

Comics and Books: Reading Value in the American Comic

by

Neale Barnholden

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Department of English and Film Studies
University of Alberta

© Neale Barnholden, 2019

Abstract

This thesis examines four comics published in the United States between 1952 and 2017, all of which portray ideas of value—the relationship between morality and monetary consumption—and exist as physical objects with value attached. Using the Book History methodology of descriptive bibliography, as well as the Digital Humanities method of distant reading, I argue that the textual portrayals of values are complicated by the materiality of these texts. While the stories told by these comics often eschew or minimize the idea that the material is the ultimate value, the physical forms in which the comics are found create a tension with this idea by enacting and promoting a culture of consumption. Ultimately I argue that the relationship between the material and the textual creates a space for readers to imagine more ambivalent, complex readings of these comics.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation is built on the remains of another, different but sympathetic project. For help with that step, I'd like to thank Dr. Katherine Binhammer and Dr. Eddy Kent.

Extending through both projects, my supervisor Dr. Cecily Devereux has been unfailingly encouraging but critical, engaged but rigorous, and I thank her profoundly for her treatment of me. I greatly appreciate Dr. Julie Rak and Dr. Mark Simpson for their invaluable comments and guidance over the years. I also offer profound thanks to Dr. Bart Beaty, Dr. Christian Reyns and Dr. Michael Litwack for taking the time to participate in the defense.

As can happen with projects based in materials and archives, this project was profoundly shaped by the people who have made material accessible. Specific thanks go to Judith Logan of the University of Toronto Libraries who deciphered my instructions regarding priceless-to-me copies of the *Ayer & Sons Directory of Periodicals* and Nick Beauchesne for distributing and consuming a surfeit of Dubble Bubble and returning the Fleeer Funnies to me.

A necessary subtext to this dissertation is the elaborate global and local networks of commerce and trade in which comics flow. In that spirit, heartfelt thanks go to the many comic book store workers and owners who have helped me over the years: the staffs of The Comic Shop in Kitsilano and Golden Age Collectibles on Granville, both in Vancouver; those of Happy Harbor and the Wee Book Inn in Edmonton; and especially Brandon and Danica of Edmonton's Variant Edition Comics & Culture.

I'd like to thank the sources of some of my information, in particular the many people whose Tweets I have used in Chapter 3. I doubt very much that they intended their ephemeral jokes about the President of the United States to be read into the academic record, and so I'd like them to think of my quoting of their remarks not as hostile criticism but in the spirit of pointing out examples of an intriguing pattern.

I'd also like to extend begrudging appreciation to a person or persons unknown who, in April 2016, broke into a storage locker at my alma mater the University of British Columbia and stole

nearly the entire collection of comic books I had assembled over three decades. It's quite possible that I would never have felt the materiality of comics so keenly without being emotionally aware of their sudden material absence from my life. Whoever you are, feel free to come forward any time and tell me in a very literal, non-literary theory, sort of way, where the things are.

For emotional support, critical readings, and a shocking patience with unprompted digressive monologues about arcane subjects, I'd like to thank my friends and colleagues. Reg Wiebe was constantly available to talk about comics, to the extent that we created a presentation about *Richie Rich* which became the seed for Chapter 3. Friends in eternity, loyalty, and honesty Theo Finigan and Matt Rea made this dissertation enjoyable. I would also like to thank Matt Schneider, who probably didn't know what he was starting when he rhetorically asked me if there was anything left to say about *Watchmen*. Aside from being academic role models in profound ways, Hannah McGregor and Marcelle Kosman are friends, colleagues, and extremely knowledgeable about print culture. Thanks go as well to my peers in Dr. Sian Echard's seminar in popular Medievalism in 2011. I would also like to acknowledge my many students over the years.

For financial support, I am grateful to the University of Alberta and the Department of English and Film Studies for making this research possible.

For always supporting me in countless ways as I tried to find my words, I thank my parents Nancy Newman and Michael Barnholden—not least for making my first experience reading *Watchmen* a road trip through the Painted Desert. Beyond words, I thank my partner Leigh Dyrda.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	page 1.
Reading Comic Books as Material	
Chapter 1.....	62.
Back to Back to the Klondike: The Good Duck Artist	
Chapter 2.....	100.
Money, Money, Money: Reading Richie Rich	
Chapter 3.....	145.
Dollars and Sense: Not Reading Richie Rich	
Chapter 4.....	175.
“I Will Give You Bodies”: Essentials and Artifacts in the History of <i>Watchmen</i>	
Chapter 5.....	230.
Trash Culture: Towards a Theory of Premium Comics	
Conclusion.....	282.
Reading Comic Books	
Works Cited and Consulted.....	336.

List of Tables

Table 1: Total circulation for Harvey Comics, 1961-1979.....	page 121.
Table 2: Total circulation for five American comic book publishers, 1961-1979.....	122-123.
Table 3: The faces of Richie Rich, 1960-1994.....	163.
Table 4: distribution of <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> in one particular bucket.....	270-271.

List of Figures

Figure 1, <i>Marvel Comics</i> #1, October 1939.....	page 288.
Figure 2, <i>Uncanny Tales</i> November 1939.....	289.
Figure 3, <i>Marvel Mystery Comics</i> #12, October 1940.....	289.
Figure 4, <i>Marvel Science Stories</i> November 1940.....	290.
Figure 5, <i>Fantastic Four</i> #4, May 1962.....	290.
Figure 6, <i>Showcase</i> #61, March-April 1966.....	291.
Figure 7, <i>Fantastic Four</i> #12, March 1963.....	292.
Figure 8, Marvel house ad, 1948.....	293.
Figure 9, Circulation and Advertising Rates.....	294.
Figure 10, Whitman house ad, 1977.....	295.
Figure 11, Hostess ad, 1977.....	296.
Figure 12, Hostess Iron Man ad, 1977.....	297.
Figure 13, <i>Richie Rich</i> cover detail.....	298.
Figure 14, <i>Richie Rich</i> panel.....	299.
Figure 15, <i>Richie Rich</i> panel.....	300.
Figure 16, <i>Richie Rich</i> panel.....	301.
Figure 17, <i>The Three Stooges</i> panel.....	302.
Figure 18, <i>The Three Stooges</i> panel.....	303.
Figure 19, <i>The Three Stooges</i> panel.....	304.
Figure 20, <i>Richie Rich</i> page.....	305.
Figure 21, <i>Watchmen</i> #1.....	306.
Figure 22, <i>Watchmen</i> trade paperback.....	306.

Figure 23, <i>Les Gardiens</i> Tome 3.....	307.
Figure 24, <i>Watchmen</i> hardcover.....	308.
Figure 25, <i>Watchmen</i> trade paperback 11 th edition.....	308.
Figure 26, <i>Watchmen</i> #1 Millennium Edition.....	309.
Figure 27, <i>Resident Evil</i> advertisement.....	310.
Figure 28, <