.

The logo (**Figure 5**) for the Atlantis model [17], an ecosystem decision support tool, utilizes a circular framework that symbolizes biological, geochemical, and physical processes. The logo was originally designed for the first Atlantis summit in 2015 [16] as way to convey to the broader international community a quick depiction of the scale and scope of the model, which is quite comprehensive. The blue

Figure 5.
Logo for the Atlantis Ecosystem Model. Various marine life as well as human activities are depicted on an ocean background while 1 s and 0 s form the sky. Full Color and Black and white versions display the effect of contrast between the foreground and background. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [16].

gradient background, shifting from sky to 1 s and 0 s, represents computer code. While a solid blue background signifies the ocean. Distinct solid shapes ranging in size, encompass various elements, including diverse fish species, a seabird, human activities like a vessel and platform, and marine life such as kelp and plankton. These elements, offset in brown, are set against a recognizable ocean backdrop. The gradual complexity revealed in the scene is deliberately structured for optimal readability and comprehension. A version rendered in grayscale highlights the emphasis on shape and texture. Regardless of the color used, shape and texture play a more significant role in identification of the objects in the scene. The familiarity of the shapes allows the viewer the ability to comprehend the imagery and recognize these elements. It also conveys the width of issues being considered simultaneously in a rapid manner This logo has been slightly modified and is also used for NOAA's monthly Ecosystem-Based Management/Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management seminar series [18].

The logo (**Figure 6**) crafted for the 4th International Conference on the Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans (noted above, [14, 15]) helped convey the need for change in the ocean. This conference brought together global experts seeking a deeper understanding of climate change and its impacts on oceans. This logo, prominently featured on posters, signage as well as printed and digital materials [14], employs two shades of blue to symbolize water. The dynamic movement of the ocean is represented by organic shapes that vary in size, wrapping around to create a cohesive wave image. The curvature and variety of these shapes convey the fluidity and movement of the ocean, encapsulating the primary focus of the conference on the profound effects of climate change on our world's oceans.

5.3 Diagrams and figures

In relaying ecosystem science, diagrams and figures can provide more information and begin to introduce more complex concepts. Geographic maps, infographics and guides are rendered to further illustrate advanced ideas and build on existing understanding.

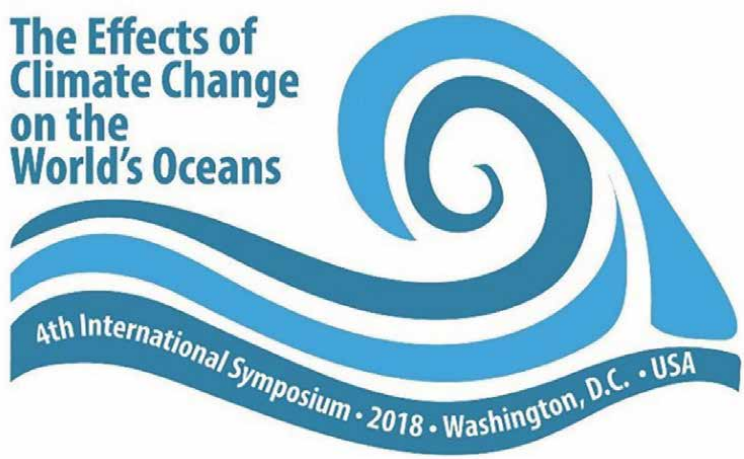

Figure 6.
Logo for the 4th International Conference on the Effects of Climate Change, shapes are formed to create ocean waves. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [14, 15].

Figure 7 [19], depicts a horizontally oriented visual diagram. On the right side, a legend features climate impacts, each accompanied by an icon and descriptive text. Meanwhile, the bulk of the image showcases a large shape outlining the United States and its coastlines, serving as the primary anchor object. Within this shape, familiar imagery such as ships, a child fishing, and a school of fish occupies prominent spaces. Each region is marked with an icon representing climate impacts specific to that area. A dark blue background provides contrast, and above it, colorful and sharply contrasting icons employ recognizable shapes to vividly depict the described impacts. For

Figure 7.
Infographic of current and expected climate-related impacts on marine ecosystems. Utilizing a map of the United States, each icon represents a climate related impact to the respective region. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [19].

instance, temperature increases are symbolized by a thermometer shape, wildfires are represented by flame shapes, and fishing impacts incorporate the outline of a boat. The use of familiar real-world objects enhances the conveyance of advanced concepts, and the strategic application of shapes, color contrast, and realistic imagery engages the viewer. Moreover, these icons can seamlessly transfer to other climate-related visuals, fostering continuity in visual communication.

In the subsequent two figures (**Figures 8** and **9**), the concept of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) is visually expressed. EBFM is a holistic approach to ecosystem management, considering multiple factors in managing a species. Unlike focusing on a single species in isolation, EBFM looks at the comprehensive picture, encompassing predators, prey, human activities, and other species, among various factors.

Figure 8 [20–22], "Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM)" unfolds against a blue background with four segments, each delineating different ecosystem approaches. The "Single Species" segment outlines a solitary species with minimal texture, sharply contrasting against a blue backdrop. In the "Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management" (EAFM) segment, recognizable icons representing climate, habitat, and ecology are enclosed within circles. This section introduces additional elements, including the sky, kelp, water, and a larger predator, but is still focused on a single fish stock. The EBFM segment then shows the multispecies nature EBM of the approach that also needs to include all the elements introduced in EAFM. The "Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) segments builds upon these approaches, incorporating new species and icons such as energy (depicted as a wind

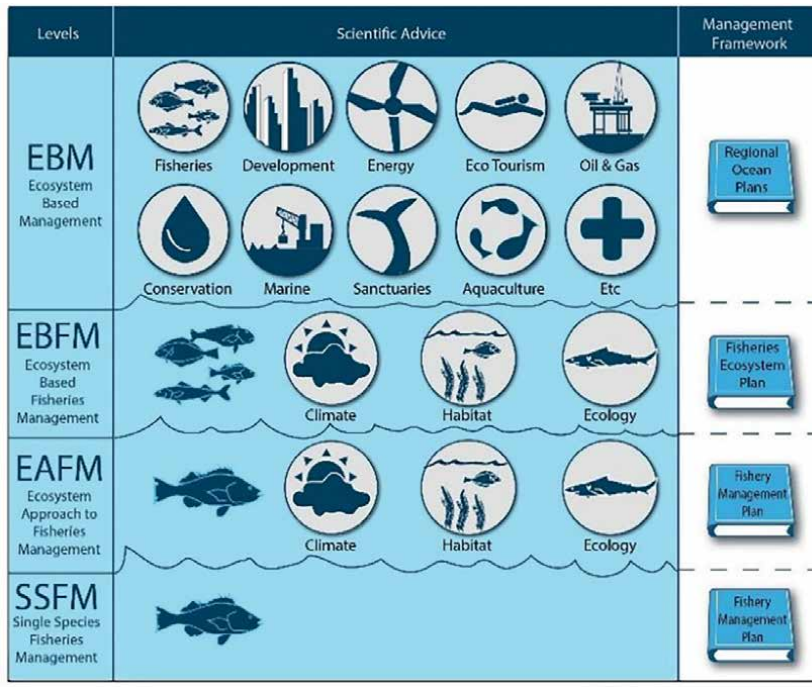

Figure 8.
Infographic for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management. Depicted here are four segments illustrating different ecosystem management approach. Icons represent each component in that management's approach. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [20–22].

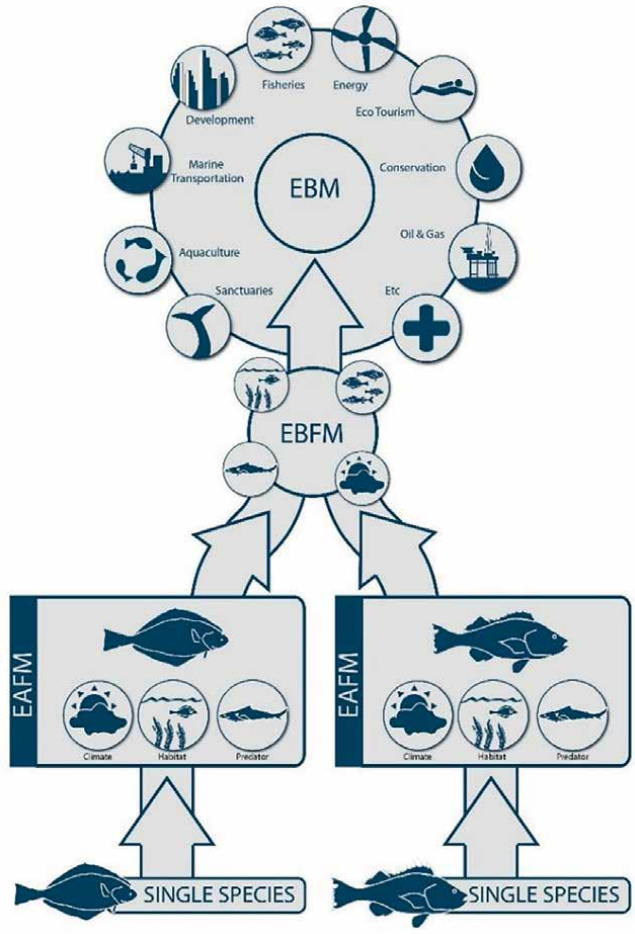

Figure 9.
Alternate Infographic for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management. Depicted here; each management approach builds on the next, utilizing components from the previous approach. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [20–22].

farm turbine), eco-tourism (symbolized by a human in scuba gear), and sanctuaries (represented by the shape of a whale's tail). An implied hierarchy of focus and factors considered is built into the diagram. To the right of each segment, a book shape signifies the respective management plan for each approach.

In **Figure 9**, an alternate approach to **Figure 8** [20–22], continuity is maintained with the presence of the same icons against a backdrop featuring a strong contrast between gray and blue. Arrows visually guide the viewer through each management approach, illustrating progression and movement. These recognizable images serve as familiar shapes, representing essential components in the comprehensive ecosystem management process.

5.4 Portals to more

The National Marine Ecosystem Status (NAMES) website [23] serves as a comprehensive resource, offering a snapshot of major U.S. marine and Great Lakes ecosystem indicators. These indicators are used to track the status and trends of eight

U.S. marine and Great Lakes ecosystem regions. The website provides users with the opportunity to explore key indicators. **Figure 10** [23] shows a key graphic that acts as a portal to these indicators, depicting a coastal scene with a cityscape and boats in white against a blue background. Marine life is rendered in sharp black on a darker blue backdrop. Each indicator is thoughtfully crafted with sharp outlines and recognizable shapes, some of which were previously featured in EBFM figures. Users can interact with the website by selecting an icon, which redirects them to a dedicated page with a larger icon, descriptors, and additional information about the chosen indicator. These recognizable objects serve as essential tools, conveying the concept of indicators and ensuring continuity throughout the site. The use of bright colors, sharp contrasting shapes, and recognizable imagery collectively create a portal that engages users and facilitates access to valuable indicator information.

In the concluding example (**Figure 11**) [24] the image attempts to depict the intricate concept of time, and prediction for each key idea that is represented as a distinct solid shape. For instance, a black swan event, symbolizing unpredictability, is rendered as a dark swan on a solid background. Economic outlook is depicted by bar and graph shapes, accompanied by the familiar dollar sign, universally associated with economic language. The concept of location is conveyed through a solid fish shape, transitioning to opacity to illustrate movement. Above these shapes and labels, the notation "T + 1" is featured, and each icon is now intricately rendered using small dots. This representation signifies the utilization of model to predict future states of these phenomena, where these dots symbolize the attempt to predict the future of the depicted examples. The use of symbolic shapes and visual elements helps convey the complexity of these concepts, offering a visual narrative that aids in understanding the interplay between time, prediction, and modeling.

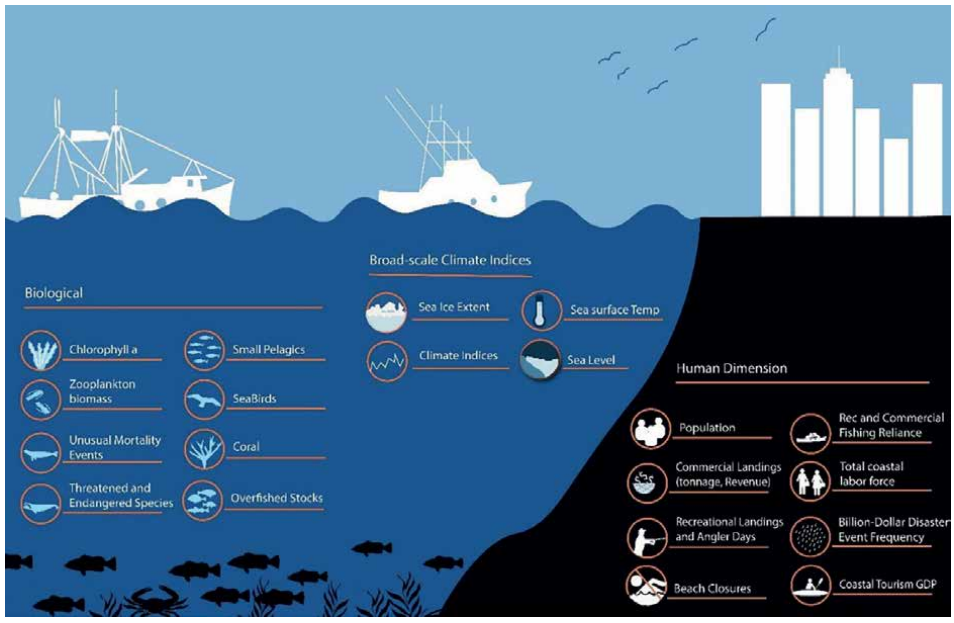

Figure 10.
Infographic for NAMES: Explore by Indicators displays icons representing Biological, Broad-scale Climate Indicies and Human Dimension components against a coastal scene with a cityscape. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [23].

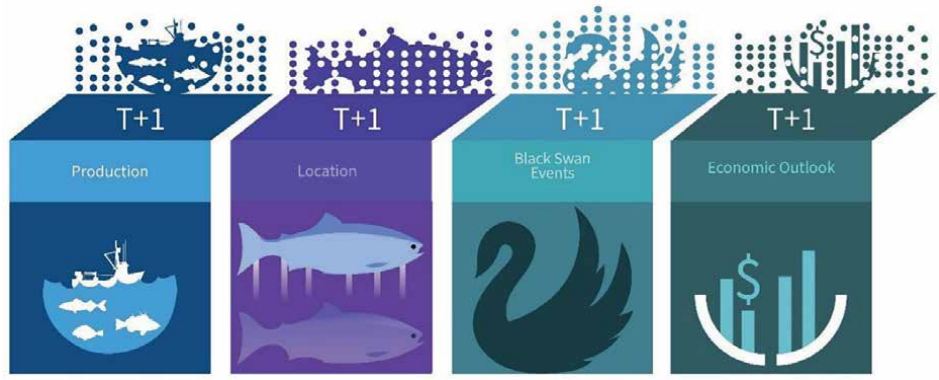

Figure 11.
Infographic for Marine Ecosystem Predictions. "The four main elements of a suite of predictions for marine ecosystems. T + 1 refers to the next time step, with various, possible future conditions." [24]. Icons represent each element. Future conditions are rendered using small dots. Developed by Avi Litwack as Adapted from [24].

6. Marine ecosystem science through visual science communication

Visuals have taken a pivotal role in marine ecosystem science communication. Examples shown here demonstrate many of the elements previously discussed in the visual perception and psychological impressions section. Large objects that anchor a scene can include an ocean-scape for marine communication or a city scene to relay human activities. Accompanying objects that connect to the scene ground the viewer and provide a path to further exploration of the scene.

The use of sharp contrasts such as white on black or a lighter color on darker color can aid in scene recognition. The additional use of appropriate texture can provide additional aid in object recognition as demonstrated with species of fish. Using bright and vibrant colors provide a pleasing picture for the user to consider while exploring the scene.

Object definition appears to be the most effective way for viewer recognition. Overutilization of colors or textures to render an object could detract from the shape outlined, impede the recognition of objects in a scene, and disconnect the viewer from the visual narrative.

These tactics serve a pivotal means to render scientific concepts more accessible and available to a large audience.

7. Recommendations

Based on the observations and findings explored in this paper using marine ecosystem-related examples, combined with the experience of the authors working together on many of these graphics over a period of years, we recommend the following as guidelines for effective visual scientific communications:

- Conduct a listening session with the scientist to capture the concept relayed.
    - Listening is a fundamental aspect of effective communication. Engage in thorough discussions with the scientist to ensure accurate understanding.
- Represent concepts with recognizable imagery that the audience can relate to.

- Utilize universally understood symbols, such as waves for the ocean and fish for species in the ocean, to create a familiar association and provide connection to the concept for the audience.

- Use a large immovable object to anchor a scene and ground the image.
  - Employing a sizable and unchanging element, like a region of land adjoining water to convey a coastline, provides stability and context to the visual representation.

- Accompanying objects varying in size should be connected and relate to the anchor object.
  - Establish a cohesive visual narrative by varying the size of accompanying elements like fish, sea birds, and marine mammals, ensuring they are logically connected to the anchor object.

- Use bright vibrant colors and tones to elicit pleasant recall in the viewer.
  - The strategic use of a limited color palette can enhance viewer engagement, creating a visually appealing experience and fostering positive recall.
  - Alternatively, using darker colors and tones could elicit an unpleasant recall and add a sense of urgency.

- Define shapes with strong contrast.
  - Utilize high-contrast combinations, such as dark objects on a light background or vice versa, to facilitate rapid recognition of shapes and enhance overall comprehension.

- Use texture judiciously, to help define shapes that are appropriate for the subject matter.
  - Carefully integrate texture to enhance the visual experience, ensuring it aligns with the subject matter without overwhelming the viewer and hindering the object recognition.

- Build on concepts that have been previously introduced with imagery.
  - Continuity is paramount. Repeatedly employing familiar imagery, such as a thermometer for temperature change, establishes associations and aids in reinforcing key concepts.

- Iterate through these steps with the scientist to ensure that the message conveyed is not obscured.
  - Collaboration with the scientist is essential to maintain clarity and accuracy throughout the visual communication process. Regular iterations and feedback sessions are key to achieving this goal.

- Recognize the impact of future advancements in visual technology.
    - Acknowledge the evolving landscape of visual technology and anticipate the need to adapt and build upon existing methodologies for continued effectiveness in scientific communication.

Following this methodology to approach visual scientific communication is foundational to employing effective and logical strategies. This serves as a guide, ensuring that the representation of scientific concepts is not only accurate but also resonates with the audience. Moreover, the iterative process, involving collaboration with the scientist and soliciting feedback, safeguards against potential obscurities or misinterpretations of the message. Looking towards the future, this methodology positions itself as a flexible framework that can adapt to emerging tools and techniques. The responsibility of conveying scientific information visually is significant, and this methodology equips communicators to meet this responsibility with foresight and effectiveness.

8. Conclusion

In the vast realm of scientific discourse, leveraging visuals becomes a powerful conduit for meaningful comprehension. Crafting scenes that resonate with the viewer's recognition establishes a vital point of reference, serving as a gateway to understanding. The strategic use of familiar objects aids in scene identification, while subsequent supporting objects guide the viewer through the scene. Use of appropriate textures and contrast cues further distinguish objects. Employing bright or warm colors can make a scene more visually pleasing and welcoming to the audience.

Our outlined methodology for visual science communication stands as a guide, offering a structured approach to enhancing the effectiveness of conveying scientific concepts. It serves not only as a set of principles but as a foundational framework fostering new understanding and paving the way for more advanced science communication practices. As our comprehension of how users perceive visual information continues to deepen, the journey towards refinement of our communication methods gains momentum. Building upon the principles elucidated in this methodology unlocks the potential for more nuanced and sophisticated approaches to science communication.

In this ever-evolving landscape, our commitment to understanding and adapting, coupled with the impactful use of visual communication, can illuminate the intricacies of scientific understanding and deepen our knowledge of this world.

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Chapter 3

Perspective Chapter: (Typo) Graphic Novels – Text as Pictorial Element of the Page in Cutting-Edge-Picture Book-Making

Vincenzo Maselli

Abstract

In the book *Arte come Mestiere,* Bruno Munari suggested that the shapes of letters and words are capable of creating dynamic and meaningful compositions as they can be used to emphasize the significance of the word itself. Starting from these thoughts and from the concept of "typographic landscapes" formulated by Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles (2019), the chapter aims to explore the communicative power of words and the narrative strength of typefaces through the analysis of (typo)graphic novels that blur the boundaries between text and images and experiment with the composition of typographic shapes to vehicle meanings and outline new paths of graphic design experimentation. The analysis focuses on two case studies: the graphic book *P!nocchio. Racconto grafico* by Stefano Rovai (2022) and the picture book *A Child of Books* by Sam Winston and Oliver Jeffers (2016).

Keywords: typography, Calligrams, graphic novels, word-image interplay, sequential narratives

1. Introduction

As stated by Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles [1], "Text as a pictorial element in itself is not new." The first verbo-visual experiments in which a text—usually a poetic composition—could be looked at and contemplated as well as "read" date back to the archaic Hindu and ancient Greek cultures, to the *technopaegnion*, to the *carmen figuratum* written by the Greeks and Latins [2]. In these poetic compositions, the text was positioned in such a way as to compose the drawing of an object directly connected to the main theme of the poem.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire chose the term *calligram*[1] to refer to the poetic practice typical of the Avant-garde Movements, commonly called visual poetry, concrete poetry, or experimental

[1] The term calligram certainly has within itself the Greek root of 'kalos' (beautiful) and 'graphein' (writing), although there are those who recall also a possible combination between calligraphy and ideogram [3].

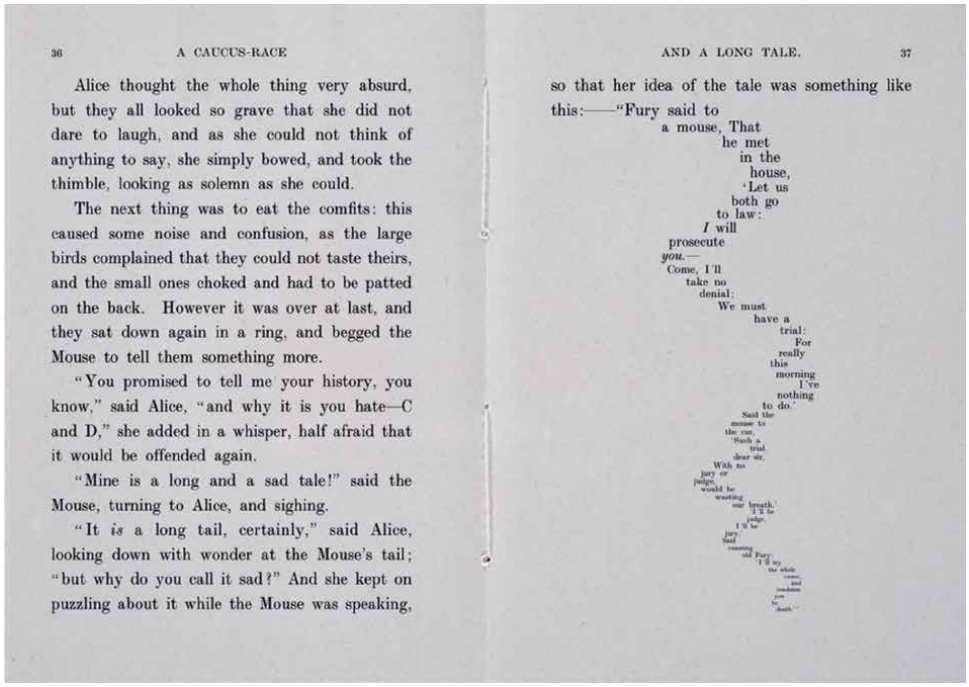
poetry [3], in which the words are arranged in such a way as to form an image or shape that represents the meaning of the text itself. This form of art required innovative use of typography and layout to create a visually appealing image that communicates the meaning of the text through its shape and arrangement. Whether we are talking about *technopaegnion*, *carmen figuratum,* or *calligram*, the main characteristic of these graphic projects lies in the juxtaposition between letter and figure, implemented with often divergent techniques and purposes [2], based on the recognition of an undeniable truth: words have a shape and visual presence on the page. In the book *Arte come Mestiere* (1970), the Italian designer, artist, and picture book-maker Bruno Munari suggested that the shapes of letters and words are capable of creating dynamic and meaningful compositions as they can be used to emphasize the significance of the word itself [4]. He wrote: "not only does each letter of a word have a shape of its own, but all its letter taken together give shape to the word [...]. When you read the word MAMMA [*mum* – editor's note] you see at once that it has quite a different shape from the word OBOLO [*offering* – editor's note]." That highlights an unequivocal truth of communication design studies: An artifact's form is the first element to be seen by users and the first capable of communicating, thus morphology becomes a natural and impactful communication channel. "The artifact – according to Francesca Ferrario [5] – sets up a relationship with the user starting from the outside, stimulating visual and haptic perception within a transmission that uses sight". But that is not all, the composition of a sentence or a long text itself can have a meaningful shape explicitly related to the subject or, quite often, used to vehicle the interpretation of the content and of the intention, perspective, and thoughts of the visual poet. Therefore, a calligram is not only poetic writing, a mere game of signs, and literary artifice, but it is also writing of thought and a form of typographic narrative [3].

In the following sections, I will shortly outline the origin of visual poetry and then focus on the features of typographic narratives with the peculiar characteristic of *sequentiality*, hence on the creative use of typography in examples that combine graphic design choices concerning the organization of words within the page, typefaces' dimensions and styles, the relationship between text and image and a certain narrative complexity to create a visual experience that conveys content in an innovative way. In order to demonstrate the expressive possibilities of this form of graphic design, I will describe two (typo)graphic novels: the graphic book *P!nocchio. Racconto grafico* by Stefano Rovai [6] and the picture book *A Child of Books* by Sam Winston and Oliver Jeffers [7].

2. The origins: the calligram from Apollinaire to Lissitzky

Salisbury and Styles refer to Lewis Carroll's "the mouse's tale" as the first calligram, as the visual poem, which appears in his 1865 novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "exist in the shape of a tail and plays on the tale/tail spelling" [1]. In the novel, the mouse introduces its story by saying: "Mine is a long and sad tale!" [8] and typography contributes to illustrate the intended pun between mouse's physical feature (its tale) and the action it is about to perform (tell a tale). In other words, the text is formatted to visually resemble its content (**Figure 1**).

With the Avant-garde Movements of the twentieth century—especially with Cubist literature and subsequently with Creationism and Ultraism—the combination of pictorial and verbal text has become increasingly common, and several artists and designers took control of the overall design of the page and developed a poetics that engage both visual and verbal elements [2]. The collapse of the traditional structures of expression affected the artistic manifestations of this period generally and



36 A CAUCUS-RACE

Alice thought the whole thing very absurd, but they all looked so grave that she did not dare to laugh, and as she could not think of anything to say, she simply bowed, and took the thimble, looking as solemn as she could.

The next thing was to eat the comfits: this caused some noise and confusion, as the large birds complained that they could not taste theirs, and the small ones choked and had to be patted on the back. However it was over at last, and they sat down again in a ring, and begged the Mouse to tell them something more.

"You promised to tell me your history, you know," said Alice, "and why it is you hate—C and D," she added in a whisper, half afraid that it would be offended again.

"Mine is a long and a sad tale!" said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.

"It *is* a long tail, certainly," said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; "but why do you call it sad?" And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking,

AND A LONG TALE. 37

so that her idea of the tale was something like this:—"Fury said to
a mouse, That
he met
in the
house,
'Let us
both go
to law:
I will
prosecute
you.—
Come, I'll
take no
denial;
We must
have a
trial:
For
really
this
morning
I've
nothing
to do.'
Said the
mouse to
the cur,
'Such a
trial,
dear sir,
With no
jury or
judge,
would be
wasting
our breath.'
'I'll be
judge,
I'll be
jury,'
said
cunning
old Fury:
'I'll try
the whole
cause,
and
condemn
you
to
death.'"

Figure 1.
"The Mouse's tale". Lewis Carroll, Alice's adventures in wonderland – 1865, p. 37 © Lewis Carroll (Licensed under CC BY 4.0).

inaugurated a new, well-known chapter of the history of art in which artists used to explore the world with different eyes, trying to "uncover the process by which we see and respond" and to demonstrate that "what we know is not made apparent [...]in what we see" [9]. On the one hand, Cubist painters rejected Impressionism and any links binding them with the concrete word and headed toward abstract art; on the other, Cubist writers "gradually moved away from symbolism" [9].

One of the poets and artists best known for creating some of the most famous calligrams in the history of literature was the French Cubist poet Guillaume Apollinaire. He was actively involved in the above-mentioned process of artistic renovation that affected not only Cubism but also Futurism, Orphism, and all Avant-garde Movements that escaped art as fictional artifice and demystified its relation with nature. Born in Rome in 1880, Apollinaire had a life as short as it was intense[2], and among his best-known *Calligrams* are those collected in the book *Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913–1916* [10]. Apollinaire's calligrams were a true form of communication as they recalled a layered system of graphic components which, on the one hand, express the poetic and graphic design skills of the artist; on the other, they represent a snapshot of his time since they metaphorically and metonymically decode political and social images, intentions and messages [2]. Metaphor and metonymy and their combination are—according to the American art historian Willard Bohn—the semantic lines along which picture poems unfold, the "basic mode of communication" of this form of visual-verbal expression [11]. In the essay *Metaphor and Metonymy in Apollinaire's Calligrams,* he wrote, "one topic may lead to another through their

[2] Guillaume Apollinaire died in Paris at the age of 38, in 1918.

similarity ("the metaphoric way") or through their *contiguity* ("the metonymic way"). Thus, in a series, a given topic/statement/image either resembles its neighbor or is somehow associated with it" [11]. It is difficult to identify which one of these forms triumphs in Apollinaire's calligrams as they consistently combine painting—that is highly metonymic—with lyric poetry—that is inherently metaphoric. This polarity does not work as a contrast but as a mix that makes calligrams a hybrid genre. Again, Bohn stated that "to the extent that it is metaphoric, [a calligram] incorporates the traditional bias of lyric poetry. To the extent that it is metonymic, it reflects the influence of Cubism" [11]. What Apollinaire reached to structure with his innovative visual poems, therefore, are visual metaphors in which shapes, symmetries, balances, and contrasts—among the many possible graphic compositional elements—relate to verbal messages and improve their impact. "In figured verse – wrote Charles Boultenhouse in 1965 – the shape of the poem in the main metaphor of the poem" [12].

In "La colombe poignardée et le jet d' eau" ["The stabbed dove and the jet of water"—editor's note], for example, Apollinaire denounced the war through a calligram that exploits a symbolic motif, the shape of a dove. The "shape" of the poem is the first, more direct reading level: the dove is peace. The typographical elements used provide a further reading level to support this intention: the bold "C" represents the dagger handle, and the words "et toi" ["and you"—editor's note] in the center of the dove mark the wound: everything could symbolize the peace killed by war. Under the dove lies the fountain, of which the jet of water—drawn by the distribution of the verses starting from a central axis—can be clearly recognized. The symmetry of the composition is given by the capital "O," which plays on the homonymy with the French word *eau* [*Water*—editor's note] and seems to be the source from which the jet comes out, and by the design of a basin which also suggests the shape of an eye (**Figure 2**) [13]. Both the dove and the fountain are visual metaphors that seem to have been visually generated as in other calligrams, and he used pictorial elements of life at the front clearly connected with imagery of the war, such as cannons, helmets, and boots [11].

Apollinaire's calligrams paved the way for other experiments and pushed the boundaries of typography beyond the mere communication of information, playing with more creative and expressive layouts and compositions and with the hybridization of typography, photography, and illustration. Throughout the twentieth century, especially with the development of Modernism and "new typography" [14], graphic design pioneers such as Jan Tschichold, László Moholy-Nagy, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and El Lissitzky contributed to the promotion of a more esthetic approach to typography. In Moholy-Nagy's design for a 1924 advertising poster, the artist presents a photograph of a car running on a track made up of letters that make up the writing "Pneumatik," emphasizing the new plasticity recognized in the typographical element and served, in this specific case, to the advertising of a product (**Figure 3**).

According to Moholy-Nagy, typography needs to get rid of "preconceived frameworks," and the typographical line has to be liberated and made to work in combination with photography, which he used to consider "the new storytelling device of civilization" [15]. As he wrote in the essay *The New Typography* (*Die neue Typographie*—original title) of 1923: "We want to create a new language of typography whose elasticity, variability, [and] freshness [...] is exclusively dictated by the inner law of expression and [by] the optical effect" [15]. In the typographic composition and in its dialog with photography lies the effectiveness of the message in the contemporary graphic design process.

The new dimension of typographic art is the subject of further thought in the essay *Unser Buch* written by El Lissitzky in 1927 [16], in which the designer credits Filippo Tommaso Marinetti for having started the modern typographic revolution, creating

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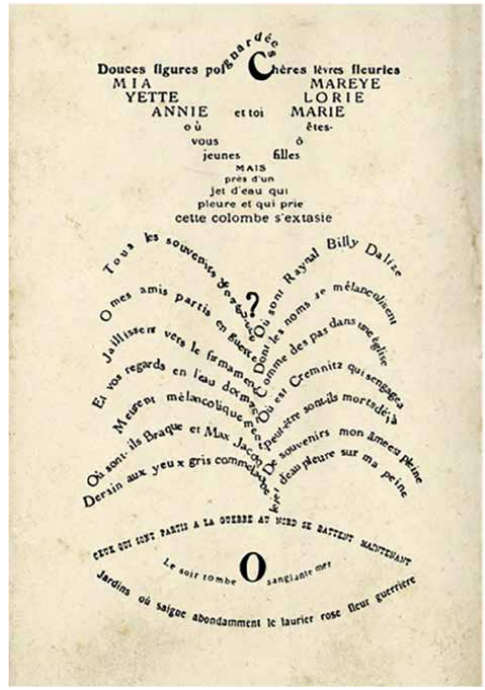

Figure 2.
"La colombe poignardée et le jet d' eau". Guillaume Apollinaire, Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre 1913–1916 – 1918 © public domain.

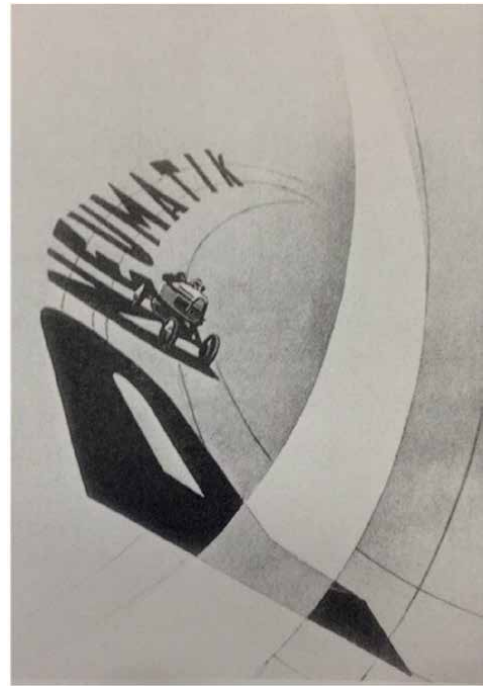

Figure 3.
"Pneumatik". László Moholy-Nagy – 1924 © public domain.

compositions that alter the morphology of the typefaces and the organization of the text on the page. Lissitzky's vision of typography as a form of visual communication, however, deepens and overcomes the experimental approach explored by Marinetti. While appreciating Futurism and Marinetti's spirit of rupture with the past and the rejection of typographical—as well as literary—conventions in favor of more expressive and less rational compositions, Lissitzky highlighted the communicative function of typography. The Futurist typographical revolution started with Marinetti's visual compositions collected under the name of "Parole in Libertà" ["Words in Freedom"—editor's note], "in which the words have no syntactic-grammatical link between them and are not organized into sentences" [17]. The configuration of the letters on the page and the graphic treatment of the words did not aim, in Marinetti's compositions, at visually reproducing meaningful verbal statements and expressions but were linked to the sonority of the words, often onomatopoeic, creating a combination between visual and phonetic qualities of the words, between music and visual arts. According to Lissitzky, typography can be arranged as a tool capable of orienting the reading of the message. As written by Caterina Toschi: "In [Lissitzky's] conception the word is used not only as a sound depending on time, but as a representation to develop a type of visual poetry conceived in relation to the space of the page" [14].

3. From the calligram to the (typo)graphic novel

The typographic narrative conveyed by a calligram can be applied in a wide range of contexts and creative sectors and involves graphic uses of letters and words that differ in their approach and in the way they communicate. There are numerous examples of typographic narratives in areas of application such as:

- advertising and marketing through advertising campaigns and posters in which the creative use of the typographic element captures the public's attention;
- corporate branding: logos, promotional materials, and packaging that can exploit typography to tell the story, clarify the vision, and communicate the mission of a brand;
- educational materials, presentations, and learning contents which, through typographic narratives, make complex concepts or specific information more accessible and engaging;
- websites, applications, animations, and videos can incorporate motion graphic narratives made of words and typefaces to guide the user experience, convey information in a visually appealing way, and improve the use of content;
- physical environments, such as museums, exhibitions, or art installations, can use typography to guide visitors or create immersive experiences;
- editorial projects and books that use typographic narratives to make stories more engaging, convey specific levels of interpretation, and improve the reading experience.

The first book, based on a typographic narrative, dates back to Futurism. In 1914, Marinetti collected in a small volume entitled *Zang Tumb Tumb* (**Figure 4**) a series of visual poems that he had written and published in the Parisian newspaper *L'Intransigeant*

Figure 4.
Zang Tumb Tumb by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti – 1914 © public domain.

in 1911, using the same compositional criterion as his "Parole in Libertà." The book tells a few episodes of the 1911 war in Libya from an unprecedented point of view in which, as suggested by the title, the mechanical sounds of war—artillery, bombings, explosions—are the protagonists of the visual story. Punctuation is abolished, and so are traditional syntactic rules; extensive use is made of onomatopoeic terms to reproduce the sounds of war, and the shape of words evokes sounds, noises that amplify the impact of the story in the moments of maximum intensity. In this book, "typography reflects the raw and evocative power of language. Rather than following established rules of syntax and punctuation, letters live and express themselves on the page" [17]. The graphic revolution of Futurism was not limited to the page but involved the entire book, leading to the construction of the first sequential typographical narrative.

Below, I will focus on sequential typographic narratives that renew the editorial category of graphic novels, and for this reason, I define these graphic artifacts as typographic novels. I will analyze two examples of typographic novels in which the shape and layout of the words do not tell a concept or a self-contained story, as happens in Apollinaire's classic calligram, but a complex sequential narrative. The experience of the calligram is enriched by adding the sequential component and by creating an archipelago of typographic "episodes" that dialog with each other, thus ensuring the correct reading of the narrative flow. Typographic novels can take on different configurations, but, in all cases, they keep integrating the focus on the graphic organization and disposition of words, the choice of typefaces, the dimensions, and typographic styles to create a new kind of visual experience.

3.1 *P!nocchio. Racconto grafico* by Stefano Rovai

In 2022, the Italian graphic designer Stefano Rovai designed a typographic novel providing a graphic translation of the book *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo

Collodi, published for the first time in 1883, but he radically revolutionized it on a graphic level. Starting from the name "Pinocchio," Rovai suggested the experimental vocation of his work: the character of Pinocchio, through his name, finds its formal translation in an exclamation mark (!), an essential but highly evocative typeface that summarizes the graphic designer's ability to lead a "graphic synthesis" of a story (**Figure 5**). By referring to the typographic experimentations of the twentieth-century artistic Avant-garde Movements, Rovai reconstructed Collodi's novel as a visual poem by mixing words, letters, and images in an effective and intense synthesis. The only protagonists of its graphic transposition are letters and words, but he altered the spatial distribution of the elements that make up the page, hybridized different typographical codes and styles in a multiple and varied set of typefaces, punctuation marks and glyphs, in which serif and sans-serif letters, calligraphic and italics, round and bold strokes mix together. Rovai played with interlines, spacing, and dimensions; that is, he transformed each page into a surrealist typographic illustration in which typographic elements have an esthetic and morphological "scenic" value even before the linguistic one. The tale of the adventures of a wooden puppet finds a new stage in Rovai's book: the two-dimensionality of the page, in which Rovai transferred and revealed the dynamism of Collodi's tale through creative and brave use of typography. Rovai allowed the readers to immerse themselves in the story and to attribute different meanings to the same content, thanks to the use of diverse typographical styles, the unusual disposition of typefaces within the pages' space, and a correct alternation of full and empty spaces.

P!nocchio. Racconto grafico stresses the concern on the importance of typography and provides an opportunity for further exploring the value of the dynamic and expressive linguistic and esthetic experimentations inaugurated by the Avant-garde Movements of the twentieth century. But Rovai pushed the research on the

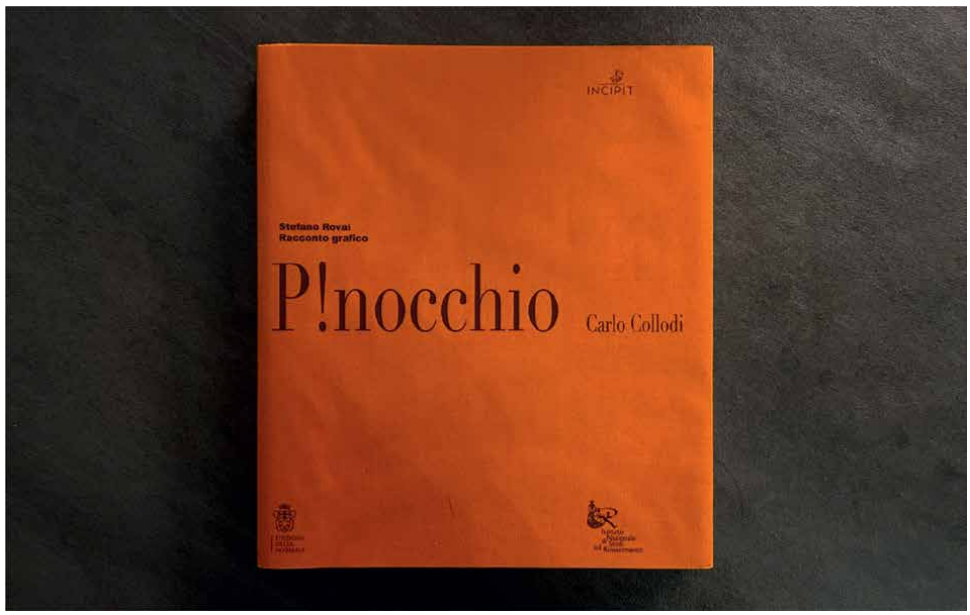

Figure 5.
P!nocchio. Racconto grafico by Stefano Rovai – 2022 © courtesy of Stefano Rovai.

relationship between word and image and on verbo-visual writing to the extreme limit. "The crossings, (and the) systematic overlaps and integrations" between the text to be seen and the text to be read, in Rovai occur "in the name of continuity" [18]. The letters emerge from the page, tilt, overlap, and contract. They are the protagonists of different visual solutions but linked in a unitary design vision throughout the book, in a sequential story that applies the complex experimentation of the relationship between text and image to all pages. Each sentence and page of Rovai's book is at the same time a speaking illustration, a self-contained "typographic adventure" and a crucial piece of the story, in which the typefaces—by varying styles, size, kerning, and even the direction of writing—recreate on a visual level the sensations and emotions suggested by the narrative (**Figures 6** and **7**). Rovai's typographic "Pinocchio," therefore, lends itself to interpretative paths of a different but convergent nature:

- it is an opportunity to experiment with the expressive potential of typefaces as a form of communication, showing how typographic design, as a "visual representation of thought" [19], fits into the contemporary design scenario with its own rules, declinations, and applications;

- it is a graphic remediation of a well-known work of literature and, in this sense, takes charge of its themes, further problematizing them thanks to the graphic choices that characterize the artifact;

- it is a particular form of *intersemiotic* translation and adaptation [20–22] in which a consolidated system of linguistic signs is transformed into a system of

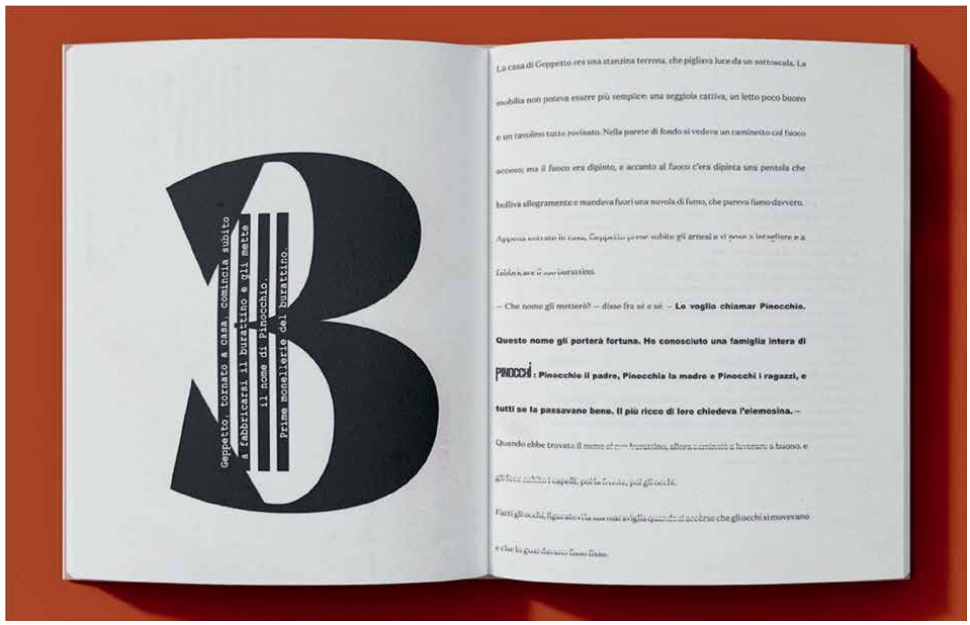

Figure 6.
P!nocchio. Racconto grafico by Stefano Rovai – 2022 © courtesy of Stefano Rovai.

Figure 7.
P!nocchio. Racconto grafico by Stefano Rovai – 2022 © courtesy of Stefano Rovai.

"a-linguistic" signs through a process of negotiation, renouncing some aspects typical of the starting system to obtain a certain result in the target system[3];

- it is the perfect manifestation of what Filippo Tommaso Marinetti wrote in the Manifesto of Futurism of 1913: "We will therefore use, on the same page, [...] also 20 different typefaces, if necessary. For example: italics for a series of similar or fast sensations, round bold for violent onomatopoeias, etc. With this typographical revolution and this multicolored variety of typefaces I aim to double the expressive power of words" [23].

The rewriting led by Rovai of one of the most emblematic works of Western children's literature is unique in the complex articulation that characterizes it: the visual and verbal story conveyed by letters, numbers, signs, and counts more than 300 typographical illustrations, making Rovai as a co-author of a multi-handed story. Rovai's volume inspired an exhibition that evolved into a typographic installation held

[3] The operation of transforming a text into an expressive form that uses different linguistic systems – such as images – preserving the content, has been the subject of analysis by semiologists who have formulated different taxonomies. The Russian linguist and semiologist Roman Jackobson defined 'intersemiotic translation' the translation mechanism that allows linguistic signs to be interpreted in non-linguistic systems, as happens, for example, between literature and cinema [20]. Algirdas Julien Greimas proposed the term 'transposition' by focusing attention not on the variation in the identity of the story, but on the variation in the experience of perception that is made of it. Transposition, according to Greimas, implies that a content is experienced in a different sensorial dimension, thus it implies a different epistemological path [21]. Umberto Eco adopts the terms 'adaptation' or 'intersystemic interpretation' (Eco 2013, 21) to refer to the passage "from matter to matter of expression, as happens when a poem is interpreted (thus illustrated) through a drawing" [22].

in the spring of 2022 at the Marino Marini Museum in Florence (Italy). The immersion in Rovai's typographical adventure was amplified, enveloping the visitor with words, typefaces, and punctuation marks that exploded on the walls and projected onto the floor, becoming actors performing on a theater stage.

3.2 *A child of book* by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Wilson

A Child of Books by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Wilson is a picture book that mixes up the main canonical design elements of a graphic novel (texts and images), finding another form of expression that gives new dignity to typography. The adventures of the protagonists come to life in a visual universe made of hand-drawn images and calligrams, creating an editorial product that gives a new dimension to the text: the pictorial one. *A Child of Books* tells the story of a little girl with a passion for reading, sitting on a raft above a sea of typed words (**Figure 8**). A wave drops the girl off at a boy's house, where she asks him to follow her. The two set out to walk along a path of words, climb "mountains of make-believe," find treasures in a cave, "lose (themselves) in forests of fairy tales" where the trees are books sprouting stories, flee from a monster and sleep in clouds made of words [7]. Then, they return to a city of buildings arranged like books on a shelf, with signs that say, "Our house is a home of invention where anyone at all can come, [...] for imagination is free" [7].

Throughout the book, the text and pictorial elements of the page merge and hybridize. Characters sit alongside and within "typographic landscapes" [1], as they travel on a sea made of words, walk on a path full of writings, run away from a monster created by the overlapping of typographic elements, descend from a rope that—literally—tells the story of Rapunzel, and enter a cave created by the accumulation of letters and words (**Figure 9**). The letters and words that give shape to these landscapes mix the texts belonging to 40 classic works of children's literature and

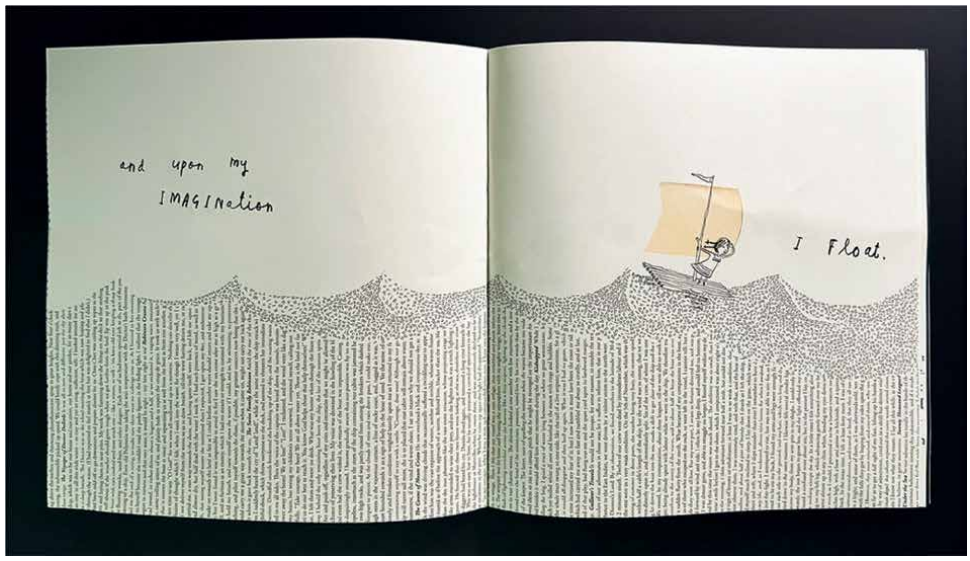

Figure 8.
A CHILD OF BOOKS. Written & Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston © 2016 Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd.

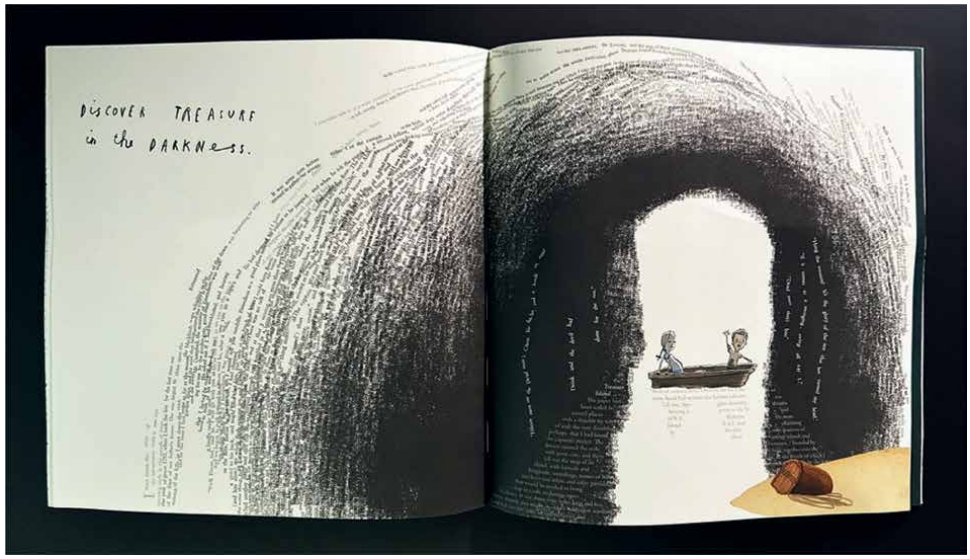

Figure 9.
A CHILD OF BOOKS. Written & Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston © 2016 Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd.

lullabies[4]: *Gulliver's Travels, the Swiss Family Robinson, Peter Pan and Wendy,* fairy tales, and many more are woven, drawn, imagined into amazing backgrounds or meaningful element of the illustrated composition. These landscapes, therefore, are much more than that they blur the boundaries between text and image and create a new form of relationship between these two graphic forms. "The book evolved and emerged through ongoing dialog between pictures and words, working together in the same physical space" [1].

Jeffers and Wilson's contribution to the evolution of typographic picture book is immense, and their work marks a milestone in the articulated and still evolving panorama of experimental graphic novels for the innovatively designed word-mage interplay. Nevertheless, it is easier to recognize the role(s) of typography in their novel than in the previously described example. If, in Rovai's book, the complete absence of pictorial images creates a new experience in which the readers have to acquire a new code of reading and watching typography, and so they have to interpret it in a new subjective and unusual way, Jeffers and Wilson retrieve the classic linguistic canons of the picture book—whose evolution in narrative and figurative terms remains easily understandable—but add, thanks to the typographical element, new levels of reading. The "typographic landscapes" of *A Child of Book* are:

- quotations from the classics of Western literature, whose texts, in this context, are used to draw the significant elements of the landscape, attributing to each illustration a meaning linked to the narratives involved in the image;

- objects of significance that dialog with the narrative of the book. The relationship between the narratives "told" by the typographic element and the morphological manipulation that is made preludes the implicit interpretation of the

[4] See [24] for the complete list of classic works of children's literature featured in *A Child of Books*.

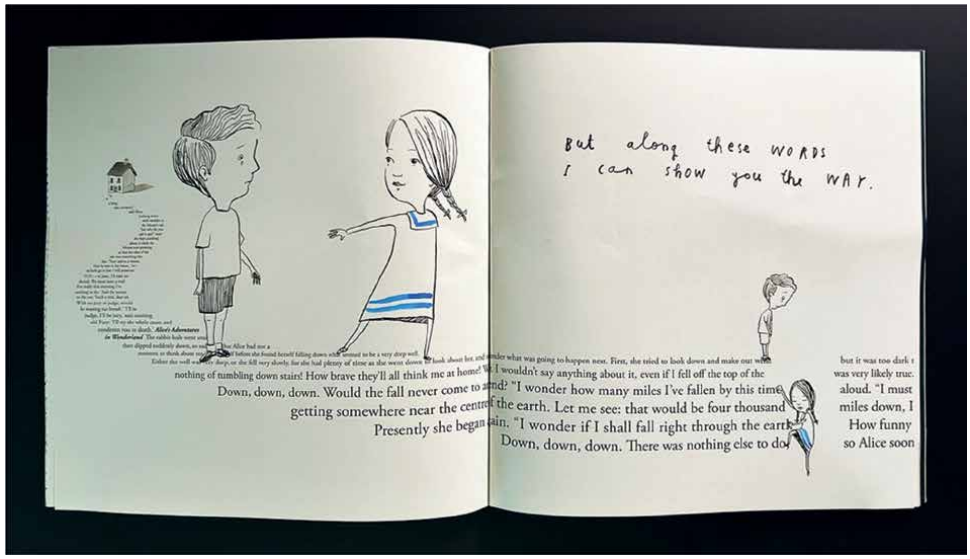

Figure 10.
A CHILD OF BOOKS. Written & Illustrated by Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston © 2016 Oliver Jeffers and Sam Winston. Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd.

protagonists' adventures, paths, emotions, objectives, and evolutions—often unconscious. For example, the text from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, and specifically the part of the story in which Alice goes down the rabbit hole—that is the beginning of her fantastic journey—draws the path on which Jeffers and Wilson's characters walk to begin their adventure (**Figure 10**);

- educational tools. The use of this graphic expedient in an illustrated book finds a legitimate justification for its important pedagogical value. A child of a book entertains, transports in an imaginative world, inspires, but mostly, educates as "reading is the foundation of every child's education, and fostering a love of story is the first step in creating a reader" [24]. Young readers will be inspired to create, question, explore, and imagine in this breathtaking visual poem on the benefits of reading and sharing stories. It can be an immersive and unforgettable experience.

4. Final thoughts and future challenges

The analysis conducted aimed to spotlight the expressive potential of typography as a pervasive form of "a-linguistic" communication whose intrinsic value lies in its design characteristics even before its applications. In the framework of this premise, this contribution reflects on the transversality of the graphic project and on the intrinsic value qualities of type design. The choice of two case studies that lend themselves to a multiplicity of interpretations is instrumental, therefore, in formulating some considerations on the role of the graphic designer in the set-up of an editorial project, in this specific case of a graphic novel: placing itself at the point of intersection between writing and image, between graphic design and visual communication, the projects of Rovai, Jeffers, Wilson and many others amplify the relevance of the creative contribution of graphic design as it allows, in these specific examples, to

remediate a classic of literature, and to build from scratch an "intersystemic" story (text and image) whose objective is to underline the value of the medium itself, the book and the reading. In both cases, things become more complex since, as stated above, typographic novels are a form of experimentation that adds an element to the concept of calligram and visual poetry: "sequentiality," and consequently requires a design which must guarantee connection and visual coherence, and must ensure the readability and interpretability of typographical illustrations. In a typographic novel, the typeface that becomes an image, typical of calligrams, evolves into words or sentences that become visual stories, giving them new dignity as design artifacts and new purposes and challenges to the discipline that deals with its construction process, typography. The described typographic novels, in fact, show two of numerous possible configurations and narrative approaches, many of which are yet to be discovered.

Experimentation is open to other forms, but a fundamental critical issue of this type of editorial product is still unresolved: the translation into a foreign language. To date, this problem has not yet found a solution and becomes a constraint from an international market sales perspective, since translating texts would mean redesigning the entire product and altering the integrity of the text transformation in image, inevitably rooted in the culture of the linguistic system of origin, and therefore different from context to context. In the book *Art and Text* (2019), Aimee Selby, Dave Beech, Charles Harrison, and Will Hill write: "to give text a pictorial form reveals complex contradictions between visual representation and linguistic description, and reminds us that language is a fragile and illogical construct, bound to its subject by cultural compact alone. While we take for granted the equivalence between the word and its subject, they are not linked by any actual resemblance, but only by the shared perception of meanings inherent in language" [25].

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Chapter 4

Perspective Chapter: Voice as Pop Culture Content – Trans-Media, Transnational, and Cross-Language Consumption of Japanese Voice Actors

Takayoshi Yamamura

Abstract

Owing to the recent popularity of Japanese anime, especially those based on manga and light novels, Japanese voice actors have become popular across various media formats transnationally. As a result, concerts and events featuring Japanese voice actors are frequently held outside Japan, and in order to physically experience an anime or a manga character that exists only in fantasy, fans participate in related events as tourists. Moreover, transnational creative activities based around Japanese voice actors have been actively expanding. For example, several video and smartphone games created in China as will be described in this paper, many of which have become popular in the East Asia region, use Japanese voice actors, and the Japanese language. Interestingly, this indicates cross-language commodification and consumption. The games developed in China and featuring Japanese voice actors, who use the Japanese language, are consumed even by Chinese customers. This study investigates the trans-media, transnational, and cross-language (crossing language borders) consumer phenomena involving voice actors and their voices. This study adopts the recently developed framework of contents tourism as a methodology and employs the notion of the experience economy, with the aim to clarify the sociocultural background and the proliferation of such consumption phenomena.

Keywords: voice, pop culture, contents tourism, trans-media, transnational, cross-language, voice actors, anime, Japan, smartphone games

1. Introduction

Studies on the consumption of Japanese voice actors and their voices have been conducted mainly in the field of media and media history studies (for example, see [1–3] or media marketing (for example, see [4]). Among them, Nozawa's work is one of the best-argued academic papers on Japanese voice acting culture, and he has

successfully initiated "an ethnographic description of the logic of Japanese voice acting and the way it animates the structure of contemporary convergence culture [3]". This paper shares a common awareness about the issues pertaining to voice acting with his approach to voice actors from the perspective of contemporary convergence culture. However, Nozawa's study and other previous media studies on Japanese voice actors have rarely mentioned tourism, and they have not discussed the topic from the perspective of tourism studies despite the need to do so. Moreover, to the best of the author's knowledge, no academic research has analyzed the consumption of voice actors from the perspective of the experience economy. On the other hand, existing studies on the relationship between voice actors and tourism phenomena are conducted mainly in the field of contents tourism. Jang or Sugawa-Shimada's studies could be cited as representative of this line of research [5, 6]. They looked at the events in which voice actors—identified as crucial to the promotion of contents tourism—appeared.

The trans-media, transnational, and cross-language aspects of contents tourism have been identified in previous pioneering research [7, 8]. In [8], Graburn and Yamamura reported that transmedia and transnational phenomena of contents tourism have intensified in East Asia and noted the importance of focusing on "cross-cultural and transnational perspective of contents tourism" and also suggested that "contents tourism studies are challenges to" observing "the transmedia process of reinterpretation, re-editing, and recreation of contents." In particular, Yamamura has focused on the use of Japanese in Taiwanese fanzine (doujinshi) circles and has identified a cross-language phenomenon: sharing Japanese narrative worlds and language contents allows for communication across language barriers, both in written and conversational language [9]. Furthermore, in terms of the sound of language, Yamamura identifies that international fans of Japanese anime consider voice as content; the use of the original voices rather than dubbing is considered important. Furthermore, they can often learn some Japanese by enjoying the original contents [9].

Although this study has a similar focus to these previous studies, it aims to further develop research in this area. Since existing research on voice actors and their role in contents tourism has focused only on cases within Japan, and no study to date has used the latest contents tourism framework or systematically investigated the recent transnational and cross-lingual phenomena mentioned above, the present study attempts to fill this research gap.

2. Methodology

The latest findings on the contents tourism framework have been presented by Seaton et al. [10], Yamamura and Seaton [7], and so on, which were utilized as a part of the methodology of this study. The concept of "contents tourism" was first defined in 2005 by the Japanese government as a part of regional and national tourism initiatives as "the addition of a 'narrative quality' (monogatarisei) or 'theme' (tēmasei) to a region—namely an atmosphere or image particular to the region generated by the contents—and the use of that narrative quality as a tourism resource" [11]. In Japan, contents tourism research later evolved into research on pop cultural pilgrimage and tourism. Simultaneously, English language research has progressed, and several important research findings have been published internationally since 2013 [7]. Based on these abovementioned studies, contents, and contents tourism are defined as follows.

3. Contents

"Contents" can be defined as "information that has been produced and edited in some form and that brings enjoyment when it is consumed" [12]. Moreover, "contents" can be positioned as "the combination of the creative elements" such as "stories, characters, locations," "music," and so on [10] "within works of mediatized popular culture" [13]. Based on these definitions, it can be said that contents refer to a narrative world consisting of a combination of creative elements.

4. Contents tourism

Seaton et al. defined contents tourism as "travel behavior motivated fully or partially by narratives, characters, locations, and other creative elements of popular culture forms, including film, television dramas, manga, anime, novels, and computer games [10]". Moreover, Yamamura re-defined it as "a dynamic series of tourism practices/experiences motivated by contents [13]".

"Multiuse of" contents "across various media formats" [10] has increased in the current era of highly developed information and communication technologies and a complex world of media. In recent years, there has been a surge in such cross-border fandoms in East Asia [8]. Unlike earlier phenomena such as film tourism, contents tourism is not centered around a specific media format but around contents themselves through multiuse that spans different media formats. In this way, the approach of contents tourism allows various tourism phenomena to be better explained under such complex circumstances. Contents tourism research has accumulated many case studies on travel to places related to the multiuse of contents across different media formats. For example, research has been conducted on novels and TV shows and novels and video games, and attempts to model such multiuse [7] have been made.

Furthermore, as the above definition of contents shows, while contents are understood as the narrative worlds consisting of a complex structure of creative elements, the consumption of contents is not limited to this narrative world as a whole but may also include its distinct decomposed components ("stories, characters, locations," "music," and other elements [10]). For example, a film may have its elements individually consumed in the form of soundtrack CD, characters-inspired merchandise, and so on. Such distribution and consumption of a narrative world's decomposed elements is currently a common phenomenon. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is no existing research that focuses specifically on these aspects and provides a structural analysis of how these decomposed components connect to specific sites or of their connection to tourism from a contents tourism point of view. In simple terms, in Seaton et al.'s definition [10], while contents tourism is defined as "travel behavior motivated fully or partially by" contents, "partially" is merely a consequence of the decomposed consumption of contents.

To address this gap in contents tourism research, this study focuses on the components of the voice actor and the voice that are important to anime and game contents. Additionally, it aims to demonstrate how the phenomenon of tourism motivated by such components and their consumption can be interpreted as a form of contents tourism. Specifically, this study will look at the phenomena of how exactly voice actors and their voices are distributed and associated with sites that give rise to tourism phenomena. To that end, this study utilizes the concept of "contentsization," which is defined in contents tourism studies as "the continual process of the development and

expansion of the "narrative world" through both mediatized adaptation and "tourism practice" and "contents" tourists access and embody 'narrative worlds' that are evolving through "contentsization' [13]. By examining how contents evolve through restructuring and expansion, this study aims to illuminate how the contents tourism structure is driven by motivation from and consumption of the voice actors and their voices.

5. Segmentation of contents and commercialization of voice

In Japan, a contents business model called media mix (Japanese term for a transmedia franchise) started to gain broad attention when "Kadokawa Shoten (Kadokawa Books) and its affiliated companies" created the "media mix system in the late 1980s and early 1990s," meaning when the "infrastructure to generate variants optimized according to platforms" was developed [14]. This is when media mixing of content, that is. the cross-media development strategy, or media franchising began to attract wide attention in Japan. It aimed to increase diversified revenue by distributing a single item of content more widely through spin-offs—novels, comics, and games—, that is, by exploiting various media as contents businesses.

A unique feature of their strategy was that they not only used single contents in other media in a multiuse and cross-media style, but they also divided it into elements to be commercialized and contentsizated—a method that has become increasingly popular. That is, a single anime or video game was subdivided into different categories of content, such as voice actors and music, and each category was developed through separate channels. In this way, the voices of characters of anime and games, which is an extremely valuable element for fans, and also voice actors themselves gained distinct value as products.

Naito describes these situations as follows. "In this way, mediatized acceptance of 'voice actors' became directly focused on 'voice actors' themselves, leaving from the premise of the existence of 'outer shells' called 'characters' or images of 'anime'. In this manner, voice 'actors' started to be accepted as an independent medium [2]". As a result, "live performances including song concerts" by voice actors [2] were actively carried out since this period. Simultaneously, "drama CDs" [15], in which the epilogue of an anime is played only through voice actors, and "character song" [2] CDs, in which the voice actors sing songs created to symbolize the main characters, were launched successively.

It is quite interesting to study the cross-media development of voice and its commercialization from the viewpoint of contentsization. The increased separation of voice and voice actors as elements of contents from the original contents has led to the commercialization and contentsization of each element. In previous arguments on contents tourism studies (see [7, 10]), the manner in which single contents (=narrative world) are used in other media formats in a multiuse and cross-media style has not been adequately studied. However, the example of voice actors mentioned in this paper suggests that in the course of contents' media mix becoming popular, contents are segmentalized and divided, mediatized adaption occurs on each segment, and unique development and expansion of the "narrative world" occurs with linkages to the original contents. According to the words of Otsuka, segmentalized contents "generate variants" of original contents "optimized according to platforms" [14]. Previous contents tourism studies have not discussed this aspect. However, its critical importance for contents tourism is apparent, given the movement of people or human mobilities in live performances or tourism phenomena. It will be necessary to position it as a distinctive process of contentsization that first arises after the completion of contents creation.

However, it is to be noted that contents, equivalent to narrative worlds, are constructed from a complex interaction between distinct creative elements. Therefore, at first glance, it looks like contents tourists consume each divided segment, but the reality is that they "access and embody "narrative worlds" underlying them [13]. In other words, by adopting a contents tourism approach, it can be recognized that they reconstruct narrative worlds through each element by using their imagination and consume them.

6. Contentsization toward experience economy

In the Japanese animation industry, it is difficult to recover high production costs only through TV broadcasts and theater releases, which is a structural problem throughout the industry. The industry has generally attempted to recover production costs by selling DVDs and BDs with high-value additions to fans as collectors' items after the end of anime broadcasts and movie releases. However, as the Association of Japanese Animations (AJA) reported, in the latter half of the 2000s, with the widespread online distribution of video works, the consumption of anime content changed dramatically, and the sales of DVDs and BDs declined sharply and experienced significant losses in Japan [16].

In their seminal book The Experience Economy, Pine, and Gilmore described that "information is not the foundation of the 'new economy,' for information is not an economic offering" and experience is "a distinct economic offering provides the key to future economic growth" [17]. Moreover, they picked up Disneyland and Disney World as good examples to explain the experimental effect and mentioned that "cast members (never 'employees') stage a complete production of sights, sounds, tastes, aromas, and textures to create a unique experience" to involve guests "in an unfolding story" [17]. They also considered "interactive games" as one of the "new genres of experience" [17]. Interestingly, we can observe the same effects, such as adaptation for stages/live concerts and interactive games, in the process of contentsization of Japanese voice actors.

Under these circumstances, "idolization of voice actors" [3] has attracted attention from the content production side as a cross-media strategy that exploits these voices. This form of content development is carried out as follows: First, an idol is set as a character in anime and games, and the voice actor is in charge of the songs, as well as the voice of the idol in the play. Further, the voice actor him/herself actually sings and dances on the stage as an extension of the character. These kinds of cross-media strategies involving voices are "most clearly exemplified" by the idol training video game "THE iDOLM@STER," which was launched in 2005, as one of the pioneering cases [3]. In this game, the player him/herself, as a novice producer, aims to train a female idol and make her debut a success. In addition to the concerts given by its voice actors [18], comic books, drama CDs, TV anime series, a theatrical anime film, and smartphone games have been produced from this video game.

Such contents using so-called idol voice actors have continued to grow both qualitatively and quantitatively. Video or smartphone games, such as "Love Live!" (2010-) featuring female idols, "Uta no Prince-sama" (2010-), and "Idolish Seven" (2015-) featuring male idols, have been released and animated one after another. There have also been many concerts in Japan and overseas where the voice actors have themselves sung and danced on the stage, wearing the costumes of their respective characters [19] ("Yume ha IM@S Seiyū"). "KING OF PRISM by PrettyRhythm" (2016) was also launched as an anime featuring male idols first and was later launched as a comic and a smartphone game.

What is interesting about this series of phenomena is the fact that the markets of voice and voice actors have clearly shifted their focus from merchandise to the experience economy, such as interactive games and stages/live concerts, as Pine and Gilmore have noted. In other words, as Matsumoto has noted, the value of products (i.e. marketability and/or substitutability) is shifting from the consumption of commodities, which is "high in substitutability" to experiences, which are "low in

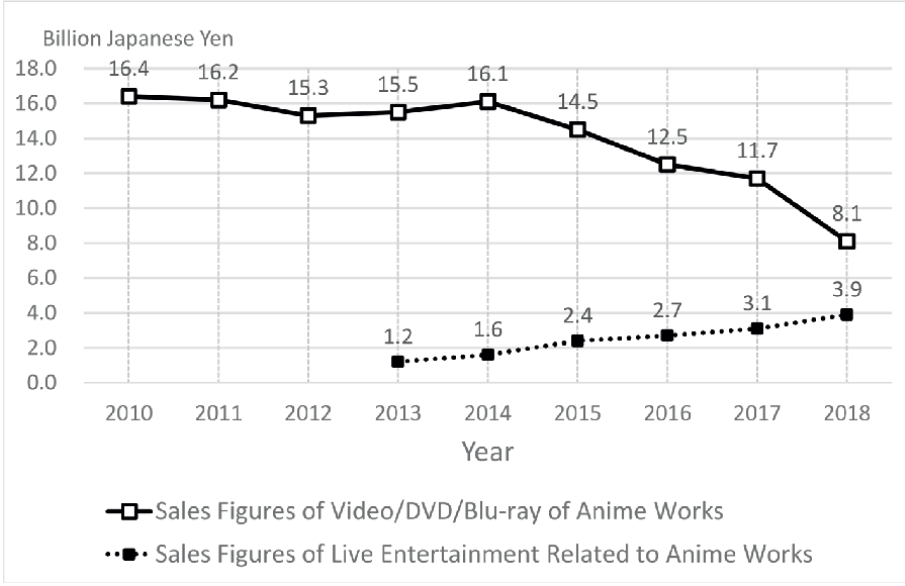

Figure 1.
Trends in the market size of video/dvd/bd and live entertainment related anime works.
Source: The graph was created by the author, and the original data was obtained from [16].

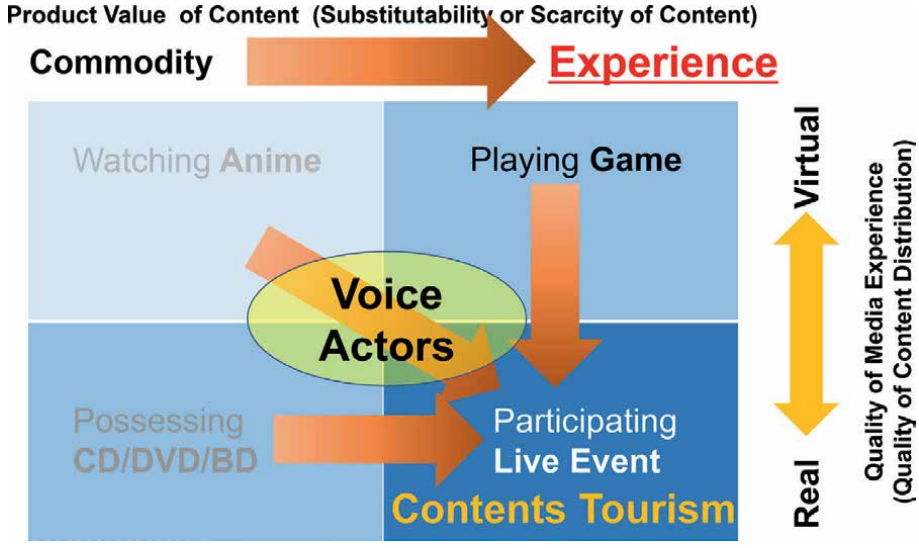

Figure 2.
Content market/consumption model toward the experience economy.
Source: Figure created by the author based on [20].

substitutability" [20]. It is assumed that such phenomena are emerging remarkably in the content industry, as are the ways in which the content is consumed. The phenomena are also clearly evidenced by the statistics of the Japanese Anime industry focusing on the trends in the market size of Video/DVD/BD and live entertainment. Sales figures of video/DVD of anime works declined from 16.4 billion Japanese yen in 2010 to 8.1 billion yen in 2018, while sales figures of live entertainment related to anime works increased from 1.2 billion yen in 2013 to 3.9 billion yen in 2018 [16]. These data strongly suggest that there was a big shift in the early 2010s. The review of literature conducted by the authors revealed that no statistical data is currently available on the trends in the sales volume of games using voice actors (**Figure 1**).

Viewers of anime can not only enjoy watching anime but also support and bring up idols virtually by playing games. Furthermore, by participating in voice actors' concerts, fans can support the characters in the real world and share a sense of unity with them. In this way, they can virtually and/or physically access and embody narrative worlds, such as the original anime/game contents underlying them. It is noteworthy that these are merchandise consumption behaviors that emphasize the experience economy. These processes of contentsization of voice and voice actors can be perceived as contentsization toward the experience economy in the context of contents tourism (**Figure 2**).

7. Official contentsization and illegal contentsization: formation of the international market of voice

As seen above, in the 2010s, the live entertainment market of voice grew rapidly, and at the same time, multiple video or smartphone games using so-called idol voice actors have also been developing. Moreover, as the Association of Japanese Animations reported, the overseas market of Japanese anime has been expanding rapidly since around 2014 mainly in North America and Asia [16]. Under such circumstances, the content, or idol voice actors, was formed and rose to popularity. Later, this content was distributed, consumed, and accepted even outside Japan. In terms of this cross-national distribution, consumption, and acceptance of Japanese voice actors, the following two major factors should be noted as important background from the perspective of contentsization.

The first is official contentsization caused by copyright holders' market strategy following the saturated Japanese domestic anime market. In Japan, which has a mature and almost saturated anime market, the voice actor market is saturated as well. Therefore, voice actors and their agencies actively try to find new ways or new markets for voice, such as games and live entertainment. In particular, they are currently focusing on emerging smartphone games. As the Association of Japanese Animations stated, "The domestic market size of smartphone games derived from Japanese anime is already considerably big" [16]. Moreover, those on the production side, who are looking for overseas markets with potential growth, are actively exporting such idol anime and games, and their voice actors are tasked with frequently performing in live concerts at foreign events [16]. As a result, the demand for idol voice actors is increasing rapidly abroad, and the growth of Japanese anime market "has been brought about through the sales in abroad since 2014" [16]. Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to consider that the number of inbound tourists who attend the live concerts of voice actors in Japan is increasing, even though statistical data does not exist to support this.

The second is Illegal contentsization by fandom based on "anime fansubbing" culture [21]. This is because a considerable part of Japanese anime was initially transmitted in the form of pirated copies—voluntary fans "fansub", or "translate and subtitle" anime contents [22] that were distributed illegally among fandom, usually without any voice-over by local voice actors. It is now very common for fansubbed anime to be distributed online, given the ease of sharing videos on the Internet. This illegal distribution has caused serious damage to the Japanese production side, the copyright holder. However, it is also an important fact that "early anime companies" outside of Japan "had to rely on the existing fanbase" and "that fanbase relied on the circulation of fansubs" as in Ref. [22]. Moreover, it is certain that the fansubbed anime led to the consumption of Japanese anime in the original Japanese, and as a result, it has raised international profiles of Japanese voice actors.

In terms of the consumption of the Japanese language among international anime fandom, Yamamura noted "typical characteristics of otaku 'geek' culture" and stated that "they are not interested in merely consuming the dubbed version but prefer the original content; they love to experience the voices of the original actors/actresses, as well as the anison in their original form as each of these individual contents is essential parts of an anime" [9]. Thus, international markets of Japanese voice actors have been built outside Japan, where Japanese idol voice actors are consumed, and the number of the fans has increased regardless of nationality.

8. Reconstruction of Japanese voice outside Japan

With the increasing acceptance of Japanese contents and Japanese idol voice actors, a very interesting phenomenon has occurred, particularly in China where the high-level anime/game production industry is already developed and the smartphone game or "mobile game market has continued to expand" [23]. They employ Japanese voice actors and produce games, with the setting being assumed to be somewhere in Japan, in which characters speak Japanese. These games are not only consumed domestically but are also exported to Japan. In other words, Chinese fans who have received Japanese anime/game culture have restructured such Japanese-made contents; created high-quality Japanese-style games in China, or so-called "Japanese-styled Chinese games" [24]; and exported those back to Japan.

It is now possible to create Chinese games with Japan as the background. The location, characters, and voices in the games are all supposed to be Japanese, and Japanese voice actors deliver lines in Japanese penned by Japanese writers. Further, emphasis has been placed on Japanese idol voice actors speaking the Japanese language. This clearly shows that not only the popular culture shared by fans but also the content industry itself has begun to interact equally and bilaterally between Japan and China. It is a phenomenon that is quite interesting from the viewpoint of contentsization, and it can be said that new contents are created by transnational and cross-linguistic contentsization based on the abovementioned contentsization history.

A typical example is the game app Onmyoji for smartphones, which was launched in China in September 2016 and in Japan in 2017 by NetEase, Inc., a Chinese online game company. Many Japanese idol voice actors appeared in this game, and the dialogs were in Japanese even in the Chinese version. Currently, such type of Chinese-made games with Japanese tastes are generally called Japanese-styled Chinese games and Onmyoji pioneers them. Following Onmyoji, Azur Lane was launched in 2017

by Manjuu Co.ltd and Yongshi Co.ltd, and is also a typical case of Japanese-styled Chinese games, which have become popular in both China and Japan.

Naturally, through these games, Chinese players rediscover and reevaluate Japanese idol voice actors, after which they start accessing other contents in which those voice actors appear. With such voice actors at the core, diverse contents are consumed and reconstructed, including contents tourism, such as participation in concerts or talk shows. For example, in October 2017, Toa Yukinari, a Japanese voice actress who performed as Ubume, a character in the game Onmyoji, participated in Shanghai Comic Convention 2017 (SHCC 2017) for an exchange meeting with fans and to sign autographs [25]. Onmyoji's second anniversary event was held in Shanghai, China, in October 2018. Romi Park, a Japanese voice actress who performed as the game character Tamamonomae participated in the event and communicated with fans [26]. Moreover, the narrative world of smartphone game Onmyoji itself has already been contentsized. It was animated in 2018. In the same year, a musical based on the game was performed in Tokyo, Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing [27].

Likewise, when considering games other than these Japanese-styled Chinese games, one can observe interesting cases of reconstructing Japanese voice in China. For example, the talk shows by the four voice actresses of the abovementioned Japanese video/smartphone game THE iDOLM@STER were held in Shanghai, China, on December 8–9, 2017. The event tickets were sold for Chinese fans through Chinese E-Commers site; however, a number of tickets were specially prepared for Japanese fans to internationally join the event [28]. More interestingly, BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment, the original seller of the game, has recorded the events and their stay in Shanghai and edited the contents to be released in Blu-ray Disc format in 2018, titled THE IDOLM@STER CINDERELLA GIRLS in SHANGHAI [29].

As observed in the abovementioned cases of events and musical staging, transnational human mobilities based on contents, or transnational contents tourism practices, is growing as Japanese voices are transnationally reconstructed.

9. Conclusion

As discussed in the previous sections, the voices of Japanese idol voice actors are circulating in a transmedia and transnational manner. It can be observed how they are being consumed without localization worldwide, i.e. dubbing in local languages. In such circumstances, content has been reconstructed overseas, and the voices of Japanese idol voice actors have been adopted and directly consumed in countries other than Japan through multiple contentsization process, namely, contentsization toward experience economy, official contentsization, illegal contentsization, transnational contentsization, and cross-linguistic contentsization.

Matsumoto presents two axes for classifying content consumption patterns. They are virtual consumption or real consumption and commodity consumption or experience consumption [20]. Based on this concept of classifying consumption patterns, the above voice consumption phenomenon strongly suggests that consumption in the content market is shifting from a virtual orientation to a real orientation from passive commodity consumption to an experience economy where users actively seek to engage with content. More specifically, it shows that the form of content distribution and consumption is changing from consuming characters, by simply watching anime and reading manga, to experiencing them. In other words, we can see that the content industry itself has set a new goal to increase profitability by emphasizing the

experience economy. Fans will virtually experience complementary relationships with the characters by playing video/smartphone games and will feel happier to get closer to the characters in a real environment by attending voice actor concerts and events. The content production side is also shifting its profit structure accordingly. Concerts and events, which are typical examples of content consumption associated with human mobility in a real environment, can now be positioned as typical elements of contents tourism.

Therefore, observing the distribution and consumption of idol voice actors from the perspective of increasing importance of the experience economy is very effective to elucidate the characteristics of the latest contents tourism practices and phenomena, and better understand their structures. In other words, these ideas present an induced structure for contents tourism, that is. how contents consumption induces the practice of tourism. Certainly, the nature of contents tourism can vary greatly depending on whether it is performed to confirm the location of the work or to feel closer to the characters through their voice. In such a case, how will this difference in the nature of contents tourism affect multilateral exchanges and understanding? There has been little actual research on this; hence, further research should be carried out in the future.

As described above, the voice contained in the content, that is. the Japanese language itself, is increasingly consumed as it is, without being localized. In addition, an increasing number of overseas productions, such as the game Onmyoji, have scenarios in which not only the Japanese language but also Japanese cultural contexts are incorporated without any modifications. This phenomenon has a lot in common with the increasing consumption of the Korean language and culture in fandoms outside South Korea thanks to the K-pop cross-border development (for example, see [30]). Cross-border consumption and acceptance of language and cultural context is a very important issue from the perspective not only of contents tourism but also of cultural anthropology and media anthropology. In the future, the study of contents tourism should be systematized by taking into account cultural anthropology or media anthropology perspectives.

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Chapter 5

Transnational Conflicts and Dialogs in Japanese Manga Consumption

Koarai Ryo and Yamamura Takayoshi

Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the impact of the transnational consumption of Japanese manga on today's international society. Advances in information technology and the popularization of online platforms lead to economic and market growth for the content industry and transnational conflicts between global fans from different cultural backgrounds. By analyzing the typical cases, these conflicts could be categorized into three types of background: the different perspective of history, the old feud with the other country, and the image of the war memories. On the one hand, these cases reveal the different ways of reading that are rooted in different cultural backgrounds and sometimes reinforce stereotypical images of other countries. On the other hand, this situation also provides an opportunity to create dialogs that lead to mutual understanding among global manga fans.

Keywords: Japanese manga, transnational consumption, conflict, dialog, global pop-culture fan

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the impact of the transnational consumption of Japanese manga (comics) on today's international society. With the advancement of information technology, media content from different countries is now accessible to audiences worldwide, transcending geographical boundaries. This situation leads to economic and market growth for the content industry, but it also leads to transnational conflicts between global fans who live in different areas and have different cultural backgrounds.

Against the background of transnational consumption of media content, this chapter focuses on the transnational consumption of Japanese manga and the conflicts and dialogs among global manga fans. However, unlike [1], which focuses on the story and structure of manga, this chapter focuses on the actual comments of manga fans and the communication among global fans caused by manga. Specifically, it examines the conflicts and dialogs that arise between fans who read the same manga but interpret it differently.

2. The transnational consumption of Japanese manga

Advances in information technology, including the development of digital devices, advances in communication technology, and the popularization of online platforms and applications, provide global consumers with the opportunity to access and consume media content such as films, music, video games, and comics from different countries. Notably, the transnational consumption of Japanese manga is a prime example. Manga is "Japanese-produced comics and graphic novels [2]," that have unique representations; for example, manga is read from right to left, various onomatopoeic sounds are derived from the Japanese language, and some symbolic expressions, such as the sweat mark, differ from Western comics. Nevertheless, manga is now consumed around the world and has a large number of transnational fans who live in different cultural areas.

For example, based on data from [3], which covers approximately 85% of the U.S. trade print book market, Japanese manga titles dominate 13 of the top 20 spots in the latest adult graphic novel sales rankings, according to sales data from October 1 to August 28, 2023. Manga sales in the United States are currently strong and growing. In fact, they "went through two years of explosive growth in 2021 and 2022, and while sales are down in 2023, they are still ahead of 2019 [4]." In France, the pass culture, a government subsidy to promote cultural and artistic exposure, has been used to purchase manga, often referred to as the manga pass [5].

In addition, Japan's leading publishers are dedicating themselves to local services overseas. *Shueisha*, the publisher of *Spy×Family*, *One Piece*, and *Dragon Ball*, expanded its manga distribution service, MANGA Plus SHUEISHA, and released an archive of over 15,000 manga episodes for paid users [6]. In the U.S. market, *Kōdansya*, publisher of *Atack on Titan*, *Fairy Tail*, and *Sailor Moon*, launched the manga application K MANGA [7]. Manga UP!, published by Square Enix, the publisher of *Fullmetal Alchemist*, *Toilet-Bound Hanako-kun*, and *Soul Eater*, offers a digital manga application service for overseas [8]. BOOK☆WALKER Global, run by *Kadokawa*, the publisher of *Ranking of Kings*, *Bungo Stray Dogs*, and *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (manga adaptation of anime), added the vertical scroll manga service TATESC COMICS for overseas [9]. Furthermore, today's Japanese manga market is expanding not only to Asia and the West, the main export areas, but also to the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia [10].

The point of this expansion of global publishing is not simply to strengthen the market but the simulpub that can eliminate the lag in consumption outside of Japan. "Chapters of 'Simulpub' manga series are released [...] at the same time as the original Japanese chapters in Japan [11]." Previously, the manga had to be translated and republished, making it difficult for global manga fans to enjoy manga at the same time as Japanese fans; however, simulpub allows global manga fans to access the latest manga episodes just like Japanese fans. With the global publication of these Japanese publishers, it can be said that the transnational consumption of Japanese manga is being promoted all over the world. However, this situation also raises some new and negative issues for transnational manga fans.

3. Transnational consumption of media content leads to conflicts between global fans

Since the 2000s, fan studies have focused on global fan communication facilitated by the transnational consumption of media content. On the one hand, some studies

point to the positive side of global fan communication. These scholars assume that "fan communities exist beyond social and cultural differences and across time and space barriers [12]." Therefore, "[f]ans' offline identity is rather unimportant as being a fan of a specific object (a film, TV show, comic book, etc.) takes precedence [12]."

On the other hand, [12] cautions against this optimistic view, pointing out that "[a] fan from one region may communicate with a fan from another region and may browse websites on the same topic; however, this does not equal community participation. Global and transnational groups [...], cannot be formed because of differences in fanism, which are determined by local economic, cultural, political, and historical factors [12]." Indeed, cases have been found where global fans interpret the same media content differently due to different backgrounds. Leung [13] found different readings between Hong Kong audiences and Japanese audiences in Hong Kong when watching the same Japanese drama rooted in the resolution level of Japanese society. Fan [12] also presented the answer that German *Star Wars* fans, unlike non-German fans, feel the similarity of the image of the Empire with Nazis, from his questionnaire [12]. These different readings by global fans sometimes cause conflicts among transnational fans; for example, the above answer reads, "I witnessed conflicts resulting from this, as something that is 'just a game' to others touches on something almost sacred to at least some German fans [12]."

This situation of fans consuming the same media content but interpreting it differently has not suddenly emerged since the Web 2.0 era. In fact, counter-arguments against media imperialism in the 1990s already noted that "viewer reception of globally distributed media products is conditioned by local contexts" [14]. However, it is the first time that the different readings of each area can meet and cause some conflicts among transnational fans, and this situation has been triggered by the advances in information technology after Web 2.0. As just described, conflicts between global fans of the same media content have been occurring recently, and this situation does not exclude manga.

4. Methodology

This article uses online ethnography, the perspective of aca-fan described as later, and triangulation to analyze the conflicts and dialogs among global manga fans. First, with online ethnography, some typical cases, which are global fan conflicts caused by manga, were found through web news, online forums, and social media. Finally, six cases and titles, *Attack on Titan*, *Hetalia – Axis Powers*, *One Piece Wano Country Arc*, *My Hero Academia*, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, and *Tokyo Revengers*, were selected with the following two criteria.

One is that this manga, known as the title, has global popularity even in Japan. There are countless manga titles in Japan, including paper and digital; therefore, as a prerequisite, the object of analysis investigation must have huge global fans and multiple online discussions. The other is that have the global fan conflicts caused by these titles been covered by the news media, or have they led to discussions involving global fans living in more than one country? To ensure reliability, the analysis was conducted using triangulation with both the fans' subjective online comments and the news organizations' objective reports through the authors' perspective of the aca-fan. Aca-fan means "people who are both academics and fans [15]." In early fan studies, scholars distanced themselves from fans and studied fans as separate from themselves, as us and them, and this scholarly stance tended to overlook the actual voices

of fans. In this situation, [16] constructed the stance of the aca-fan to "signal a dual allegiance – to treat our subcultural knowledge as part of what informed the work we were doing as scholars [16]" through his study. To analyze the online comments of fans, including an internal context and code among manga fans, it can be helpful to use this perspective of an aca-fan by authors, who are also fans of Japanese anime and manga. In addition, triangulation with both the subjective online comments of fans and the objective reports of news organizations through the authors' perspective of the aca-fan protects the qualitative data from extreme objective or subjective bias.

Finally, as content analysis, which "is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use [17]," authors will list the status and limiting point for analysis as follows. Authors are native Japanese speakers and can use English for study; and therefore, when they understand fans' comments, such as in the Korean language, they use the Deep L translation tool. Meanwhile, this method has a limiting point: it is difficult to research fans' comments other than in Japanese and English. In particular, due to the language barrier, it can be said that this analysis could not adequately address some comments from Asian fans in Chinese and Korean languages.

5. Some manga titles cause global Fan conflicts due to different readings

5.1 Case 1. *Attack on Titan*: the different of perspective of the history

Global fan conflicts due to different readings of manga have come to the fore, especially since the 2010s. By analyzing the typical examples, these conflicts could be categorized into three types of the background, which are the different of perspective of the history, the old feud with the other country, and the image of the war memories. *Attack on Titan* is a dark fantasy manga created by Hajime Isayama. This manga depicts the battles between Titans and humans in the beginning; however, as the book progresses, its story changes to a complicated ethnic war. It has been serialized since 2009 to 2021, has gotten into adaptations such as anime, live-action movies, and live-action musicals, and has big fans all over the world.

This manga, the major conflict among global fans, was triggered by one of the blog entries written by the manga creator of *Attack on Titan*, Isayama, on October 4, 2010 [18]. According to the blog post, Isayama responded to his fan's question by saying that one of the characters in *Attack of Titan*, Pixis, was modeled after Yoshifuru Akiyama, who is a real historical person. In response, some Koreans shared this information on their social media, and people claiming to be Koreans criticized it in the comments section of this blog article. The comment that triggered the conflict was posted in 2013, about 3 years after the blog post, and can be summarized as "I'm Korean, I knew Pixis was modeled after Yoshifuru Akiyama online. Do you know that Akiyama is *senpan* (the war criminal)? Maybe the author is a right-winger? If the author has no historical perspective, you must apologize. This manga is too popular all over the world, so the author must have a global historical perspective [18]."

Yoshifuru Akiyama is the general of the Imperial Army in Japan; therefore, this comment indicates that some Korean fans took issue with the author's creation, which was based on people who belonged to the Imperial Army. After this post, audience claiming to be Korean or Japanese had a dispute on this blog, and with analysis, their comments can be categorized into two types: genuine debate on this issue and troll,

defined later. As for a genuine debate on this issue, they discussed the difference in each historical perspective between Korean and Japanese fans. Most of the Korean fans argued criticisms that can be summarized as Akiyama is a war criminal, I feel sad that you chose the war criminal as the model of the character, the author is pro-war because he respects the war criminal, Korean fans are angry, and the author is right-wing [18]. Meanwhile, in Japan, the term *senpan* generally refers to war criminals who are defendants at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal after World War II; however, Akiyama Yoshifuru died in 1930, before the beginning of World War II. Therefore, most of the Japanese fans argued against the Korean fans' claim because Akiyama is not a war criminal and criticized the Korean fans for misunderstanding history [18]. In line with these discussions, one Korean fan described what can be summarized as some Korean fan's post, including a little wrong because Akiyama is not a war criminal in the dictionary. However, he also visited Korea as the headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Expeditionary Army in Korea, which was the occupying army of the colony in 1916. Therefore, he actually supported the colonialism as an army [18].

These arguments were caused by the difference in historical perspective, especially the concept of *senpan*. For most Japanese fans, Akiyama Yoshifuru is not *senpan*; therefore, they see the Korean fans' criticism of the author as wrong. Meanwhile, for most Korean fans, although he is not a war criminal, Akiyama is seen as one of the armies who supported the colonization of the Koreans in their eyes; therefore, they see the author's creation as wrong. The Korean and Japanese fans have different points of view in this conflict, just as the points of view from different places are never the same, and it is impossible to say which of the different points of view is correct. However, it can be said that their dialogs also have the potential to allow Korean and Japanese fans to find their different historical perspectives and lead to mutual understanding.

Meanwhile, as for a troll, their comments make the conflict more active and create a new stereotype. Trolling is described as "triggering disruption and conflict for one's own amusement, is a malicious online behavior that causes substantial, negative consequences for its victims [19]." In Japan, this behavior is called *arashi* (depredating) and is recognized as similar to this definition.

As for a genuine debate on this issue, at least both fans tried to make the discussion on this issue; however, troll's comment devoted all its attention to inflaming the situation by abusive online slander. A troll's comments included offensive terms and did not try to focus on the cause of this conflict; therefore, the fans' thought process stopped, and they concluded that if you hate it, you should not read it [18]. Most of these types of comments seem to be posted by Japanese people, which include not only innocent fans but also perpetrators for pleasure, who knew about this conflict online and gathered on the blog.

In addition, these Japanese posts also reinforced the dubious stereotype that Korean people read or watch this title by pirates. They argued that we should ignore the comments of Koreans and not criticize the author because they enjoy the title of pirates [18]. However, as one of the Japanese comments indicated that Koreans can watch this title without pirates, it is not always true that all Koreans enjoy this title of pirates [18]. Actually, Japanese media also said that "since first aired in Korea in 2013, this title became more popular, which called social phenomenon through the ground wave and other several media in Korea [20]." In short, Korean fans could also enjoy this title in a legitimate way. Nevertheless, Japanese comments argue that Koreans repeatedly use pirates [18]. It can be said that they did not pay attention to whether it was true or not and only wanted to abuse the other side.

In addition, some trolls were suspected of posting aggressive comments pretending to be fans of other countries, such as Japanese pretending to be Korean and posting comments that incite Japanese [18]. By doing so, they unnecessarily inflamed the fans of both countries, and the situation became more complicated and harmful. Eventually, the active posting continued for about a week; there were no outward signs of an official response from the author and rights holder of this title, and the conflict gradually lost substance.

5.2 Case 2. *Hetalia – Axis Powers* and *One Piece Wano Country Arc*: the old feud with the other country

Some manga titles lead to global conflicts caused by the old feud with the other countries. *Hetalia – Axis Powers* is a web manga title featuring anthropomorphic nations. In this title, the characters comically reflect the stereotypical images of the people of each country. For example, the protagonist of this manga *Italia* (Italy), is depicted as a cheerful and crying guy who also loves pasta, pizza, *siesta*, and women. Meanwhile, one of the characters *Doitsu* (Germany), is characterized as a martinetish and serious person, *Nihon* (Japan) is depicted as a person who is good at being shy and reading the situation. Their character mainly reflects the image of the characteristics of the people of each country by Internet users. With these anthropomorphic characters, this title depicts original stories and historical events such as the American War of Independence. As a characteristic of this title, the anthropomorphic nation's characters are not portrayed as discriminatory but as a person who also has a weak point but is lovable. Therefore, this manga and its characters get global fans enough to be held a fan meeting called *Hetalia* Day all over the world on or about October 24, the United Nations Day.[1]

However, in 2009. this manga sparked a transnational conflict in Asia over the cancelation of on air of the anime version of this manga. The broadcasting station of this anime did not say why they canceled on air; however, the cause of this problem could be seen in some Korean's criticism. Japanese web media reported as follows: some Korean netizens criticized that the story and setting of this manga slandered Korea. They also wanted to cancel the broadcast of the anime. The criticism from Korean netizens was that the character of *Kankoku* (Korea)'s setting, which tends to say that everything comes from Korea, is insulting, and other characters praise the war criminal nations. In this situation, some Koreans collected signatures to stop the broadcast, and the promotion of this Korean was discussed in the Korean parliament [21, 22]. This uproar spread across the border and was also reported by the Japanese media. As a result, the broadcaster announced that it would stop broadcasting this anime.

Interestingly, this problem did not end as just a conflict in Asia. After the cancelation of the broadcast, fans of this manga worldwide reacted and sent an encouraging message to the author of this manga. The author of this manga, Hidekazu Himaruya, said in his blog, "Thank you for your encouraging mail. It is unexpected that I could get encouragement from the closest Taiwan to the farthest Argentina [23]."

The English-language anime news site, *Anime News Network*, reported on this conflict, and many comments from English-speaking users gathered in their forum. One of the users expressed understanding of the Korean anger and this issue with both historical backgrounds, saying that it can be summarized as because the world wars were tense and painful, so there are people who are not happy about a humorous

[1] In fact, some fan activity can be seen by searching online for a term such as *Hetalia* Day.

parody of these historical events [24]. Another user disagreed and had potential anger with the Korean criticism; however, they also made an appeal to Koreans to get over themselves, describing that *Hetaria* has a potential insult to everyone, not only Korean, and if you cere it is a joke, you will enjoy it [24]. As you can see from these comments, this issue has also led to a dialog that seeks to find mutual understanding and a peaceful solution among global manga fans with different cultures, histories, languages, and political situations.

A case of *Hetalia* could be seen that it was caused by the old feud between Korea and Japan. After World War II, Korea and Japan often came into conflict not only over manga but also over political, cultural, and industrial issues. However, these issues should not be viewed as simple, traditional binary oppositions, with Koreans one-sidedly blaming Japan and Japan only criticizing Korean behavior and attitudes. Another case of conflict shows that there are multiple points of view, even among Koreans.

One Piece Wano Country Arc also led to the hatred of some Koreans because this arc included a strong Japanese taste, and it can be seen that Japanism in *One Piece* did not have a specific national taste before this arc. A Korean fan posted on a bulletin board network site with a title such as I am a patriotic person, so I can no longer read *One Piece* [25]. This fan said, I learned about Japan's atrocities when I was a student, so I cannot read *One Piece Wano Country Arc* [25]. It could be seen that their aversion to Japan was rooted in their historical perspective; therefore, they had difficulty seeing some depictions that included Japanese tastes. This post reinforces the stereotypical image that all Koreans hate the depiction that includes Japanese flavor because of the historical background.

Meanwhile, from the comments of this thread, it can be seen that not all Korean fans have only anti-Japanese feelings, and there are many kinds of opinions about this stereotypical image that Koreans hate the depiction including Japanese taste caused by the historical background. One of the users pointed out that the thread starter has extreme anti-Japanese feelings [25]. Some users criticized the thread starter's "optional anti-Japanese sentiment (선택적 반일) [25]". They found it paradoxical that the thread starter has an anti-Japanese sentiment but reads *One Piece*, which is a Japanese manga, and one of the users advised the thread starter to stop consuming Japanese culture if one has that optional anti-Japanese sentiment. Another user said, I am not going to praise Japan unconditionally, but this problem never ends when we put something down just because it is Japan, like you [25]. As can be seen from this discussion, not all Koreans have an anti-Japanese sentiment such as the stereotypical image that all Koreans hate the depiction including Japanese taste because of the historical background. Even Korean fans also have several different opinions and often create conflict and dialog, such as Japanese and Koreans.

5.3 Case 3. *My Hero Academia*, *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, and *Tokyo Revengers*: the image of the war memories

Some motifs in manga often lead to global fan conflicts because they evoke the image of war memories. *My Hero Academia*, a Japanese manga that depicts the battles between heroes and villains, caused conflict among some Asian readers in 2020. The source of the conflict was the name of one of the characters, Maruta Shiga. *Maruta* is the name used by the Imperial Japanese Army's Unit 731 during World War II to refer to human subjects used in human experimentation; therefore, some Chinese fans criticized the character's name for evoking horrific memories of the war [26]. In response, *Shueisha*, the publisher of the manga, stated that there were some who

pointed out that Maruta Shiga was reminiscent of past historical evidence. The author and editors did not name this character with that intention. However, we never want this manga to be seen over historical facts; therefore, the name of this character will be changed to another name [27].

In the case of *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*, a manga that depicts the battle between humans and *oni* (demons), the anime adaptation of the title drew criticism from Korean fans. The pattern of the piercings worn by the protagonist is similar to the Rising Sun flag; therefore, some Koreans demanded that Netflix change the design of the main visual [28]. Not only this manga but especially designs that evoke war memories, such as the Rising Sun flag, have often been criticized by some Asian people, excluding the Japanese. In fact, because these designs were also used during wars, some Asian people may associate some designs with imperialism and the colonial period.

As a result, Netflix responded to some Korean claims and changed the design of the main visual. Meanwhile, most Japanese people differentiate between reality and fiction and consider it to be more of a design, and since they do not intend to associate the design with war memories, they consider the Korean criticism to be an exaggerated reaction rooted in anti-Japanese tastes. However, this case does not indicate that all Koreans are nervous about such issues. Some Koreans felt anger about this issue, and a part of Koreans combined this manga and anti-Japanese [29]. In addition, web media reported that some Korean voices who want to read manga and watch anime as the original, which were released in Japan, are getting bigger [28].

This kind of discussion, rooted in the memory of the war, occurs not only in Asia but also in Europe. *Tokyo Revengers*, a Japanese *Yankee*, a term meaning a Japanese gang composed of boys or girls, manga that depicts science fiction stories and clashes between yang gangs, become the trigger of conflict by Western fans. The original Japanese title of this manga is written as 東京卍リベンジャーズ (*Tokyo* 卍 *Revengers*), which includes the *manji* (key) pattern. In addition, this pattern plays an important role in this manga, as it is used as the motif of the yang gang team, to which the protagonist belongs, and is further developed on something like the young gang's uniforms and flags.

The *manji* pattern is the Buddhist sign, the auspicious omen motif, used as a map icon of temples in Japan in the past; therefore, most Japanese do not see it as a problematic depiction. However, because this pattern is similar to the Nazi symbol, the *hakenkreuz*, this manga and anime require special attention when distributed, especially in Europe. In fact, the *manji* pattern is just the *hakenkreuz* reversed, and when people who do not know the *manji* look at this pattern, most people might mistake it for the *hakenkreuz*.

While this was worrying, this manga got huge popularity in the West, and according to the official X account of this title, excluding Japan, the country with the most sales of this manga is France [30]. The background of this popularity was some careful localization and conflict. For example, the French version of this manga removed the *manji* pattern from the title, and the anime version also erased or hid the *manji* in a somewhat unnatural way [31, 32].

Even with this localization, some web media reported that there was criticism of this manga from some people who saw some cosplayers wearing the young gang uniform with the *manji* and equating the *manji* with the *Hakenkreuz* [33]. Meanwhile, some Western people also had discussions and tried to address and understand this issue. One of the web articles agreed that "[f]or most Western viewers, the swastika will be forever linked to Nazism. Unfortunately, because of how historically and culturally rooted the symbol is in Nazism in the past and present, it may be difficult

for viewers to overcome the connection [34]." However, the author of this article also introduced the true meaning of the *manji* pattern and how it differs from the *hakenkreuz* and tried to promote multi-understanding between Japanese culture and the historical background of Europe. The author also said, quoting a Japanese Buddhist priest, that "starting a conversation about the symbol 'is already a victory' and that having both sides talk about the symbol and their understanding of it is opening a path to reconciliation and reclamation [34]."

Meanwhile, on other web forums, it can be seen that this discussion about the pattern of the *manji* also evokes another stereotypical image of the people of certain countries. On the web forum of *My Anime List*, one of the participants asked the question, which can be summarized: because this manga uses this symbol, is the creator of this manga a secret Nazi [35]? Faced with such a question, some participants corrected the misunderstanding because this manga uses the *manji* and it is not the *hakenkreuz*, and someone also tried to tell the difference between the *manji* and the *Hakenkreuz* [35]. However, some thought that the questioner was an American, and others saw this question as an attack by Americans [35]. As one might guess, the reason for these comments is that there is a stereotypical image among some Western users that the kind of people who criticize Nazi taste are Americans.

6. Conclusion

These cases show that the transnational consumption of manga, which has been enhanced by the development of technology and changes in society, does not only have positive effects that break down cultural, industrial, and geographical barriers between global manga fans in different countries but also has rather because people around the world can read the same manga at the same time and share their feedback through social media, it reveals the different ways of reading that are rooted in different cultural backgrounds and sometimes reinforce stereotypical images of other countries. While the Internet removes geographical barriers and encourages transnational consumption, "[t]he basic conclusion that can be drawn is that the observations indicate diverse fan cultures worldwide and not a single common one [12]."

However, this situation does not only have negative effects on the international society. The transnational consumption of manga around the world provides an opportunity to create dialogs among global manga fans. As the comment in [34] quoted above, in today's international society, global manga fans have started a conversation, trying to express their own opinions rooted in different cultural backgrounds and trying to understand each other. "No matter how imperfect, there is a long-running, ongoing dialog between these cultural spheres [36]."

In this situation, in which "'Japan' and 'the West' do not encounter each other as isolated units that are mutually incomprehensible [36]", this dialog (even if it includes conflicts) plays an important role in revealing and understanding the different ways of reading and the different cultural backgrounds. Previous studies in media studies tended to discuss the globalization of specific media content in the context of media imperialism. However, this situation, in which Japanese manga is spread and consumed all over the world with the different ways of reading in each country, can be said: "that contemporary global consumption is less a matter of cultural opposition than a process of coexistence of differences [37]." In this situation, the more important key is what dialogs are generated that have the potential to promote mutual understanding in today's international society.

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Chapter 6

Perspective Chapter: Representation and Subversion of Norse Mythology in Popular Culture

Abigail Rebecca Dennis

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to delve into theories of cultural ideologies, laying focus on the sub-genre known as Popular Culture and its foundations. Culture and society, as we know it, are interlaced with each other, and they act as major influences in the creation and modelling of identities in world societies. Through the decades, cultures have progressed and adapted to suit more contemporary cultures. Hence, the emergence of Popular Culture. This chapter will analyse the use of mythology and its representation in popular culture and its influences on human ideologies and the shaping of cultures. This chapter will not only study the correlation between myths and popular culture in general but will focus specifically on Norse mythologies and their vast emergence into the world of popular culture, especially in the literary field of comics and graphic novels. It will analyse the contemporary use of and representation of Norse mythology through the lens of popular culture to find its place in present-day society by showcasing the subversion and representation of ancient myths into fiction. These fictions are not meant solely for entertainment purposes but also aspire to instruct and educate contemporary society on cultures and traditions of the past using popular fiction outlets such as comic books and graphic novels.

Keywords: cultural studies, popular culture, Norse mythology, subversion, representation

1. Introduction

The term "Culture" originated from the Latin term "Cultura," first used by Cicero, which meant "cultivating" in regard to agriculture. Cicero used the term metaphorically in reference to the cultivation of the philosophical soul. The term has since come to adopt numerous meanings which showcase the intricateness of human antiquity, consisting of the social behaviours and norms existing in and among communities. Cultural universals are prevalent in all societies. These universals are demonstrative genres of music, rituals, religions, dances, art, fashion, and cuisine. Peter Brooker defines "Culture" as "Creative and cognitive creations or activities that, through their

inherent shapes and significances, delineate human society as a product of social construction rather than a natural occurrence" ([1], p. 56). Raymond Williams, a prominent scholar in cultural studies, provides three distinct definitions for the term "culture." The initial definition characterises it as a "broad process encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development" ([2], p. 90). The second definition posits that culture is "a specific manner of living, whether belonging to a community, era, or a collective" ([2], p. 90). Lastly, Williams defines culture as "the creations and activities stemming from intellectual, particularly artistic endeavors" ([2], p. 90). In the writings of Mathew Arnold, F.R. Leavis, and T.S. Eliot, culture is meant to serve a liberal or radical conservative ideology.

Culture and society are interlaced with each other, acting as major influences in the creation and modelling of identities in world societies. Culture gives an individual a sense of self-identity and belonging in a society. Through the decades, cultures have progressed and adapted to more contemporary cultures, but certain beliefs, practices, and traditions remain rooted. According to Matthew Arnold, in regards to culture and religion, in his book *Culture and Anarchy*, says the realm of God exists within you, and similarly, culture places the pinnacle of human perfection in an internal state, in the development and dominance of our distinct humanity, set apart from our animal nature ([3], p. 11).

Cultural Studies is a multidisciplinary field that explores the political dynamics of contemporary culture and its historical foundations. Cultural Studies consists of a range of theoretical and methodological interpretations and approaches. While distinct from cultural anthropology and the interdisciplinary realm of ethnic studies, cultural studies draws upon and contributes to both disciplines. The development of cultural studies took place between the late 1950s and 1970s, spearheaded by British Marxist academics. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist philosopher, politician, and writer, is credited as a key figure in the modification of Marxism. According to Gramsci, culture was a major instrument in political and social control. Gramsci saw the capitalists as not merely an extreme force used to maintain control but also to invade the everyday culture of the working class. Therefore, according to Gramsci, cultural hegemony is a key concept in the field of cultural studies.

Cultural Studies is a melting pot of race, gender, ideologies, socioeconomic class, and country. Raymond Williams is considered to be a prominent member in the study of culture. His works *The Long Revolution* (1961), *Culture and Society* and *The Sociology of Culture* (1981) were pivotal works in the field of cultural studies. According to Raymond Williams, "Culture" is something that is entwined with life itself because culture is experienced and lived everyday. Stuart Hall notes that according to Raymond Williams, the aim of cultural studies "is to highlight the distinct and unique, often idiosyncratic, experiences of a social group and to reconstruct and comprehend what defines the identity of that particular experience" ([4], p. 32).

Herbert Richard Hoggart, a British academic and founding figure of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, instituted the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), propelled the discussion of Contemporary Cultural Studies with its endeavour to examine and understand the changing British culture. In regards to the analysis of culture, Hoggart proposes a literary imagination perspective. In his book "Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History," Stuart Hall describes Hoggart's perspective on culture as follows: Culture, according to Hoggart, is the language of a class lacking control over history. It represents the language of a class that experiences events rather than shaping them. Hoggart skillfully unravels the implicit value system of an entire societal group by examining their physical demeanour, communication style, interpersonal relationships, object handling, and

organisational patterns. Hoggart recognised the meaningfulness of these aspects not through the lens of anthropology but by delving into literature ([4], p. 10).

Stuart Hall has been highly instrumental in the development of cultural studies as a field of research. Hall was invited by Hoggart to join Birmingham University, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Hall went on to become Hoggart's successor as the acting director of the centre. While at the centre, Hall played a major role in broadening and developing the range of cultural studies, including exploring race and gender. According to Stuart Hall, culture is not just a subject of study but a critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled. In this view, culture serves as a dynamic arena where power dynamics are not only established but also have the potential to be challenged and disrupted ([4], p. 2).

Cultural Studies portrays the formulation of societies with and by culture. Lawrence Grossberg, an American scholar of Cultural Studies, with a main focus on popular culture, is known for his research on popular music and youth politics. Grossberg, in his seminal work *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, defines Cultural Studies as concerned with both describing and intervening in the processes through which cultural practices are created, inserted into, and function within the everyday lives of individuals and social formations. The goal is to understand how these practices contribute to the reproduction, resistance, and possible transformation of existing structures of power ([5], p. 8).

Williams, Hoggart, and Hall believed in studying culture "from below." They explored the cultural practices and rituals in the everyday lives of ordinary working-class communities. Williams, for example, drew his inspiration from writers such as Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence, whose novels more than often portrayed working-class characters such as poor farming or mining communities [6]. In *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams makes a distinction between middle-class culture, characterised by "the fundamental individualist concept and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and intentions that emanate from it," and "working-class culture, characterised by the fundamental collective concept and the institutions, manners, habits of thought, and intentions that arise from this." Williams highlights the contrasting foundations and expressions of individualism and collectivism within these two socioeconomic groups ([2], p. 313).

Cultural studies is the process of organisation of cultural artefacts, such as food habits, cinema, music, sporting events, literature, etc. It examines popular culture, which had earlier been viewed as "inferior" and unqualified for academic study. According to Nasrullah Mambrol, cultural studies has four approaches, the first being that it transcends the confines of a particular discipline such as literary criticism or history, the second being that it is politically engaged and it rejects the distinction between "high" and "low" art or "elite" and "popular culture," and finally cultural studies not only analyses the cultural works but also the means of production [7]. In the study of culture, it is believed that cultural artefacts should not be "read" specifically within the aesthetic realm but must be explored from a materialistic and socialistic point of view. It views the cultural artefacts as symbols for reinforcement of cultural identity, ideological values, nationalistic signs, etc.

In the field of Cultural Studies, representation acts as a major concept; hence signs and symbols play an important role. Identity is denoted based on experience, which in turn consists of representation through the utilisation of signs, the creation of meanings from such signs, and the wisdom obtained from the meanings. Cultural Studies focuses on lifestyles because it is about everyday life, defines identity, influences social relations and gives meaning and value to cultural artefacts. Everyday life,

in the field of Cultural Studies is viewed as fragmented with various complex and interlinked meanings [7].

The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture by Kelton Cobb gives us three divisions to help us understand the term culture better. The first perspective is characterised by viewing culture as a standard of excellence. In this approach, culture is seen as an ideal that individuals and societies should strive to achieve. The process of becoming "cultured" involves exposure to and a concerted effort to comprehend certain landmarks in literature, philosophy, poetry, and artworks that embody significant accomplishments of the human spirit. This involves internalising the values that underpin these achievements, encompassing aesthetic, moral, philosophical, and religious dimensions ([8], p. 42).

The second perspective can be framed as viewing culture as a way of life.

This perspective, often associated with "the modern anthropological view of culture," posits that there are diverse cultures worldwide, each self-contained and internally coherent. Each culture is perceived as a homogeneous and functional entity, propelled by its unique essence or genius. This viewpoint emphasises the distinctive practices, beliefs, and social structures that define and characterise a particular culture as a cohesive and integrated way of life ([8], p. 43).

The third and final perspective involves subaltern cultures. This viewpoint rejects the notion of cultures as monolithic and integrated entities, suggesting instead that the seemingly cohesive systems of values, considered cultural wholes, are actually power ideologies employed by dominant segments of society to perpetuate control over subaltern or subordinate communities. Subaltern communities are defined by factors such as age, race, ethnicity, and gender, often evolving into "subcultures." In this sense, subcultures share a way of life, including a distinct use of language, common values, a sense of solidarity in facing challenges, and a shared self-image, setting them apart from the dominant culture ([8], pp. 43, 44).

Culture is greatly considered as the fountainhead of literature and art. Due to the importance of culture seen in literature and art, terms like "cultural poetics," also known as New Historicism, founded by Stephen Greenblatt, Williams' "Cultural Materialism," have found eminence in the field of cultural studies as well as cultural criticism.

Cultural Studies in the field of literature has been flourishing. Culture is evident throughout literature because it is through his writings that an author portrays their society, traditions, and religious practices. Cultural Studies helps decipher the connection between cultural texts and social norms by studying society on a global scale. Literary works are produced based on various cultural factors such as artistic, ideological, economic, and nationalistic. This literature is used to develop and improve our cultures further. According to Gotshalk, literature and art contribute to "an indispensable foundation of congruency of feeling or social solidarity between individuals and peoples" ([9], p. 596). Due to the rise of Cultural Studies being examined in literary works, society today bases its relations on the thoughts and ideas of poets, artists, journalists, dramatists, and writers in other literary genres because they are believed to portray culture authentically in their artistic endeavours. Lorraine Walsh Cashman in regards to literature says that, Indeed, Cultural Studies utilises methods of textual analysis to unravel cultural formations, but it broadens the traditional concept of a "text" by incorporating insights from semiotics. In this context, a "text" encompasses anything that is symbolically organised and intelligible. Therefore, "cultural formations" encompass not only verbal, visual, musical, material, and customary artefacts but also extend to the social practices and relations within which these artefacts are embedded. This

expanded understanding allows Cultural Studies to examine a wide range of cultural expressions and their interconnectedness with societal dynamics ([10], p. 108).

Literature in the past decade has contributed largely to the culture industries. The culture industries at the time proved to be dexterous in making the audience acquiescent. From the cultural industries emerged the genre of popular culture. Popular culture includes the beliefs, practices, etc., of a social system that is viewed as mass culture. It is a key term in cultural theory and in the field of cultural studies. Brooker defines popular culture as "the culture of the 'people' or the working class; folk culture; youth or subcultures; or popular genres in fiction and film" ([1], p. 190). Therefore, popular culture is a culture of the masses. John Storey calls it a "hopelessly commercial culture" ([11], p. 8).

Popular culture emerged in the late eighteenth century, through the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Storey believed that it was developed by intellectual groups under nationalism, romanticism, folklore, and folk songs that invented the very first concept of popular culture. The term popular culture was then divided into two definitions. The first conception was popular culture seen as a quasi-mythical rural "folk culture," while the contrasting perspective—distinctly different and often regarded as the "other"—depicted popular culture as the debased "mass culture" associated with the emerging urban-industrial working class ([11], p. 1).

John Storey, in his work *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture An Introduction*, defines popular culture as inclusive of:

> *[A]ctivities that are related to art, music, films, literature, books etc: that are liked by a large number of people. It stands for what is popular among the people like - the top hit songs, blockbuster movies, bestselling novels and so on and so fort ([12], p. 25).*

Raymond Williams, in regards to popular culture, refers to it as a culture that is of the people and, by the people, a portrayal of their cultural practices in the modern and contemporary age. It basically showcases the popular practices of a society. F.R. Leavis, the English literary critic, placed his interests in culture as a whole based on where certain authors were situated and certain texts were formed. He believed that literary scholars, in regard to interpreting texts and critiquing trends, needed to base their work on a much wider historical aspect of culture itself. His wife, Q.D. Leavis also contributed to the study of popular culture by publishing a controversial study of mass society and mass culture theory titled *Fiction and the Reading Public*, which aimed at dealing with popular literature rather than serious high-brow literature. The work aimed at portraying popular literature as emotionally stunting and that the study or indulgence in such works will lead to emotional and intellectual decline. Stuart Hall in regard to Leavis' critique on the popular, says that Popular literature was entirely dismissed on the basis of its perceived lack of "refinement." The argument maintained that engaging with popular literature would not contribute to the refinement and sophistication of our minds and sensibilities. Instead, it was deemed the duty of the perceptive and educated literary critic to meticulously sift through the literary tradition, eliminating the subpar, the mediocre, and the flawed works. Through this process, the critic would curate a refined literary tradition—a small, selected collection comprising only a few books deemed worthy ([4], p. 13).

According to Edward Quinn, as defined in his work *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*, popular culture refers to forms of cultural expression characterised by broad popularity, such as detective stories or Western television sitcoms. This

definition typically sets popular culture apart from "folk culture," a term reserved for older cultural practices rooted in the oral tradition of a community ([13], p. 327).

With the development of popular culture, it has become an important field of analysis because of the extent to which people's lives are affected by and influenced by the vast production of popular culture presented by the contemporary mass media. Popular culture can be seen as a form or medium of cultural and political self-expression. Dominic Strinati, in his work *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, in regards to defining popular culture says, "Popular culture can be found in different societies, within different groups in different historical periods. It is therefore preferable not to have a strict and exclusive definition of the term" ([14], p. 14). Lawrence Alloway, pop art's first theorist, credited with the coining of the term "pop art," meaning art about popular culture, explains that the mass-produced urban culture, which included films, science fiction, literature, pop music, and advertising, were enthusiastically accepted by the intellectuals and it became a topic of discussion. These discussions led to the extraction of popular culture from the domain of escapism, entertainment, and recreation and the viewing of it as serious art.

The Guide to United States Popular Culture refers to popular culture as the voice of the people, a medium through which they showcase their likes, dislikes, and practices. It has become a basic way of life for societies, acting as the voice of democracy and as a hotbed for the development of democracy. Browne emphasises that popular culture is not merely about entertainment; instead, it constitutes the fundamental elements of a society, serving as the essence from which the spirit of that society either rises or declines ([15], p. 1). Browne proposes three categories for the study of culture. He termed the first category the "Impact approach," which focuses its study and analysis on "high" or "elite" art forms. He termed the second approach as the "determinist approach," which viewed culture to be "determined by ideology, and employed to manipulate the so-called unwashed masses" (Hoppenstand). Browne was not an advocate of the first two approaches but strongly advocated the third approach, which was termed the "American Studies Myth-Symbol" approach. He believed that the products of culture and culture itself should be viewed as means of symbolic representations, and it was this approach that substantially supported the study of popular culture. In his work, *The Pioneers of Popular Culture Studies*, Browne provides a broader definition of popular culture, stating that it democratises society and makes democracy truly democratic. According to Browne, popular culture encompasses the entirety of the everyday world, including mass media, entertainment, diversions, heroes, icons, rituals, everyday actions, psychology, religion, and the overall life picture. It represents the way of living inherited, practised, modified, and passed along to descendants. Popular culture encompasses our waking activities, the manner in which we engage in them, and even the dreams we have while asleep. It is a comprehensive and influential aspect of societal existence ([16], p. 61).

Therefore, popular culture brings together a largely diversified mass of people, allowing them to identify as a whole. It is inclusive, uniting the masses on acceptable behavioural norms. It also helps individuals forge an identity for themselves. Unlike folk or high culture, popular culture enables individuals a chance to change existing beliefs or norms of behaviour. Where folk culture represents stability, popular culture often represents constant change, catering to the contemporary masses. Due to this, popular culture often poses a challenge or threat to folk culture. Another key element of popular culture is the fact that it is easily and readily accessible to the masses. Hence, popular culture fascinates and intrigues the masses because it allows for individualism as well as communal bonding.

Hence, the common factor in the definition of popular culture is that culture is vastly prevalent and accepted by the masses. It is the portrayal of everything that is contemporary and accepted by modern society. The study of popular culture is believed to have been adopted by the American studies programme, which began to analyse factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexuality that can be shaped or reshaped in popular culture. According to Richard Maltby, if modern popular culture can be said to have been invented in a specific location, it was in the great cities of the United States, particularly in New York ([17], p. 11). Furthermore, Maltby asserts that popular culture offers escapism that is not a retreat from or to a specific place but rather an escape into our utopian selves. This suggests that popular culture provides a form of escape that transcends physical locations, offering a retreat into an idealised version of ourselves ([17], p. 14).

In the past decade or so the common theme found throughout literature has been popular culture. The genre has been used by authors to strengthen the subjects or arguments found in their works. With the development of media, the genre of popular culture, which has been cast aside as unworthy or unimportant is now the subject of extensive analysis and exploration. Cult television shows such as "Friends" showcase the need for communal bonding and relationships. and the novels-come television franchise *Game of Thrones* portrays women's struggles and women empowerment, among other things. The widespread fame attached to the mass-marketed books and the television shows adapted from these texts and the wide array of analyses done on these texts advocate further the need popular culture has for textual scrutiny. It also sheds light on the need consumers have to decipher and analyse the broader cultural elements presented in their entertainment. Popular culture texts should be read as classical texts, paying close attention to the symbolic and metaphorical messages presented in the texts. Popular culture is a distinctive and paradoxical domain for constructing meaning, often extending beyond the confines of meaningfulness as defined by traditional textual analysis. It serves as a realm marked by personal connections, emotional subtleties, and intricate contradictions that challenge conventional analytical approaches. The complex and multifaceted nature of popular culture makes it resistant to straightforward or rigid interpretation. It has the ability to rewrite texts and reconstruct the meanings and nuances to form new and contemporary interpretations.

Popular culture adapts texts to suit their contemporary audience's needs. One popular example of this is the adaptation of myth and history in popular texts. We see the characters, setting, and themes morphed into contemporary works of art to render them more amusing and captivating to the twenty-first-century reader. According to Klaus Dodds, engaging in the study of and participation in popular culture offers opportunities to challenge and contest dominant ideas, motifs, and practices. This perspective implies that popular culture is dynamic and ever-changing, never static. It suggests that through active involvement and examination, popular culture becomes a space for ongoing negotiation and resistance against prevailing norms and conventions [18].

2. Mythology and history in popular culture

Mythology, history and its representation in popular culture influence human ideologies and shape cultures. The word "myth" owes its origins to the ancient Greeks. It meant "true narrative" or "to teach," which is precisely what myths were intended

to do. It is what cultures and societies are built upon. Myth later came to mean something fictitious and not a statement of fact. However, this did not diminish the importance of mythology, for it soon became a fact that myths were traditional stories which were the embodiment of the heritage of various cultures worldwide:

> *The term myth was used by Homer for the first time in 7th or 8th century B.C.E in his great work 'The Iliad'. The term myth means a traditional and ancient story based upon a different culture. The myth of each culture binds up with the beliefs of the people and that beliefs have been often told throughout the generations in the name of oral tradition. In different countries people believe their own tradition and their own ancient culture myths, when a person explains the myth of their culture they believe it teaches a moral lesson to the further generations. Mythology means the study of myths or the study of collections of myth stories ([19], p. 106).*

H.A. Guerber, an American author renowned for his retellings of myths, folklores, legends, and histories, defines mythology as a "science which treats of the early traditions, or myths, relating to the religion of the ancients." This encompasses a comprehensive account of the origins of their gods and their beliefs concerning the beginning of all things. Guerber's perspective positions mythology as a systematic exploration of the early narratives and religious traditions of ancient societies ([20], p. 5).

Myths act as a form of answers or responses to age-old questions and act as a guiding hand to every generation that follows. Myths are more than often represented in order to render them more relatable and understandable to the generation of the time. Myths were structured in ancient times to give reason and understanding to natural phenomena and other unexplainable events or religious beliefs.

Myths are stories with dramatic plots, and the presence of magical beings, fantastical settings and backdrops with gods and goddesses further adds to the dramatic narrative of the myth. They are also highly symbolic and evocative in character. The inspiration for great creativity can stem from the smallest fairy tale or myth. According to Joseph Campbell, the symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented, or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bear within, undamaged, the germ power of its source. Campbell emphasises that mythological symbols arise organically from the human psyche and carry an inherent, unaltered essence derived from their origins. This perspective underscores the authenticity and enduring power of mythological symbols as reflections of fundamental aspects of the human experience ([21], pp. 1, 2).

Myths, due to their flexibility and adaptability, can take on or be interpreted in various ways and consist of numerous meanings and connotations. They are recordings of histories and ancient practices. It preaches moral codes and beliefs and carves a pattern of cultural belief systems which render the meaning of life. Mythology, on a whole, displays mankind's pursuit of the meaning and purpose of life, an age-old question to which mythology is able to extend an answer to some extent. Mythology acts as an enticement, pulling together different cultures, beliefs, values, traditions, and nations. Myths, according to Lévi-Strauss, function as intricate systems of thought, facilitating a society's exploration and explanation of the fundamental aspects of existence ([22], p. 153).

According to Joseph Campbell, myths have lost their power in the modern world. Myths are not just a demonstration of mankind and the fundamental meaning of life, and they form the rules by which mankind is expected to live. They also map out the foundations for the structuring of individual societies because the structure of a

society ultimately derives authority from the concepts expressed in its mythology. The principle role of myth is to act as a conservator and disseminator of moral codes of conduct. Myths enumerate the actual functions of the supernatural, and when they are represented or re-enacted, they release or set in motion that supernatural activity [23].

Myths, when transferred from one era to the next and when adapted from one culture to another experience substantive changes and revisions. Writers who allow their works to be guided by and influenced by mythopoeic imagination alter the original myths significantly to adapt them to the characterisation and styles of the times. Dorairaj says "It is this character of situatedness in the context of emerging horizons which bestows on myths a fresh lease on life. In this sense, myths are truly resilient and protean" ([24], p. 18).

Mythical thoughts are considered to be integral to the development of human culture as a whole. The Polish-British anthropologist Malinowski considers myths to be functional and utilitarian in society. According to Malinowski, there exists an intricate connection in a utilitarian sense between the world, the mythos, and the sacred tales of a tribe, on one hand, and their ritual acts, moral deeds, social organisation, and even practical activities on the other. This perspective suggests that myths play a functional role within a society, influencing various aspects of its members' lives, from religious practices to moral conduct, social structures, and even day-to-day practical activities ([25], p. 96). He also goes on to describe myth in functionalist terms, saying that myth serves several significant functions within human civilization. It expresses, enhances, and codifies beliefs, providing a framework for understanding the world. Myth also validates the effectiveness of rituals and incorporates practical guidelines for human guidance. In essence, it is portrayed as a crucial component of human civilization, functioning as a practical charter for primitive faith and moral wisdom. Myth, according to this perspective, plays a vital role in shaping cultural and moral norms within societies ([25], p. 101).

Mythology synthesises the past with the present. It fuses together antiquity and modernity. Eras, societies, and cultures are merged as one. Eliot, in his essay, "Tradition and Individual Talent" talks of the "pastness of the past and its presence" ([26], p. 49), which is exactly what the representation or retelling of myths entails. Joseph Campbell, in *Myths To Live By*, says that; "[m]ythologies might be defined as poetic expressions of just such transcendental seeing…" ([21], p. 31).

Fiction based on mythology is basically literary works that are based on or adapted from tropes of myths, legends, fairytales, and folktales. In the same way, literary works that have been adapted from some historical event or background but have been fictionalised either in way of characters or subplots are termed as historical fiction. These trends of mythical and historical fiction have been taking the field of popular culture by storm:

> *While earlier, the purpose of myth was to express abstract truths in symbolic form, now there is ample proof of the methods by which modern empire builders used myths to influence and shape events. The fact is that myths have been actualised and historicised ([21], pp. 9, 10).*

There have been numerous discussions about the interpretation and belief of myths and history, which eventually leads to the representation of both myth and history. Where myth differs from history is the fact that myth uses highly figurative and symbolic ways of representing facts or the truth, whereas history pursues the truth of the past to help understand the present. Hence, the representation of our modern-day

myths, in addition to the original, is what forms part of the "cultural and religious consciousness of all nations" ([27], p. 1). In the same way, history was "erased, rewritten, subverted, and distorted" ([27], p. 1) to help understand the past. According to Sundararaghavan, "postcolonial writers and theorists have underlined the need to rewrite history, to bring to light hidden truths… and restore facts that suffered erasure in the public memory" ([27], p. 1).

The portrayal of both myth and history in popular culture, such as contemporary fiction or art, helps form the heritage of a nation and its people. Heritage is the bearing of a nation's culture. They help to interpret culture and prove to be educational and dynamic. Hence, it also leaves room for communal discussion and is open to interpretations by various groups of people.

3. Representation of Norse mythology and history in popular culture

One such culture that is rich in mythology and history and that has been taking popular culture by storm with its retellings, representations, and subversions is that of the Norse or Vikings. The people of the North, better known as the "Norsemen" or "Northmen" in later years, earned the title of "Vikings," a Scandinavian seafaring warrior tribe. Theirs is a people steeped in culture, superstitions, and mythic beliefs, not forgetting a rich, varied heritage and historical importance lasting between 793 and 10,766 AD, known as the "Viking age." The name Scandinavia originated in the early eighteenth century. The term Scandinavia, also known as Skåne, comes from the same etymology, having been derived from Germanic roots from the word 'skađin-awjō' which translates into Skáney in old Norse and Scedenig in Old English. The Germanic term Skađan means danger or damage, and the second half of the name awjō means "land on the water" or in simpler terms "island." The term was originally used for Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, all of which were subsets of the Nordic countries such as Finland, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland Islands. The linguistic and cultural Scandinavian movement popularised the term "Scandinavia." It propounded the common heritage and cultural unity of the Scandinavian countries and emerged in the 1830s. The term has two principal meanings, the first being a modern-day demonym and the second it serves in an ethnic or cultural sense. When referring to the term in an ethnic or cultural sense, it refers to the people who speak the Scandinavian languages and have descended from the ancient Norsemen. As a modern demonym, the term refers to the overall citizens of all the Scandinavian countries. The people of Scandinavia speak two different languages from prehistoric times. One of the languages is the North Germanic language, and the other is the Sami language, which is a group of Uralic languages [28].

Although profoundly influenced by the English, the Norse race has wrapped itself in historical facts, myths, and folklore. The literature of the Norse is what defines their culture during the Middle Ages. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which was considered as the end of the Viking Age, literacy reached Scandinavia, and a tradition of vernacular writing came to be a language known in English as "Norse." In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the vernacular literature was limited to law codes and held little to no interest among modern readers. But the literature of the Eddas, skaldic poetry, various sagas, chronicles, myths, folklores, and legends is what has captured and still holds importance and interest among the people. It was not until the first half of the twentieth century that archaeological, linguistic, historical, and literary inquiry dug deep into the medieval past of the Nordic artefacts, runes, and Eddic verses.

The Viking Age holds great importance in regard to the literary aspect of the people as most of Norse literature is set in the Viking Age. The most evident feature of the Viking Age is the noticeable similitude of the Norse culture it possessed. There were noticeable regional differences, but one could not ignore the various traits that were shared by all the people in the Norse world. Based on their runic inscriptions, it is evident that there were major similarities in their language and vernacular texts, but apart from their language, they also shared similarities in their construction, jewellery design, and fashion. All these aspects showcase the geographical extent of Norse culture during the Viking Age. The Norse possessed a strong cultural identity, which set them apart from all other European races.

The runes found in Denmark, Norway, or Sweden are of great importance as they hold much of Norse history in their inscriptions. The runes were believed to have been created by Odin, one of the Norse Gods, and they are believed to have the power to predict the future. The runic characters were diverse in nature and primarily utilised for magical purposes. They served both malevolent and benevolent ends, with noxious or "bitter runes" used to inflict harm upon enemies, while favourable runes were employed to ward off misfortune. Some runes possessed medicinal properties, while others were utilised to attract love and various other purposes. In later periods, runes were frequently used in inscriptions, with over a thousand discovered so far. The language used in these inscriptions is a Gothic dialect known as Norse, which is still in use in Iceland. Although the language can be deciphered with certainty, the historical insights derived from these inscriptions have been limited, with very few shedding light on historical events ([29], p. 350).

Skaldic poetry refers to the poetry written by the Skalds who were the bards and poets of the Norse. They are responsible for the historic lore that is present. The Skalds would narrate their poetry in the courts of kings or warriors accompanied by music. Their poems would sing the praises of their heroes. The writings of the Skalds were given the term sagas. These sagas have been passed down from era to era, century to century, and are considered to be great possessions of historical value that showcase people's cultures, traditions, and beliefs.

The Norsemen or Northmen, also known as Vikings or Danes, were warrior tribes that raided and looted while colonising half of the European continent from the ninth to eleventh centuries. Their influence has greatly affected the history of Europe. Most of the Vikings whose deeds have been deemed legends throughout history hail from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The Lindisfarne monastery massacre, which was located off the coast of Northumberland in Northeastern England, brought about the beginning of the Vikings age. The mid-ninth century saw Ireland, Scotland, and England become major targets for the Viking settlements as well as raids [30].

The Viking raids continue today, but the target of attack at this time is popular culture. Viking and Norse history and myth have been sweeping the popular culture genre for decades now, with historical fictions, television shows, and video games sweeping the globe. Historical fictions like Bengtsson's *The Long Ships*, and Jane Smiley's *The Greenlanders*, tell the history of the Vikings and the Norse and have also influenced some of the more contemporary novels like Giles Kristian's *Raven Saga*, and Bernard Cornwell's *The Last Kingdom* series, which is an historical fiction depicting the attack on the Lindisfarne monastery and the war between the Danes and the English. The books were such a success that they were adapted into a televised series by the same name. Another famous show that was adapted for Netflix is the Vikings series which was created by the English screenwriter and producer Michael Hirst, whose penchant for carnality and history mangling has made the show a hit going on

six seasons now. The show's protagonists are great Norse historical legends such as the Viking chief Rollo, who was granted Rouen and the surrounding territories in 911 by the West Frankish king in exchange for Rollo denying other Viking raiders passage to the Seine. This region in Northern France is now known as Normandy or the "land of the northmen." Keeping in the popular culture theme, various video games have also emerged based upon Viking and Norse history, such as Assassins Creed: Valhalla, which is set during the Viking invasion of Britain. Another popular video game is "God of War," a highly acclaimed game that features Kratos, a character from ancient Greek mythology, as he ventures into the realm of Norse mythology. In this instalment of the series, Kratos faces various challenges and battles against Norse gods and mythological creatures. The game is known for its compelling narrative, stunning graphics, and engaging gameplay. It has received widespread praise for its fresh take on the character and mythology.

One of the oldest and first Norse literary works is the Eddas, which, when split into two, is the Poetic Edda and the Prose Edda. The books are the main source of Skaldic tradition and are said to contain the recordings of all Norse mythology. The name Edda is believed to have been adapted from the Eddic poem "Rigsbula," with the name meaning "great-grandmother." The poetic Edda is believed to have come into existence in the year 1056, with the prose Edda emerging in more recent times of the year 1640. The poetic along with the Prose Edda is considered to be the largest source of Norse mythology. It appeared in the manuscript Codex, which means the Royal Book in translation. The Edda can be divided into two parts: the first part, which includes 10 songs, sings the praises of gods and goddesses and tells of the creation, destruction, and rebirth of the Norse mythical world, and the second part, consisting of 19 songs, sings the praises of heroes and legends such as the tales of Sigurd, the dragon-slaying hero, Brynhild, a warrior princess known for the murder of Sigurd and King Gunnar, the first King of Burgundy also implicated in the death of Sigurd [29].

The Prose Edda is also called the Younger Edda or Snorri's Edda. The main aim of this Edda was to help Icelandic poets and readers make sense of the alliterative verses and understand mythological allusions behind the numerous kennings used in Skaldic poetry. It got its name Snorri's Edda because it was penned by Snorri in 1220. There are four known surviving manuscripts split up into three fragments. It has been written and recorded from 1300 to around 1600. Unlike the Poetic Edda, the Prose Edda was given a prologue. It has also been divided into three books, the first being the Gylfaginning, which, when translated, means the "Beguiling of Gylfi" or the "Deluding of Gylfi," which tells the tale of creation, destruction, and rebirth in the mythical world. The second part is the Skaldskaparmal, which means the "Language of Poetry," written in the form of a dialogue between the Aegir, a Norse sea God, and Bragi, the Skaldic God of poetry. The third and final book in the Prose Edda is titled Hattatal, which means a "Tally of Metres." This book describes the verse forms used in old Norse poetry. The book was written using a descriptive and prescriptive approach, by systematising the materials. Scholars have voiced their opinions on Snorri's systematised methods, saying he has derived classical traditions from traditional Christian writings. However some scholars have refuted this claim, saying it has no influence on classical writing but rather it is purely a result of Snorri's use of logical approach set in the framework of dialogue [31].

The Eddas claim that in the beginning of time, there was no heaven or earth but a bottomless pit through which a fountain flowed. From this fountain, 12 rivers were born and spread far and wide and in time, they froze, and the ice filled up the once

bottomless pit. In the southern part of the mist-covered realm, there was a realm of brightness. A gentle breeze from this realm thawed the ice. The melted ice gave rise to vapours, forming clouds, and from these clouds emerged Ymir, a frost giant. Ymir, in turn, had a descendant, the cow Audhumbla.

It was Audhumbla's milk that served as nourishment and food for Ymir. Audhumbla's nourishment came from salt stones and hoarfrost from the ice. One day, while Audhumbla was licking the salt stones, formed a man's hair; the second day, the head of a man formed and the third day formed the formation of the entire being gifted with beauty, power, and agility. This newly formed being was a god whose wife came from the giant race, from whom were born Odin, Vili, and Vi, the three brothers who killed Ymir, the giant. It was out of Ymir's body that the earth was formed; from his blood flowed the seas, his bones formed the mountains, the trees were his hair, his skull formed heaven, and his brains the clouds. Odin and his brothers formed earth out of Ymir's eyebrows, which became known as "Midgard," and it would later become the home to mankind [29].

After Odin created the earth and the heavens, he regulated day and night and the seasons by forming the sun and moon. The first rays of the sun brought to life the vegetable world. The three Gods then stood back to admire their creation but felt it was still incomplete and decided to create mankind. The first man was formed out of an ash tree, and they formed a woman out of an elder, for they knew man would be incomplete without a woman. They named the man Aske and the woman Embla. The three brothers gifted them with the necessary virtues required. Odin gifted them with life and soul. Vi blessed them with senses, speech, and emotion. And Vili gave unto them motion and reason. They were then given Midgard as their abode and gave birth to the entire human race [29].

From Ymir's body also arose a mighty ash tree known as Ygdrasill, which was intended to be the life force of the universe. According to Norse mythology, there existed nine realms, and these nine realms sprang up from the roots of the Yggdrasill, and they were all connected. The nine realms existed on Asgard, which was the home of the Gods; Jotunheim, the dwelling of the giants, Niffleheim which literally meant home of the mist; Alfheim, the home of the elves; Vanaheim, the dwelling place of the Vanir, Midgard, home of mankind, and Muspelheim, land of fire, Helheim, the land of the dead and Nidavellir, land of the dwarfs. From the side of each root springs a stream that waters and feeds the nine realms. The roots that feed Asgard are guarded by the three Norns, who are Urdur, the past; Verdandi, the present; and Skuld, the future. They are the goddesses of fate. The stream that feeds Jotunheim is Ymir's well, which holds the gift of wit and wisdom. The stream at Niflheim feeds the adder Nidhogge, which represents darkness and is constantly chewing away at the roots of Yggdrasil. Under this tree lies Ymir, who, when he tries to shed the burden he is carrying, is believed to cause earthquakes [29].

One of the most important and represented realms is Asgard, home of the gods. Asgard is described as having streets of gold and silver as well as castles built with silver and gold. Asgard can only be entered through the Bifrost, a rainbow bridge guarded by Heimdal, the all-seeing Vanir god. Odin's palace, Valhalla, is by far said to be the most beautiful of homes in Asgard. Valhalla is also home to all the fallen warriors who died in battle. They spend their time in Valhalla feasting on the meat of Hrimnir, a self-resurrecting boar and on the mead of the she-goat Heidrum, and when they are not feasting, they are preparing for Ragnarok, the destruction of the Norse mythical world altogether. Two other characters that are constantly mentioned in Norse mythology are Odin's two ravens that sat upon his shoulder on either side, one called Hugin, and the other was Munin, who would fly all over the world and

carry news of all the happenings back to Odin. Odin was all-seeing and all-knowing, for which he was given the name Alfadur, meaning the all-father [29].

In Norse mythology, the gods are split into two pantheons. The first and most principal of the two are the Aesir gods. The Aesir pantheon is made up of Odin, the all-father; Frigg, Odin's wife; Thor, Odin's eldest son; the gods of thunder Balder, the beautiful and the favourite among the gods; Loki, the trickster who tries his hardest to bring about Ragnarok, Tyr, the god of war, and Bragi, the Skaldic god of poetry. The second pantheon, the Vanir, was a race of gods responsible for wealth, fertility, and commerce; the Vanir were expected to be submissive to the Aesir, who were the warrior gods. The Vanir gods were Njordr, father of the other Vanir gods, Freyr and Freyja. Nordr is the sea god associated with wind, fishing, seafaring, and crop fertility. Freyr was the god of prosperity, virility, and kingship, and was especially connected with Sweden and adopted as an ancestor of the Swedish royal house. Freyja is the goddess that is responsible for war, death, love, sexuality, beauty, fertility, and gold. Freyja rules in Folkvangr, where she is the recipient of half the souls who die.

Of all the Norse gods and goddesses, Loki is believed to be the most colourful character and is vilified throughout Norse mythology as the trickster and the initiator of all fraud and mischief. For a god who is often vilified in the sagas, Loki is always described as the most handsome of gods with wit and charm, which helps him a great deal in tricking his way among the gods and goddesses. Loki had a number of children, but the three that play a major role in Ragnarok are Fenris wolf, the Midgard serpent known as Jormungandr that lives in the sea and whose body coils around all of Midgard, hence also being given the name of the "world serpent." It is believed that when Jormungandr uncoils its tail, Ragnarok will commence. The third of Loki's famous children is his daughter Hel who presides over Hel, where the damned souls are departed to in the realm of Niflheim. Hel is described to be half beauty, which represents the living, and the other half of her is ghastly with rotting flesh to represent the dead.

All these mythologies of the Eddas proved to be the touchstone for Norse mythology for eight centuries after their initial publication, and a resurgence of interest in the Norse myths emerged. These mythologies of the pre-Christian societies have inspired not just novels of fiction but have also found their way into various other venues of popular culture such as video games, films, comics, and graphic novels.

Unlike Greek or Roman myths, which have a background of warm waters and gorgeous goddesses of love and peace and fertility, the Norse myths are fierce, with both gods and goddesses seen as harsh and brutal. Norse myths are portrayed as the survival of the fittest, with the gods themselves always warring, and their backdrop is always stained with bloody battle. Neil Gaiman portrays the Norse myths as belonging to a frigid land characterised by extended winter nights and everlasting summer days. These myths describe a community that harboured reservations and perhaps even dislike towards their gods, despite maintaining a level of respect and fear for them ([32], p. 12). This showcases that the Scandinavian landscapes have not only inspired numerous travellers but have been the backbone of the country's rich mythology and history. It is lakes, fjords of unfathomable depths, deep, spooky forests, mountainous rocky peaks and whistling winds as the fantastical backdrops have provided the inspiration for some of the most memorable Norse mythological creatures and legendary tales, which is now portrayed by the popular fiction in a form that renders it suitable and relatable to the present-day readers.

One of the biggest franchises of Norse mythology is that of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, which includes three movies based on the God of Thunder, Thor, and

the numerous Avengers films and series in which they all portray Loki, the god of mischief, as the proponent of villainy. The Marvel films do of course draw their inspiration from Stan Lee's comic, which first appeared in 1962 and featured Thor as the hero and Loki as the anti-hero. Stan Lee's portrayal of Norse mythology has inspired numerous renderings and retellings of the myths. Neil Gaiman credits Stan Lee and his comic series for introducing him to Norse mythology. As a young boy of around seven, Gaiman's first exposure to Asgard and its inhabitants was through the adventures of the Mighty Thor, depicted in American comics by artist Jack Kirby. In these stories, plotted by Kirby and Stan Lee, with dialogue by Stan Lee's brother Larry Lieber, Thor was portrayed as a powerful and handsome character, and Asgard was depicted as a towering, science-fictional city with impressive buildings and perilous structures. Gaiman was particularly drawn to Kirby's depiction of Thor, the blond, hammer-wielding hero, sparking his curiosity and desire to learn more about the character ([32], p. 11).

While the comic portrayed Thor as mighty and the perfect hero and simplified Loki to the status of villain, which made the mythos absolutely perfect for the pre-pubescent superhero-loving audience, there was a shift in the retellings when looking at Roger Lancelyn Green's *Myths of the Norsemen*, which also served as Gaiman's inspiration for his *Norse Mythology* and Rick Riordan's *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard* trilogy. These novels portray the protagonistic gods in a more nuanced manner, giving them more depth and making them less black and white. Loki is seen as less evil and more mischievous, playing practical jokes on the gods. Thor is less of a big scary god and rather more of a comical character in a dull-witted sense, whereas Loki is portrayed as highly intelligent. In fact, in regards to Green's *Myths of the Norsemen*, Gaiman comments that while he enjoyed Green's version of the Norse myths and read and re-read them with delight, he found a marked difference when compared to the comic. In this reinterpretation, Asgard shifted from the futuristic city envisioned by Kirby to a Viking hall surrounded by icy desolation. Odin, the all-father, departed from the gentle, wise, and irascible depiction, transforming into a brilliant, unknowable, and perilous figure. While Thor retained his formidable strength and his hammer's power from the comics, his intelligence fell short, portraying him as not the most astute among the gods. As for Loki, he was not purely evil, though far from a force for good; his character was presented as complex and intricate ([32], p. 12).

These renderings of the Norse myths do not indicate that either one is wrong or more accurate than the other; they just show how Norse mythology has proven to be incredibly flexible, open to interpretation, and adaptable in popular culture. Neil Gaiman suggests that what keeps Norse mythology relevant and enduring for him, as well as for all readers, is the concept of Ragnarok. The impending end of the world and the cyclical nature of its destruction and rebirth imbue the gods, frost giants, and other figures with a tragic quality—making them heroes and villains in a poignant sense. Ragnarok adds a timeless dimension to the Norse world, making it feel strangely present and contemporary, unlike other, more extensively documented belief systems that may seem relegated to the past ([32], p. 12).

Popular culture has manifested itself in numerous forms of media such as television, music, art, etc. Author Rick Riordan plays on the influence and effect popular culture has on people by portraying the major gods like Thor and Heimdall as being obsessed with popular culture, which is the case with the millennial generation today. Thor, the mighty thunder god as depicted by every other author and televised version as seen in the Avengers series and Thor movies, is far from the stereotypical god in Riordan's novels. Thor in the Magnus Chase trilogy concerns himself with popular

television shows such as The Walking Dead, Breaking Bad, and The Game of Thrones, all well-loved shows that have taken the popular culture world by storm. Heimdall is portrayed as the selfie—obsessed god who would rather take "a selfie with you before talking business" ([33], p. 249). He is also fond of creating social media vines. Apart from the characters being obsessed with popular culture, the novels contain numerous pop culture references to video games such as "call of duty" [33], pop music references such as Taylor Swift's hit song "Shake it off" ([33], p. 15) sung by Jack the talking sword. There are also references to the king of pop, "Elvis Presley" ([33], p. 309) and his home "Graceland" ([33], p. 310).

Norse mythology and history have been the subject of scholarly discourse since the seventeenth century for their popularity, flexibility, and adaptability, ever since major texts like the *Eddas* captured the attention of the intellectual circles of Europe. The modern period saw the romanticist revival and reawakening of the Viking interests in the subject matter, leading to the representation and revisions of Norse mythology and history throughout modern popular culture. Though these representations of these ancient myths and histories have developed through time to adapt a sense of inclusivity and receptivity, they have managed to maintain their essence of cultural authenticity. They have managed to travel through the vast expanse of time and take on new forms to suit the changing times. Popular culture demands these myths and histories be represented or rewritten in order to suit the contemporary audience. Since popular culture is based on culture, it goes to show that culture is no longer homogenous but rather based on its influences.

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Chapter 7

Perspective Chapter: Visualizing the Unseen – Multilayered Narrative of Violence in Graphic Novels by Francophone Middle Eastern Women

Haniyeh Pasandi

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the post-9/11 testimonies of women from the Middle East whose work has gained international recognition. It explores four graphic novels written by female authors with a Middle Eastern background: *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi), *A Game for Swallows* (Zaina Abirached), *Bye Bye Babylon* (Lamia Ziadé), and *Poppies of Iraq* (Brigitte Findakly). Within this examination, the chapter delves into the various visual techniques used by these authors to unfold/re-view the layers of violence that these women experienced. Through their works, they experiment with diverse representational possibilities, aiming to capture the psychic impact of distressing experiences on both individuals and the collective.

Keywords: graphic novel, violence, francophone middle eastern women, culture, space

1. Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the recognition of the graphic novel as a respected art form has coincided with a profound transformation in the genre, encompassing changes in themes, techniques, authors, and publishing companies since the publication of graphic novels such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis, Kyle Baker's Nat Turner,* Parsua Bashi's *Nylon Road,* or Paul Hornschemeier's *Mother, Come Home*. These authors, hailing from various parts of the world, used the graphic novel to navigate the intricate mental landscapes of fictional and non-fictional characters affected by potentially traumatizing events. Through their works, they experiment with diverse representational possibilities, aiming to capture the psychic impact of distressing experiences on both individuals and the collective. In the context of the Middle East, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* played a pivotal role in legitimizing comics as a meaningful tool for reconstructing the past through the lens of memory. Satrapi's foundational contribution paved the way for subsequent creations, resulting in a

substantial body of over 60 pieces that explore the Middle East from various angles. These works encompass genres such as autobiography, journalism, and fiction and have been published in Farsi, Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, French, and English, collectively contributing to a diverse and comprehensive exploration of the region's complex issues.

This chapter focuses on the Francophone graphic novels that emerged in the early 2000s. During this period, graphic novels by Middle Eastern writers were more oriented towards European publishers and the global market, as seen in the works of Marjane Satrapi, Zeina Abirached, Lamia Ziadé, and Brigitte Findakly. However, since the uprisings of the Arab Spring, they have established a remarkable presence in the region. Lebanon, Iran and the Maghreb[1] are the main countries producing graphic novels. In Lebanon, a group of friends in Beirut established Samandal in 2007, the very first adult comic magazine in the region. Also, in 2011, two graduates from ALBA, Zeina Bassil and Wissam Eid, launched the fanzine La Furie des Glandeurs which includes-single-panel comics and illustrations [1]. In Algeria, the founder of Dalimen Press, Delila Nadjem, and a group of Algerian artists, launched the first edition of the Festival International de la Bande Dessinée d'Alger (FIBDA) in 2008 which quickly became a network for artists, publications, and magazines. The reputation of Iranian comics belongs to its exilic authors including, Satrapi, Amir (*Zahra's Paradise*), Mana Neyestani (*An Iranian Metamorphosis*), and Dara Naraghi (*Persia Blues*, Volume 2: *Love and War*, 2015). In Iran, each book (or translated book) must be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance before being published. As such, most of the international comics are subject to censorship. The local comics are children's books or have for theme the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, martyrdom and biographies of religious (Shiite) characters [46–47, 1] [2]. In the past few years, the internet has provided comics creators with avenues such as personal blogs, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms to publish their work, making it readily accessible to the public. Remarkably, comics have emerged as a favored medium for young individuals, enabling them to critique various facets of their lives in the Middle East. Despite the omission of many Middle Eastern realities in official media, comics serve as a medium that empowers ordinary people in the region to gain awareness of unspoken events.

This chapter will limit its span to the representation of violence in the graphic novels published in French including Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Zeina Abirached's *A Game for Swallows*, Lamia Ziadé's *Bye Bye Babylon: Beirut 1975-1979*, and Brigitte Findakly's *Poppies of Iraq*. In doing so, it looks at how these artistic creations are hybrid in nature meaning they explore a transcultural identity of a Middle Easterner to whom migration was imposed. It also highlights how these individuals found a third space from which new perspectives of identity emerge. This in-between space is intrinsically critical of essentialist positions of identity and a conceptualization of "original or originary culture" ([3], p. 211). According to Bhabha, this hybrid "third space" is an ambivalent site where cultural meaning and representation have no primordial unity or fixity. The medium of comics enables contemplation on the conflicts that contribute to the misunderstandings and miscommunications between the East and the West.

[1] The connection of the Maghreb with the Middle East through colonialism, languages (Arabic, English, and French), and religions are very strong.

2. Discussion

The authors of this study not only observe the violence and geopolitical instabilities in the Middle East but also reflect on their transcultural experiences through the medium of the graphic novel. By venturing beyond their homeland borders, they undergo cultural dislocation, immerse themselves in diverse cultures and geographies, and ultimately develop what I argue are transcultural identities [4]. Their mobility patterns have had a notable impact on other writers, particularly women across the Middle East. Writers such as Brigitte Findakly (Franco-Iraqi), Lamia Ziadé (Franco-Lebanese), and Leila Abdelrazaq (Palestinian-American) stand out among them. Their works, following the tradition of *Persepolis* and *A Game for Swallows*, vividly portray the complex issues of the Middle East. The perspectives presented in *Persepolis*, *A Game for Swallows* and, *Bye Bye Babylon* are noteworthy. Each serves as a personal narrative recounting the experiences of a girl growing up in the tumultuous Middle East, eventually immigrating to France. These graphic novels emerged during the politically charged era of the War on Terror, where media coverage and political discourse intensified focus on the Middle East, reinforcing stereotypical representations of the "other." These authors offer firsthand accounts of wartime experiences through the unfiltered lens of a child, fostering sympathetic readings due to their direct exposure to adult violence. These graphic novelists face a significant challenge in navigating the tension "between what is "sayable and what is showable" ([5], p. 5). Scholars like Gillian Whitlock [6] and Hillary Chute [7] argue that the graphic novel has evolved into a privileged medium for portraying traumatic content in recent decades. The inherent page layouts and frames in this format create "multiple spaces for dialogue between individual narration and its context" ([8], p. 96). In essence, graphic novelists can articulate their emotions while placing them in proximity to broader sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts. Their works present a new image of determined women rebelling against fundamentalism, violence, and patriarchy within their homes. They convey their stories not only in French but also through the graphic novel format, recognized as a Western-style, effectively reconstructing their multifaceted worlds.

Persepolis grapples with the challenge of representing unutterable violence and the complexities of testimony. Leigh Gilmore ([9], p. 157) contends that the graphic novel insists on the notion that trauma holds the potential for bearing witness, even if it involves testifying to what was not shared or deemed shareable. Satrapi's exploration of the interplay between presence and absence in traumatic scenes reveals the limitations of imagery when confronted with extreme violence, such as executions and death. In conveying her fear, anger, and trauma, Satrapi [10] employs distinct voices for her child, adolescent, and young selves, illustrating the evolution of the self over time.

Following the tradition of *Persepolis*, Lebanese artist Zeina Abirached provides readers with a recollection of her childhood in war-ravaged Beirut. Abirached was born in 1981, six years into Lebanon's civil war. Growing up in half of Beirut (East), she experienced the city divided by the demarcation line between Christian East and Muslim West. Lebanon, since its formation in 1943, has consistently witnessed confrontations among its political parties, religious groups, and minorities, culminating in the Civil War of 1975–1990. Initially sparked by conflicts between Christian factions and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1975, the war evolved into a multifaceted conflict fueled by both internal and external forces. Following the war,

the State initiated the Taif Agreement, also known as the National Reconciliation Accord, in 1989, aimed at a balanced "mutual coexistence" among Lebanon's various religious parties regarding their political representation. However, this agreement, considered a general amnesty, sought to deliberately sidestep the painful past. In 2002, as the Lebanese government began rebuilding Beirut and erasing war traces, Zeina Abirached felt compelled to share her personal wartime experiences in the city. A student at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA), she discovered the works of French and American comic artists, including Jacques Tardi, David B., Art Spiegelman, and Chris Ware.

While Abirached has not explicitly cited Marjane Satrapi as an influence, many readers and reviewers have drawn comparisons between her black-and-white drawings and the style of *Persepolis*. Much like Satrapi's graphic novel, *A Game for Swallows* [11] narrates a serious war story from a child's perspective, marked by dominant black hues and flattened images reminiscent of David B.'s *Epileptic*. What distinguishes Abirached's work is her Oulipian style, influenced by her time at the École nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs in Paris, where she became familiar with the Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle group (L'Oulipo). Although not an official member, Abirached collaborated with its members, including co-writing *Agatha de Beyrouthe* with Jacques Jouet. Oulipian writers employ rules, rituals, and games to break with habit and stimulate creativity, even when addressing serious subjects. Anna Kemp [12], in "Je me souviens Beyrouth: Zeina Abirached's Perecquian practice," explores the influence of L'Oulipo, particularly the writings of Georges Perec, on Abirached's graphic novels. Kemp concludes that Abirached finds comfort in a playful attachment to everyday objects and routines similar to Perec, evident in *A Game for Swallows* through playful layouts and framings that recreate geographical places and evoke a sense of security. Abirached emphasizes the importance of sounds, influenced by the French filmmaker Jacques Tarti, in remembering the war. The onomatopoeias in *A Game for Swallows* not only insert sound into the graphic novel but also reflect the physical space of war-torn Beirut. In addition to these Western influences, particularly French artists, Abirached deliberately chooses French over Arabic to recount her personal war story.

The style of *A Game for Swallows* diverges significantly in its portrayal of trauma, illustrating how Abirached grapples with her past and the events of the Lebanese the Civil War by reconstructing her fragmented memory through space and everyday life. She belongs to the second generation of post-war authors who, having lived through the war as children and adolescents, seek to (re)construct a temporal and spatial framework of reference to contain an experience of war" ([13], p. 588) as a response to the State-ordained amnesia. Abirached's entire body of work contributes to the reconstruction of war's memory within the urban landscape of Beirut. An examination of her texts reveals the frequent appearance of the urban space of Beirut in the titles. Initially timidly enclosed in parentheses in the first graphic novel, *(Beyrouth) Catharsis*, the city gains stronger representation in the book of memories, *Je me souviens: Beyrouth*. The capital also appears metonymically in *38, rue Youssef Semmani*. The recurring presence of this address in most of Abirached's works can be interpreted as her attempt to create a monument or memorial representing Beirut's history of war. Abirached utilizes spatiality on the page to capture the intricate connection between war and geographical space, exploring maps of both the interior (home) and the exterior. The inside signifies Abirached's entryway, the site of gatherings and social rituals, while the outside represents the unknown city beyond 38 rue Youssef Semaani, where she resides. Through transacting black lines—sometimes chaotic—on a white comics page, Abirached conveys the sense of a claustrophobic space in which

she lived. The stability of the panels, maintaining mostly the same size, and the consistent representation of content demonstrate Abirached's effort to organize her memory of war. Carla Calargé and Alexandra Gueydan-Turek ([14], p. 209) argue that Abirached's drawings often serve as semiopaque screens, covering and indirectly revealing the traumatic aspects of violence. However, I contend that the avoidance of explicit violence should not be viewed as an incapacity to depict trauma in the graphic novel medium. Instead, it is a deliberate aspect of Abirached's project to universalize her personal experience, allowing anyone, regardless of their differences, to engage with a narrative of war.

In the vein of Zeina Abirached, Franco-Lebanese artist Lamia Ziadé delves into the memories of the first 4 years of the war from a child's perspective in *Bye Bye Babylon: Beirut 1975–1979*. While not a historian, Ziadé's work seamlessly merges art with a fragmented, non-chronological history of the Middle East. Ziadé seamlessly intertwines historical, military, and political references with personal anecdotes about her family and the harrowing experiences of night bombings. The child narrator (similar to *Persepolis* and *A Game for Swallows*) grapples with a desire to comprehend the horrifying violence, realizing the absence of innocence or evil in such circumstances. Her work *Ô nuit, ô mes yeux: Le Caire / Beyrouth / Damas / Jérusalem* partially explores the illustrious history of the Middle East through the lives of two female singers. These texts collectively contribute to constructing a framework of an inhabited war.

In *Bye Bye Babylon*, Ziadé [15], at the age of seven, resides in East Beirut as the war unfolds. Although labeled a graphic novel, the style defies genre conventions. The sketchbook approach incorporates full-page images alongside short paragraphs resembling captions, omitting traditional speech bubbles. Ziadé's panels not only captivate with their stylistic uniqueness but also transcend the boundaries of conventional comic book forms. Ziadé employs unframed fragmented pictures to narrate events from a personal perspective. This graphic painting memoir can be perceived as an exhaustive catalog of the civil war. Diverging from Satrapi and Abirached, Ziadé opts for bright colors to depict violence. The graphic novel traverses the author's childhood favorites to the tools of war, from bubble gum to war equipment. Ziadé skillfully juxtaposes the familiar with scenes of shocking violence, illustrating how war becomes ingrained in daily life. Representations of the familiar, like Nivea cream, offer a semblance of security to the child grappling with a world full of contradictions. Rather than presenting a political polemic, Ziadé provides a glimpse into the emotional impact of witnessing the shift from the comforts of foreign brands to the harsh reality of everyday violence. Amidst a backdrop of state-maintained amnesia, *Bye Bye Babylon* contributes to the archival project initiated by Lebanese writers. Ziadé's and Abirached's graphic memoirs vividly unveil the representation of Beirut, shedding light on the less apparent but deeply infrastructural violence.

Similarly, Brigitte Findakley's *Poppies of Iraq*, illustrated by her husband Lewis Trondheim is an autobiographical graphic novel that encompasses familiar tropes seen in contemporary graphic memoirs. Trondheim, renowned for works like *Kaput & Zösky* and the *Donjon* series, is also a founder of the French independent publisher L'Association. Setting itself apart with nonlinear comics frames, *Poppies of Iraq* introduces a distinctive storytelling perspective to themes reminiscent of *Persepolis* and Riad Sattouf's *The Arab of the Future*. Findakly entrusts the reader to weave together her personal stories, fostering a nuanced understanding of the concepts of home and belonging while finding her place in between. Despite other authors, Findakley was born to an Iraqi father and a French mother. Findakly navigates the complexities of national identities, stemming from one parent in the Middle East and another in

Western Europe. The narrative unfolds as a poignant coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of war-torn Iraq, where the allure of France plays a significant role. The novel portrays the beauty of home amidst cultural and religious repression. Brigitte Findakly presents a nuanced narrative in her recounting of the events depicted in *Poppies of Iraq*, interweaving elements of personal memories, historical events, and autobiographical reflections from her upbringing in Iraq since the 1950s. Notably, the graphic novel, published in 2016, emerges within the socio-cultural context of escalating Islamophobia in France following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. In contrast to Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Findakly employs a child's perspective to articulate historical traumas with a distinctive blend of humor and irony.

An illustrative instance of this narrative approach is evident in a panel where Findakly initiates her recollection by stating, "durant les chambardements et les coups d'État des années 60, je ne me suis sentie en danger qu'une seule fois" [during the upheavals and coups d'état of the 1960s, I only felt in danger once] [16]. The accompanying imagery portrays Iraqi military soldiers brandishing guns. Subsequent frames depict Findakly and her family in a café, their tranquility disrupted by the presence of May 1968 protesters crossing the street. The final frame concludes with the reflection "je me suis dit que c'est dangereux, la France" [I thought to myself that France is dangerous] [16], drawing a parallel between the social movements in France and the upheavals in Iraq during a comparable period. This narrative strategy serves to illuminate historical events through a lens of levity and irony, offering a distinctive perspective on the convergence of personal and socio-political/socio-cultural dimensions of her life particularly after her immigration to France. Reflecting back on the Islamophobic perspectives held by her family members who, due to challenging living conditions, particularly for Christians, opted to migrate to alternative countries, Findakly arrives at the conclusion that she holds a profound appreciation for both religions and cultures. She concludes the final chapter with a full-page panel titled "Les bons souvenirs," [Good memories] expressing, J'aimais bien les moments-là où nous devions rester tous ensemble dans la maison [I loved those moments when we all had to stay home together.] [16].

3. Conclusion

Outside their homeland borders, Satrapi, Abirached, Ziadé and, Findakly find themselves in a liminal position where they oscillate between two modes. Hamid Naficy describes the state of exile as "a process of perpetual becoming, involving separation from home, a period of liminality and in-betweenness that can be temporary or permanent" ([17], pp. 8–9). He considers cultures as being located in place and time. However, the exilic culture, according to him, is created at the intersection of other cultures. Much like Naficy's notion of liminality, in the context of postcolonial discourses, Homi Bhabha's concept of "third space," describes "the new cultural identities that often emerge in the border zones between incommensurably different cultures" ([18], p. 40). While Naficy focuses on the challenges of the individual in exile, Bhabha is more positive about the new possibilities that the in-between position can offer to exilic authors. Both of these concepts are useful in understanding how the authors of this study became transcultural writers. The transcultural vision allows these writers to create new ways of thinking and imagining the notions of identity, home, and culture while creating points of contact between Middle Eastern and French cultures. Indeed, the medium of the graphic novel is transcultural. According

to the comics scholar, Mark McKinney, comics depicts "transcultural movement and change through immigration" (p. 7) and also it is "a shared form across cultures worldwide" (p. 7). These authors "seem to be living in a dimension without any fixed borders or whose geographic, cultural, national or homeland boundaries and allegiances are self-identified, self-chosen" ([4], p. 7). As a result, their literary/artistic productions are innovative as they move beyond ethnic, national, racial, or religious concepts and offer a new perspective on the world and humanity while exploring and making sense of the roots of violence.

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Chapter 8

The Appreciation of Comics as a Medium for the Recollection of Historical Events of the Past

Karna Mustaqim, Iwan Zahar and Ijah Hadijah

Abstract

This article praises a particular style of comic illustration found in recent album format comic book publications in Indonesia. These comics feature fictional stories that stand alone and are completed in one or a short series. However, the backgrounds of the stories are inspired by past events. The aim is to revive the intricacies of historical events or capture the atmosphere of locations in the past. Two examples of such comics are mentioned: "Katumbiri Regenboog" by Yaya Riyadin, and "Laosam 1892" by Toni Masdiono. Both comics are based on the indirect recuperation of past events or places. The style is willing to evoke the nostalgia in reader's mind through its predominantly black-and-white ink drawings and shading decoration techniques. The article suggests that the art of comics and esthetic appreciation can serve as a form of memory, allowing readers perception to experience past events through the medium of comics. The research method employed is art-based in nature, formalist involving qualitative observations akin to library research.

Keywords: appreciation, perception, decoration, experience, memory

1. Introduction

Comics are a popular pictorial narrative medium and have various names or terms coined in different parts of the world. In Indonesia, there is a well-known term for the medium of comics, namely *"Cergam."* This term was once a generalization to refer to the publishing of all kinds of comics in Indonesia, whilst it is also an inclusive term to identify Indonesian comics. For this chapter, the terms "*cergam*" and "comics" will be used interchangeably, where *"cergam"* will be an inclusive construct or concept to emphasize that *"Cergam"* is Indonesian comics. The term *"Cergam"* contains the duality of stories *(cerita)* and pictures *(gambar)*, or illustrated stories *(cerita bergambar)*, which can also be called picture stories *(cerita gambar)*. The use of the *term "cerita gambar"* or abbreviated as *"cergam,"* was coined by *cergamis,* as the comic artist was called, known as Zam Nuldyen (1922 - 1988), intends to indicate the twofoldness of this medium of visual storytelling.

If we refer to the research of psychobiologist Roger W. Sperry (1913-1994), the initiator of the brain duality theory in the late 1960s, or later the works of

neuropsychiatrist Boris Cyrulnik, that it is more impressed by images than by writing [1], then comics as a verbal-visual medium are a significant medium in our society's culture. The reason to study visual images is because images are everywhere and we voluntarily encounter images everywhere without being forced to read them most of the time [2]. Comics, as a hybrid art form that combines text and images, provide artists with the opportunity to create new and meaningful narratives within stories. Text and image need not be considered as two distinct medium entities, but are instead viewed as two essential sides of a presentation where the interweaving of text and image contributes to the creation of a narrative in an entirely unique way.

Narratives in comics are created through the interaction between text and images. In the comics medium, text and image should be considered together, not as two separate entities. Just as the line is an ambiguous concept that can be read as both text and image, writing itself can be seen as a kind of image that is, in essence, made up of lines. It is the viewer who creates the narrative in the space between image and text in what is essentially the "gutter of the comics." The human imagination that then reads two (or more) separate pictorial panels and turns them into one idea, cognitively connects the text and image (if both are juxtaposed or simultaneous) of one panel with the text and image in the next panel. The viewer in this specific and unique way creates an emotional and intellectual connection, through the imagination of the viewer who reads the comic image, the memory of the comic artist is reconstructed, and the image of an empathetic memorable atmosphere is re-presented in the midst of the story. Therefore, comics are essentially interactive-participatory in that the viewer's involvement transforms the work into a coherent whole [3]. Comics employ a language that fosters reflective reading, prompting readers to concentrate on the graphic elements in order to fully comprehend the story [4].

The two book titles that we discuss here are first, titled Katumbiri Regenboog (2022) authored and illustrated by Yaya Riyadin, self-published under the publisher's name Grafiti Indah Karya located in Tangerang Selatan (South Tangerang), Indonesia, and second titled Lao Sam 1892 (2022) authored and illustrated by Toni Masdiono published by PT Wira Cerita Nusantara (WiN Comics) located in Jakarta Timur (East Jakarta), Indonesia. Both comics depict fictional stories inspired by past events or places.

Yaya Riayadin's Katumbiri (**Figure 1**) is set in both present-day Bandung and the early twentieth century. It tells the story of a character named Ganesha, a university graduate who is continuing his studies in the Netherlands. In there, Ganesha meets Amelia, who is also from Bandung. They are harassed by thugs while cycling with Amelia to visit the house of a professor who studies the history of Bandung. Ganesha was assigned to research the Cimalati bridge in Pasirmelati village, Ciburial area, which was built in the early twentieth century and technically ahead of its time. History records that the bridge was built by a young native named Putra Martanegara. The big question arises because at that time in the Indies, there were no technical schools, such schools were only inaugurated in 1920. When Ganesha returned to Bandung, he immediately searched for data about the Cimalati bridge, which is when he was suddenly thrown back in time, to the Dutch Colonial era in 1915, and became involved in conflict and romance with a local girl. This historically-set comic is very interesting, through its panels the reader is invited to travel from the atmosphere of the city of Delf, the Netherlands, and also from the northern Bandung area in 1915, which at that time was still a small village with lush forests [5].

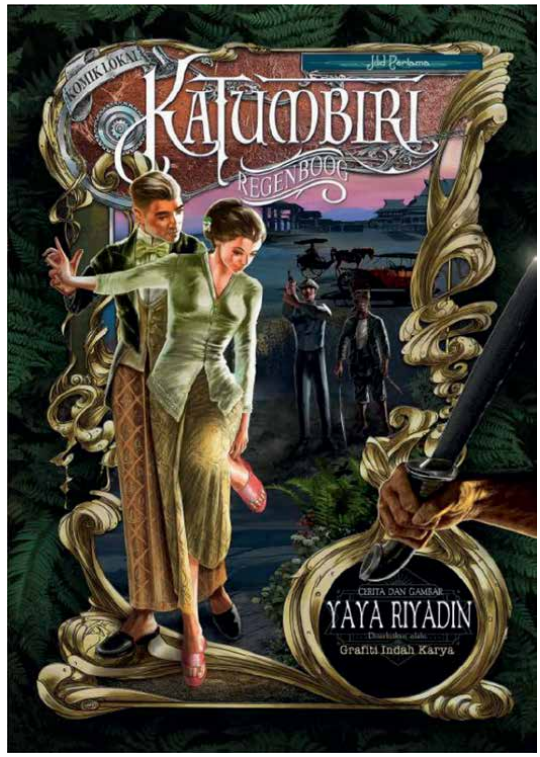

Figure 1.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia. (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

Toni's Laosam comics (**Figure 2**) are labeled as "silent comics" but this does not mean that they contain no written words, although there are no sound effects that are visualized through graphic iconic images. Laosam still has a slight reliance on text, though only on the introductory page of a chapter, and some text box captions that provide a brief explanation of the situation on the page being drawn. On some other pages, a minimum text also appears within the image such as in the announcement section of posters, banners, or the names of stalls and shops.

Laosam 1892 is the second in a series of silent comics by Toni Masdiono after the first debut Karimata 1890. Recalling historical events of the past is not entirely appropriate for Toni Masdiono's comic which tells the story of a fictional pirate and Chinese traders, who may have existed and lived during the Dutch colonial era, but the time and atmosphere depicted with all the pirates props and locations are reminiscent of historical events. Toni's Karimata and Laosam comics are historical fiction that tells the life of pirates in the Malacca Strait in the first part while the second part is about the life of trade with fictional characters and characters, yet the detailed depiction of Toni's comics reminds us of history during the Dutch colonial period. The images are realistic and accurate to the places and atmosphere of the past. In comparison, Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel "Bumi Manusia" tells the life of Minke, an HBS student (Hogere Burgerschool - general secondary education in the Dutch East Indies era for Dutch, European, Chinese, and indigenous elites) and a descendant of Javanese priyayi or nobility during the Dutch East Indies colonial period. Like Toni Masdiono Karimata's comics, the novel belongs to the historical fiction genre.

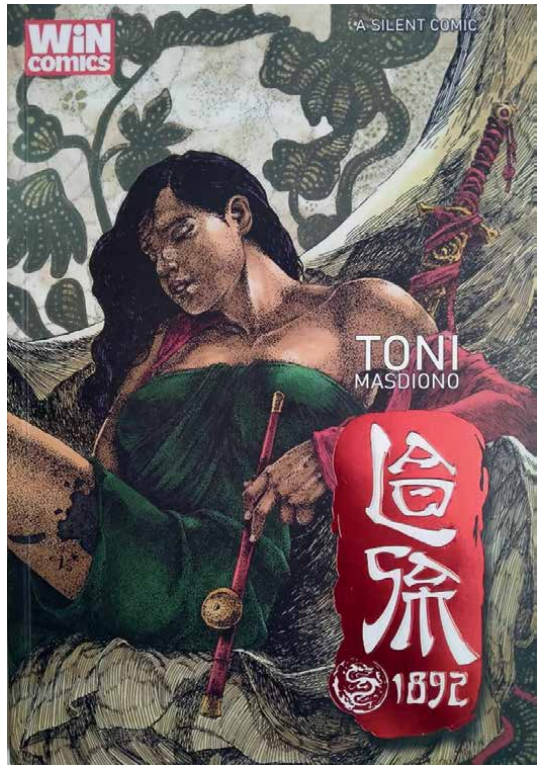

Figure 2.
Toni Masdiono, 2022. LAOSAM 1892, silent comics published by WiN comics, Jakarta, Indonesia. (Source copyright 2022 Toni Masdiono).

However, Karimata's comic depicts the life of a pirate with several silat scenes that use Kali silat during the Majapahit kingdom. Karimata also does not represent one of the ethnic groups in the archipelago and the costumes shown in the comic are a mixture of various ethnic groups in Indonesia [6]. In contrast, Lao Sam tells the story of Chinese culture and social and political life during the Dutch colonial period. The comic highlights the social, class, and political conflicts of the time.

Laosam comic tells the story of a small town on the coast of Java that is known as Little China and because the area is surrounded by many old teak forests, it gets the name Lao Sam. Another name for the area dates back to the Majapahit era, when it was ruled by Bhre Lasem and since the arrival of Admiral Zheng He, Lasem has become a major trade link with China. The life of the Lasem community, consisting of Javanese and Chinese, has been harmonious for hundreds of years. During the war against the Dutch colonizers in 1750, the Lasem community united against the invasion of the Dutch, under East India Company soldier, *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* a.k.a. VOC army. The war is known as the Yellow War. Aside from being a trade route for spices and batik since the British conquered Java, Lasem was also secretly the main location for opium traffic for the eastern region of the archipelago. The comic's story takes place in early 1892, the year of the Water Dragon, when a young entrepreneur tries to seize the opium trade commodity from a senior businessman who has been a resident of Lao Sam for generations. This trade friction becomes a big wave that tends to become a bloody war, which disturbs the peaceful life of the city of Lasem which has long been well preserved [7].

2. Representation of visual memories and histories in comics

How history itself unfolds is gradually influenced by how history itself is revealed, and thus knowledge of history changes and advances. This changes the extent to which the stories of history are understood with varying degrees of "accuracy," as we understand the human race itself in representing the past through stories that further shape our understanding of our history, whether it is remembered or perhaps forgotten as it unfolds. Here we agree that there is such a thing as events in the "past" that can be known through physical things that have been discovered or recently rediscovered. Therefore, various physical artifacts, including written or painted records can have the possibility of describing past events, an ever-changing entity we call "history," which consists of various records of individual investigations and or experiences reflected by individuals, these can be fragments of a whole or different collective history [8].

The term "accuracy" in the case of comics should not be understood in the sense of exactitude, but rather in terms of how well the comic succeeds in creating an imaginative moment in the present that symbolizes or represents an event in the past. Indeed, how well a comic recreates a representation of the past can be seen in the way it allows us to "see" and "sense" things that cannot be seen in real-time. The text and images serve the story where the comic artist attempts to express the qualities of past events in pictures and words to present to the reader memories and some of their personal experiences, but he does not over-dramatize them. Comics can serve as therapy in a sense; where it can serve as a mindful release of memories. Visualizing memory repositions the past in a new, modern context, and comics allow it to remain present. Documentary comics illustrate a new way of presenting historical narratives. It provides the reader with as much accurate information as possible. Even if it is not based on first-hand experience, but on historical accounts, the past and the present coexist through comics [9]. Below is an example of the Indonesian people's struggle against the Dutch who wanted to take away their independence. **Figure 3**, comic book titled "Seizing the City of Struggle," a full-color comic in oil painting style, which at that time was the city of Yogyakarta in Central Java, where it tells the story of a general attack on 1 March 1949 to show the existence of the Indonesian Republic Army which was ready to defend the independence of the Indonesian nation that had been proclaimed in 1945.

Through its plasticity, the comics form supports narratives of remembrance that do not conform to rigid discourses around frameworks of historical study, instead showing evidence of consistency, gaps, and repetition that help to explore the complexity of narratives of memory and experience. Remembrance is reconstructed to help shape memory, where memory and narrative in comic books share a fluidity of form that contrasts with more rigid discourses around the past ([10], p. 138).

Incomplete documentary photography is usually seen in war photos or transition of power conditions such as the documentary photos of the Mendur brothers, which captured many of President Soekarno's activities including photos of Soekarno reading the independence speech and Soekarno's daily life. Only the photos are not made with photo storytelling techniques or photo essays. Similar to war photographer Robert Capa, whose photographs depict the tragic nature of war and the atmosphere of war, but different from photo essay specialists such as Eugene Smith who recorded fishermen affected by mercury poisoning in Minamata. Eugene Smith's photo essays will depict a sequence of stories protesting against environmental destruction and the resulting deaths of many fishermen. In *The Photographer's*

Figure 3.
Marsoedi, and Wid NS, 1985. Merebut Kota Perjuangan (Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949) seizing the City of struggle (general offensive 1 march 1949), published by Sinar Asih Mataram, Jakarta.

comics, the incompleteness or inability to build a complete story from the photo collection files alone also occurred in the limited collection of photos taken by Levefre in Afghanistan, which ultimately required illustrator Guilbert to work by combining photos with illustrations to build a documentary story in Afghanistan. Guilbert's illustrations were made to fill in the gaps between the photographs, thus creating the comic sequences.

Nabizadeh cites Lustiger-Thaler's view emphasizes the significance of a critical interlocutor in shaping the meaning of the past in the present. An example of this is in the esthetic style of the comic "*The Photographer*," where Guibert's illustrations mimic the harsh environment in which the story takes place and in photographer Lefevre's reconstructed memories of his time in Northern Afghanistan ([10], p. 139). The comic's color scheme employs a muted *ligne claire*, a style commonly used in Franco-Belgian comics. However, the bold lines in the artwork effectively convey the urgency of the depicted danger. Guibert asserts that the story accurately portrays the harsh environment of life in a difficult country. The closely tied images effectively convey a sense of urgency to the mission while also being sensitive to the narrative ([10], p. 141). The use of mixed media and multimodal storytelling, such as the juxtaposition of photographic contact sheets with drawn panels, raises thought-provoking questions about the narrative of testimony and the transmission of memory in comic journalism. The story combines photography and illustration in a documentary framework, inviting readers to reflect on the relationship between the representation of memory in documentary comics and how testimony occurs in graphic reportage (**Figure 4**).

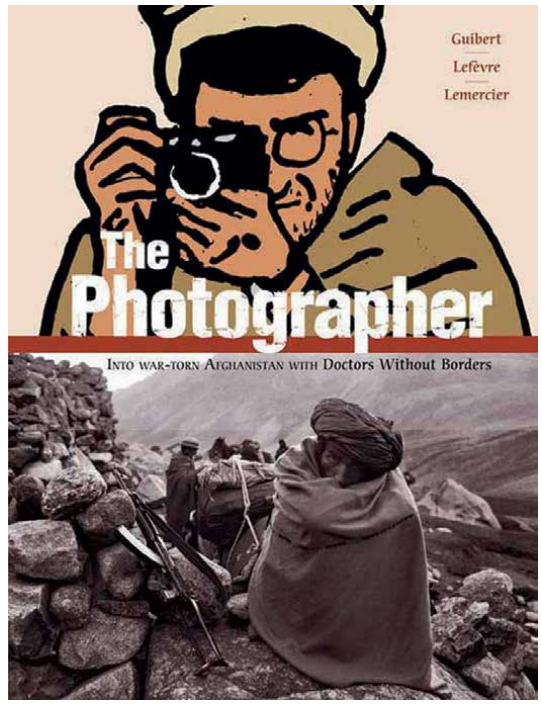

Figure 4.
Guibert, Lefevre, Lemercier, 2009 the photographer: Into war-torn Afghanistan with doctor without Borders. Published by first second, New York.

A unique feature of *The Photographer* is the use of contact sheets and drawn panels as elements that complement the narrative. A sense of time in progress, a lasting trace of movement through space, a clear authentication of photography's claim to transparent representation of reality ([10], p. 142). The term "contact sheet" itself suggests an animate - a point where material recorded images in time come to life as they meet their first expression. Furthermore, the use of photography alongside hand-drawn illustrations is also known as plurimedial, as suggested by Bettina Egger called *The Photographer* as a plurimedial comics, which means through comics drawings and photographs represent the photojournalist Didier Lefevres memories of his journey in Afghanistan team up with doctors without borders in 1986. Otherwise with some comics generally redrawing from photographs or referencing and modifying from photographs. Phillipe Marion asserts that Roland Barthes' concept of complementarity between image and text applies to comics. In this concept, images, photographs, and texts complement each other on a diegetic level or the story-world ([10], p. 66). It asserts that the embodied essence of the hand-drawn and hand-written comic is distinct from the photographic image. Comics provide a unique way of accessing documentary material through deliberate, old-school techniques that inscribe the creator's body into the image ([11], p. 68). This feature is attributed to the ability of comics to offer a different perspective on the material, showcasing the creator's expertise and authority. The archiving mode in this plurimedial form confidently challenges the conflicting relationship between the comic's drawing, or illustrated, and the photograph, and their respective truth claims ([11], p. 75).

Comics offer a unique and engaging way to experience stories that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds. Comics, and more recently graphic novels, are increasingly recognized as cultural artifacts that open a unique window not only on mass or popular culture but also on social, cultural, and political processes. The industry has a rich history globally, with some regions having a more established presence than others. Some regions have developed more advanced comic industries that reflect the particular historical processes of their respective national experiences ([12], pp. 3-4).

3. Comics storytelling memory and nostalgia as cultural artefacts

Comics are a unique cultural form that combines text with graphics in distinctive and sophisticated ways. Through this combination, comics have enabled the development of visual techniques that present memory and reminiscence in engaging and impactful ways. This interaction between memory and comics is significant in engaging with both the past and present. Indeed, comics are a powerful tool for storytelling and cultural expression. Comics provide a unique platform for visually connecting memories across time and space. Such as **Figure 5**, we witness a place with a building and local people's activity on their market and a praying temple, which is drawn carefully by the comics artist. Comics and graphic novels are powerful memory devices, distinct from other media such as photographs, memorials, or museums. They uniquely engage readers, eliciting and mobilizing memories that differ from those evoked by film or battle reenactments. By providing a personal and immersive

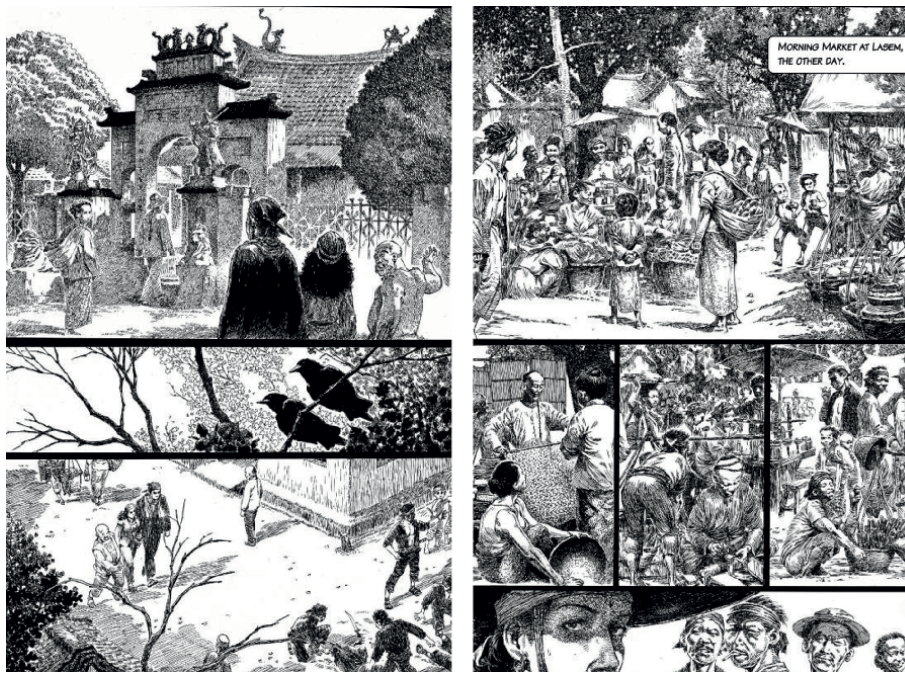

Figure 5.
Toni Masdiono, 2022. LAOSAM 1892, silent comics published by WiN comics, Jakarta, Indonesia. (p. 35, p. 49) (Source copyright 2022 Toni Masdiono).

experience, comics and graphic novels offer a friendly and confident approach to exploring the past ([12], p. 5). Comics are an incredibly valuable tool for teaching and explaining historical events, especially in cases where there is a lack of collective responsibility to remember.

They provide a medium for expressing experiences that might otherwise be forgotten or remain isolated memories. It is important to remember that comics can offer unique perspectives and insights into history that may not be found in traditional academic sources. Since comics do not necessarily use rigorous research methods grounded in historical scholarship, they can communicate alternative versions of factual events. ([13], pp. 188-189). Comics create a space through the graphic trace that is both intersubjective and memorializing. Memory in comics fluctuates between the material and immaterial or psychological spaces, echoing the dynamics of the medium. Additionally, comics artists propose multifaceted, interlinked approaches for apprehending comics memory through styles and archives ([14], p. 281).

In accordance with Smolderen, style embodies idiosyncrasy, tapping into the memories of the artist and reader while conveying specific mnemonic information. The text simultaneously draws on the reader's memories of comics, the artist's memories, and individual memories, while also conveying specific mnemonic information. Comics drawing brings together aspects of both oral and print culture, making drawing an embodied practice that also participates in the performative logic of the repertoire, while at the same time engaging with the archive of existing graphic culture ([14], p. 283). Memory is "stylized" in comics in particular ways, ranging from stylization through drawing and narrative styles such as nostalgic or retro, to how memory is stylized through reprints, databases, and other archival practices ([14], p. 284).

The comic books discuss in this article incorporate historical backgrounds into their stories. Through combining text and image – story and pictorial images both artists create a narrative that brings to life memories of the past. Although the stories are fictional, they are based on factual events that have happened somewhere. The distinctive linework of the comic illustrations in **Figures 6** and 7 shows Yaya's comic expertise in recreating the situations and nuances of the past that are visible in the present. The realistic and naturalistic approach seems to be the illustration style of choice to create an atmosphere of reminiscence.

The authors and comic artists in both comics use some of the names of real historical figures for their characters, but the stories and roles are changed to be fictional. This kind of narrative strategy is often used by comic storytellers so that when a comic artist conducts a study of an event location, the main goal is just to strengthen the impression of that place so that comic readers can feel more realistic. From photography that records events, recorded images of events can evoke nostalgia and capture memories more powerfully than text or pictorial imagination. When it is applied as a reference for drawing comics, it could help to retain the memory of reading them while retracing the scenes depicted in the pages of the comics, which become uniquely recreated as a kind of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a common condition that can be said to have been felt by most people. Nostalgia has more to do with time and space, which are powerful phenomena that are completely irreversible. Complicating the contemporary notion of nostalgia, a little is the notion of spatiotemporal distance, or one's temporal distance, from something - a place, a moment, a condition, and an experience - that may be difficult to recall or repeat. There is sometimes a transition of feelings and thoughts from the pleasurable sensation of reminiscence to the rather sad realization of an unbridgeable distance from the past and it comes in a variety of shades ([15], p. 18).

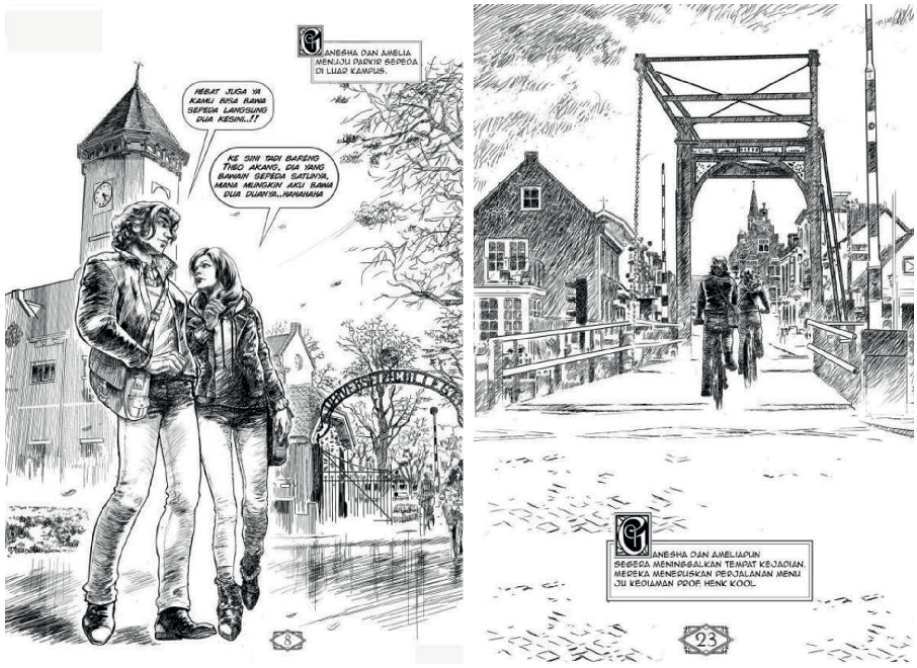

Figure 6.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia. (p. 8, p. 23) (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

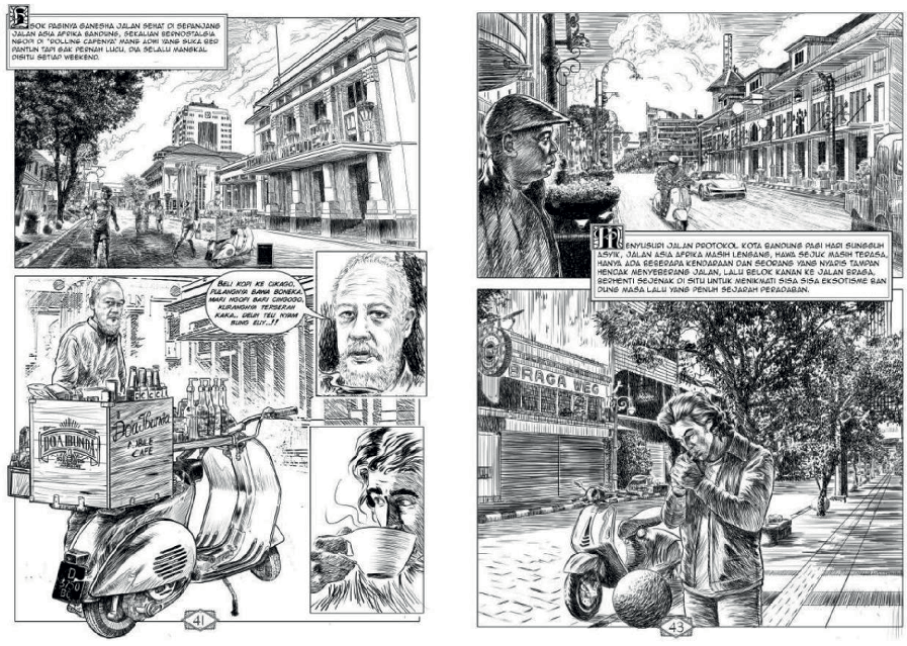

Figure 7.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia. (p. 41, p. 49) (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

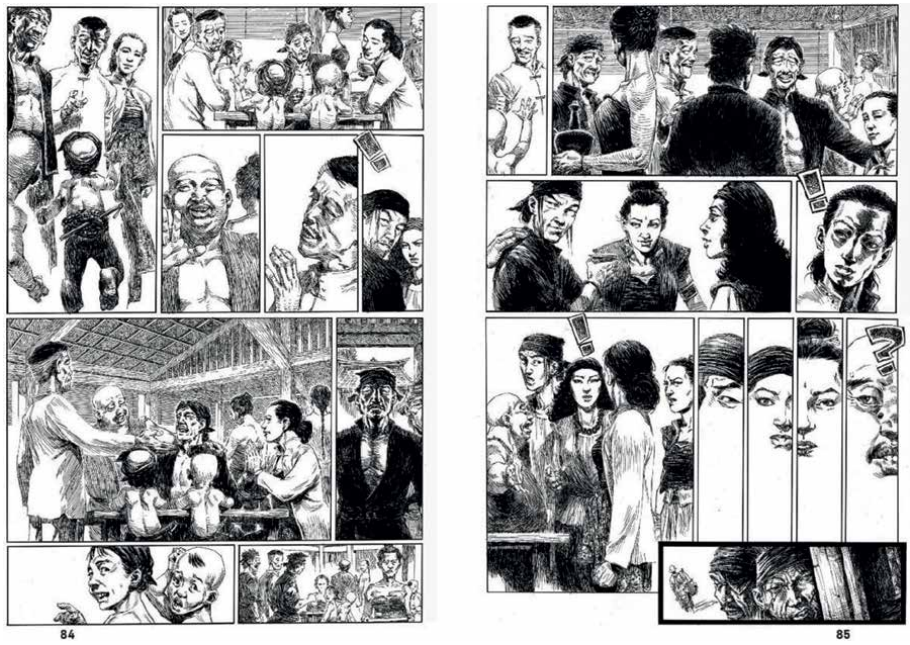

Figure 8.
Toni Masdiono, 2022. LAOSAM 1892, silent comics published by WiN comics, Jakarta, Indonesia. (pp. 84-85) (Source copyright 2022 Toni Masdiono).

Another concept of nostalgia centers on the opposition between personal experience and collective experience, ranging from minimal recollections originating at least from intimate childhood memories to ubiquitous references to media present in the cultural milieu in which one lives. Widespread exposure to mass media implies that each individual's memories will more or less carry with them elements that are closely related to memories held by other people as well. Nostalgia can be felt in moments experienced individually and/or together which then remain and are embedded in collective memory in the act of thinking about the past. Nostalgia is the longing for an idealized past, whether positive or negative, associated with a particular place, object, person, or event, that may not be experienced in person ([15], p. 19). In this case, comics are collaborative texts between the author/artist's imagination and the reader, who recreates or imagines the feelings or memories that the artist wants to evoke (**Figure 8**) ([15], pp. 21-22).

4. Appreciation through the analysis of formal aspects

From an esthetic perspective, there is a plausible phenomenological view that no form of perception can fully capture the content of an object, because the object is only partially represented and its meaning goes beyond what is perceived. Nonetheless, it could be argued that a single visual perception cannot fully grasp an object completely, since everything is present through "adumbrates" (foreshadowing) and its meaning extends in the "horizon" of vision far beyond what is seen ([16],

p. 564). By this type of Husserlian phenomenological insight, we further articulate it with the terms "lack" and "excess" that characterize all intuitive readings of visually perceived things, by a "ack" we mean what entirely depends on the giving side (givenness) of the perceiver and an "excess" is on the intentional side of the perceiver ([16], p. 565). Since the lack is on the side of the perceiver and abundance is on the side of the phenomena that arise from visible things, the reader is required to notice the intentional correlation between things in the way they appear to us and the way we perceive these appearances. This interplay between lack and excess that characterizes the intentional correlation between the perceiver (the reader) and the perceived (the comics storytelling). This is to emphasize that we can comprehend more than what is initially shown to us, by paying close attention to the abundance of matter. By paying attention to the beauty that radiates from the appearance of the images and paying attention to the details of what they can tell us about the true nature of things. It is not just the same as pretending to see things individually ([16], p. 567). In short, the perceiver might lack the ability to perceive, while the appearing phenomena are excessively rich. To improve perception, pay attention to the intentional correlation between the way things appear and the way they are apprehended. The intentional correlation between a perceiver and a thing perceived involves an interplay of lack and excess. It is important to notice the excess in what is given and perceive more than what is actually given. We should also attend to the shining beauty of appearances and what they can tell us about the true nature of things. It is not the same as perceiving the nature of things.

Discussing comics is certainly inseparable from seeing the important role of the form of the comic itself. The form is not a neutral container for the content of the medium. The form shapes the content and conveys interpretation and feeling. The form of a comic is made up of material such as subject matter and theme, which are shaped and transformed by the overall composition, including plot structure and stylistic patterns ([17], p. 71). We will focus more or less on formal aspects of the sample foremost on the relation between *mise en scène* (or staging) and the formal analysis of pictures.

The terms *mise en scène* and framing come from other art forms such as theater, photography, and cinema. *Mise en scène* is a term for the displays illustrated in the text of a play for example, and looking for the best way to portray this material for the audience to see, how best to stage it, such as what backgrounds to use, where to place actors, what props to use, and so on ([18], p. 19). Mise en scène and framing are also very important to the reading experience, and in comics, there is no actual scene being recorded by the camera. There are no actors or objects placed in front of the camera lens. There is no camera at all, just a comic artist suggesting with dots, lines, shapes, and figures drawn or painted in context and placed in panel-to-panel framing on the pages of comics. What we mean by *mise en scène* in comics here concerns the representation of a scene by a specific organization of its virtual but figurative elements such as decoration, properties, and characters ([18], p. 25). *Mise en scène* and shooting angles can greatly influence the way viewers perceive a scene. The only way to read the diegetic world or story world for a comic reader is none other than observing the pictorial world presented by the artist. Readers have no other choice but to rely solely on the information presented by the comic pages depicted by comic artists.

The nature of images in comics is distinct from that of photo-realistic images in live-action films. Comic images are static, two-dimensional, and highly stylized, which draws attention to their handmade quality. Unlike real-life or photographic images, lines are very prominent in comic images. A common habit of hand-drawn pictures will

leave out unnecessary details and pronounce telling characteristics by means of perceptual factors such as simplicity of shape, orderly grouping, clear overlapping, distinction of figure and ground, and deformation. Distilled images, or stylized drawings are indeed less visually analogous to the reality we perceive out there, but thousands of years of human experience - art have proven that it can be very effective in capturing the essence of an object or person, their characteristics simplified to be quickly understood by the viewer, a drawing that is literally and figuratively "signed" ([17], p. 72). The counter-lines clearly fix the main characters and objects, in addition to extensively nervous hatching and cross-hatching which make the images vibrate with movement. Furthermore, the graphic styles as depicted in **Figure 9**, suggest experiences and feelings through their nonverbal qualities. It can be a tiresome task for a cartoonist to draw the same scene from the same perspective panel after panel, this is why in comics rather simplified images are quite common and why the background can disappear for several panels. The staging of elements from the written scene, from a single scene, scene changes, and scenes details the various decisions and artistic choices of the comic artist involved in realizing the scene for reading. The situation can be complicated when the comic artist is choosing whether to take the embodiment in an increasingly realistic direction from realism or in a symbolic and figurative direction ([18], p. 19). And the choices made by the comic artist in terms of costume, setting, and character expression are entirely controlled and deliberate. Where the image is displayed in various aspects depending on how the comic artist sees it, it only displayed through stylistic choices and framing an opportunity to share the artist's mode of seeing ([18], p. 25).

By using formal analysis describes not only the various techniques but also understands their role in the visual narrative and how they attempt to communicate information. One thing comics cannot have in common with film or animation, that

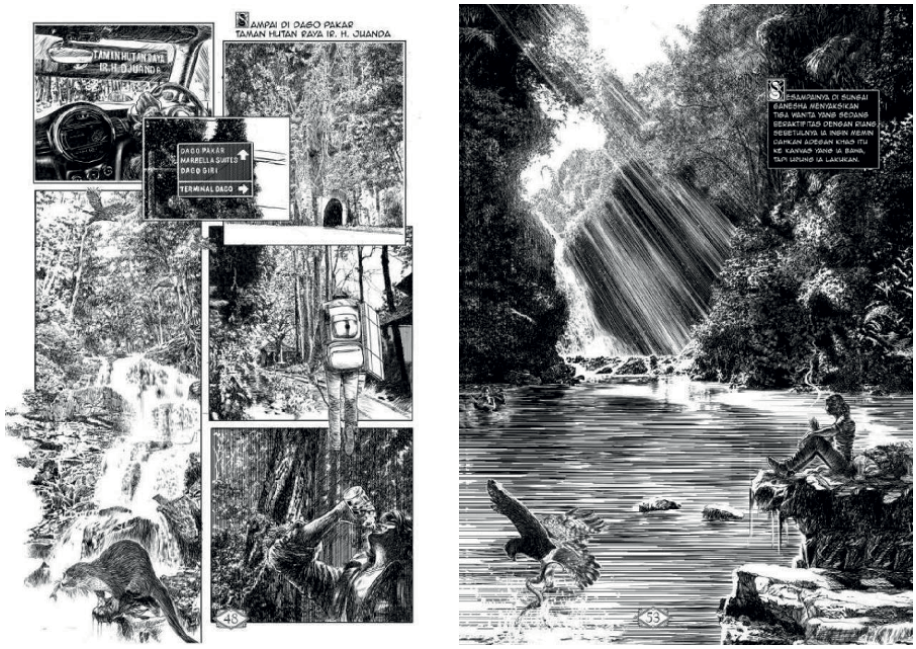

Figure 9.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia. (p. 48, p. 53) (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

film can easily do but comics cannot, is getting the words in comics to sound and be heard, the reader never knows exactly what the characters sound like, and comics reader has to pretend to pronounce and make a sound play by themselves. That is why the sound visualizes into text such as *DEZ!* and *BYUR!* likewise designed in **Figure 10**, for the reader to imagine a hitting/kicking sound alike, and water splashes. Comics compositions are not shown only in a single frame or square screen such as film or animation movies. Comics need sequences in order to have a narrative, sequences that organize spatial and temporal relationships within a narrative. Their placement on the page is based on the arrangement of multiple panels in a systemic grid layout, referred to as tabular organization. This is very important in comics, because with organized panels, it allow the comic artist to manipulate the storyline of the illustrated narrative. In some cases, there are comics that are primarily a verbal content delivery system with less lengthy images [19].

As far as the visual arts covered by the term "realism" are concerned, this term restrictively denotes the nineteenth century artistic style, which was called realistic for the first time in art history, and this was done in order to draw a line between itself and its idealistic opposite ([20], p. 6). The term is synonymous with naturalism to refer to the endeavor of reproducing perceived external reality. The so-called realist tendency has existed throughout the history of art since ancient times. By realism in this art-world sense, we understand any attempt at a precise depiction of visible reality in painting, sculpture, and graphic arts. Furthermore, realism is not about what real things look like, but what the reality of things is, whereas the art presents not reality but truth. It is the pursuit of reality. The interest is not in representing the complete reality (depiction of reality) in all its details, but the "essential" representation, the "truth" about reality where concrete reality must always be taken as the point of departure ([20], p. 11). As photorealist painters play with reality, it is reflected in

Figure 10.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia (p. 54, p. 55) (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

their works where the point of departure is not reality itself, but the indirect reality of the photograph used as reference. Comics artists copy the photographs not to be claimed representing an objective truth, but as deliberate starting points in the sense of dealing with reality for depicting the situation of a historical event in their comics story world.

The story world of comics often recognized as a narrative world or diegetic world. Narratives (diegesis) in comic visualizations are copies of natural objects, which they also use varying degrees of imitation in telling, it moves away from copies and proximity to natural objects toward mimesis or visuality. The contemporary usage defines mimesis as "showing" and diegesis as "telling". Diegesis is not just narration, but also the comprehension of the world being narrated. Nonetheless, mimesis is not just a visual imitation, but also encompasses the style, mode, and degree of imitation being portrayed. In comics, however, more contemporary definitions must be used. Diegesis is the narrative world established by the comic text in accordance with ideas set forth in ([18], p. 77). In comics characters seem to do both mimetic gestures and act in service of the narrative simultaneously, and depiction of a character trying to do the thing within their world. Mimesis in comics has come to mean "showing" rather than "telling." Comics characters are therefore a *mise en scène* paradox, they are the staging and the staged, we can understand comics as a translucent form, they show and tell and perform the same function in the system of representation as a realization of intersubjects ([18], p. 78). Comic artists may have full control over the images they create, which may have a certain set of intended meanings. However, they cannot control readers' intertextual experiences or the inferences they bring to the reading ([18], p. 29).

Comics include narrative and pictorial properties. The narrative properties are connected to the stories that comics tell, while the pictorial properties are connected to the visual and graphical elements ([19], p. 140). A scene includes more than just panels. While a panel has the potential to be the smallest component of a scene, it can also extend to an entire unit of dramatic action or establish a setting. The page, as seen in **Figure 11**, like the panel is only part of the overall story. It is important to consider all the other panels, their position on the page, and their place as part of a larger artifact. There is a sense that each panel encapsulates a narrated world that persists beyond its boundaries ([18], p. 27). The resulting effect of reality is one of a general scenic setting punctuated by close-up shots that are particularly detailed. The sequence of images drawn creates meaning and impression by connecting images that have similar depictions of movement, mass, and size. This can be recognized by the viewer as connected. Images can be understood even if background details and marks indicating objects in the composition are left unclear or incomplete. However, it is important to note that it is the act of looking at the rest of the image and the obvious parts that makes this understanding possible; as shown in **Figure 12** readers can establish a sense of space by recognizing linear perspective depth cues, being aware of the virtual space beyond the panel boundaries, and looking for overlaps to connect the fragments. Contiguous spaces can be constructed even without possessing all the necessary visual information ([18], pp. 33-34).

The comics field is entirely additive, starting from nothing and then adding graphical elements that become signs conveying meaning. The images depicted are often imaginative, varying between descriptive and photographic, and may be based on reference material, but are always rooted in the imagination. Decorations may always be perceptually visible, but they do not have to be narratively visible. Décor in comics *mise en scène* scene are elements that emerge and fade away without affecting the flow

Figure 11.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia. [p. 82, p. 83] (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

Figure 12.
Yaya Riyadin, 2022. Katumbiri Regenboog, published by Grafitti Indah Karya, Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia (p. 90, p. 83) (Source copyright 2022 Yaya Riyadin).

of the narrative and it is not a necessity for them to be part of the narrative. It is a matter of stylistic convenience of the image caused by the artist rendering and re-rendering the drawn background. As mentioned previously, comics do not always depict spatio-temporal story worlds that are analogous to our world or similar to cinematic representations of it. Faced with the physical flatness of comics, the artist endeavors to find a way of depicting space that has depth, and the way in which this is presented is due to the fact that comics are a two-dimensional medium. Comic artists use abstraction techniques creatively to present diegetic space and location, which can signal important information to the reader/viewer. This can range from unmarked paper to photorealism in terms of detail, indicating the depth of the narrative in the comic world ([18], p. 37).

In comics, there exists a diegetic world that is perceived by the characters, however, not all aspects of this world can be conveyed to the reader/viewer. Whereas there is a graphic world experienced by the reader/viewer that is intentionally by the artist and seen by us, the reader. Such ambiguity "designates" an esthetic practice of expressing a textual disclosure onto the "stage" of the comic page, and in this way establishes itself at the intersection of the interpretation of a text (the narrated story) and its artistic realization (the visual narrative). The artistic realization built into the comics page provides an important amount of information, which the reader then compiles with other images across the page in what is ultimately referred to as "reading comics." Every detail that gives us an understanding of the world and presents us with action is a cumulative system of visual staging that we construct through the experience of reading comics. Comics oscillate from panel to panel (or even page to page) and can be read at any speed, as shown by the fighting scene above in **Figure 13**. Every aspect of the fighting scene can be understood through a

Figure 13.
Toni Masdiono, 2022. LAOSAM 1892, silent comics published by WiN comics, Jakarta, Indonesia. (pp. 102-103) (Source copyright 2022 Toni Masdiono).

visual breakdown that takes into account all the elements that are presented in detail. Readers can choose to pause to look at the details of the fight, or quickly turn the page to see who wins the fight.

Illustrations in comics are often seen as amazing when readers find that the images are detailed close to the actual object. What is often of concern is the illustration of the background and scenery of the "scene" that takes place in the story. Whether it is a panoramic view of a place to the details of a historical room from a certain era. Although in the process of reading comics, comic readers tend not to pay attention for a long time at the time of reading/reading for the first time, people generally tend to ignore the background. However, to be able to evoke an atmosphere or mood, to feel the atmosphere of the place, the depiction or illustration of the background and the objects in it becomes very important to pay close attention to. Feeling the atmosphere of the place is related to how to feel in a place or feel the presence/feel in the location where the events are being told or the narrative is being told through the guidance of words and images in comics. The challenge for a comic illustrator is to depict the atmosphere of the situation of the scene scheme that is being narrated or told/whose storytelling is taking place. In comics, the biggest elements are the story and the illustrations, the story that is poured into pictures, or also the story that is narrated through drawings, some parts use pictorial narration, pictorial narration that moves the reader's mind.

As far as we know, photography is the most recognizable medium in historical graphic memoirs, and surpasses painting in stature. This prominence of photography can be explained by its capacity as a medium that has long been trusted to prove and recall facts [20]. The success of comics in recreating historical stories lies in how much the reader believes the storytelling to be close to the truth, or how precisely one can place oneself when the events take place in the past. All of this effort by portraying the methods of collecting data such as photographs and other visual matter, as evidence, through the mind of the artist(s) who presents it to us now with paper and ink. Recreating the experience of a place that may no longer exist is achievable through the narrative of the image and the details of the redrawing of photography into illustrative images. This immerses the reader, evoking nostalgia for a place they may have never visited or that may have changed significantly [21]. The narrative is built upon important historical events rather than excessively specific ones. The emergence of this type of narrative is associated with a growing interest in memory in general. Since the late 1990s a separate genre has emerged that is increasingly "memory-focused" and of course the little-studied memory comic. It became a global phenomenon, with authors in Europe, the United States, and Japan. Henry Rousso, a contemporary historian who specializes in memory issues, refers to the "globalization of memory" [22]. Elsewhere, we have argued that in the world of comics, it is not the accurate or precise objective description that makes them alive and real. Instead, it is in the inaccuracies, incompleteness, distortions, and simplifications of form that the reader's mind takes part to complete, or reassemble the missing parts. Although the world depicted in the illustrations is never visited directly by the reader, the way it is portrayed using certain techniques done very well by the illustrator or comic artist makes the comics communicative and provides an artistic experience to the reader. Thus, it builds an image in the reader's memory of a historical event, or the location of a historical event that still exists today or maybe no longer exists [23].

5. Conclusions

This article gives the reason that comics with a fictional background based on a historical event may help to preserve a remembrance of a true event for the younger reader. Although the artist who illustrated it, never attended the actual event, since it happened in the past long time ago. The capabilities of both comics artists to capture and draw in detail the background of the comics can give a sense of presence. With a drawing style that tries to be as realistic as possible, and traditional techniques that still rely on ink and pen, the lines drawing of the two comic artists that we discussing here, their images on each page encourage contemplation in the reader's mind, who must be patient enough to explore every corner of the story and image. Apart from the fact that this traditional comic technique is one of the earliest used in old Indonesian comics, the effect of drawing details in such a way also makes a deep impression on the mind and, of course, the memory. Pages with scenes and situations from the past provoke the reader to try to remember places or events, or even to give a place to memories of places or events that they know well from reading the visuals of these comics.

By combining texts and images – the story and pictorial images, both comics artists enable a narrative that brings to life memories about a past event. Toni's comics differ from Yaya's in their approaches to time. The narrative of Toni's Laosam progresses according to a general plot linearity, although the story takes place in the past time. Meanwhile, Yaya's Katumbiri is a comic with a storyline that moves back and forth in time. Its main character exists both in the present and in the past. They both write stories not based on first-hand experiences, but on historical accounts, especially focusing on the setting of the place told in the comics. Toni's comics are more likely telling as a historical narrative which is truly an event happening in the past, yet the story itself is fictionized. While Yaya's comics are fully fictionalized events but refer to some places that still existed from the past to the present day.

Both artists wish to provide their readers with as many precise stages as possible that were redrawn from photographs or pictures taken from authentic places. The historical memorials they tried to portray were seen through the way they illustrated the background and the properties of the "stages" in the comics' panels. Their chosen format in printed comics as an album book size, not the small standard one seems to give a sense of looking and invitation to the reader to explore the details in their drawings. Both artists show their expertise and skill in rendering the comics with cross-hatching and pointillist techniques by using pen and ink throughout the whole pages of the comics book. It seems to be an exhaustive method, yet it consistently shows persistence on every page. Look like the artist wants to catch the reader's attention to every detail they have illustrated with those techniques. Their attention to the details in the background is comparable to the depiction of characters in action which elevates the mood to the environment atmosphere. By creating a comic world based on a factual historical situation, wrapped in a fictional story with different themes, comics can be a vehicle to stimulate interest and recall in the collective memory of the community for historical places and events that may be slowly disappearing and being forgotten. With historical themes, backgrounds, or figures, comics can be a creative way of preserving part of the history of a community or nation. However, the question of factual truth between fact and fiction is still debatable and should be discussed elsewhere.

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Comics and graphic novels are important components of popular culture and have international influence. They engage readers across all age groups and across fiction and non-fiction genres. They address many cultural and social ideas, histories, languages, and concepts with engaging stories and narratives. This book provides international perspectives on comics and graphic novels in various contexts for education that may inform social cognition, curriculum theory, and cultural studies. Interdisciplinary perspectives are highlighted to showcase research, theory, and practices in the use of comics and graphic novels. Complexity within this genre is discussed to provide new and updated perspectives on the theory and practice of comics and graphic novels for their reflection of and influence on culture, their multimodal role in content area literacy, and their influence across social contexts.

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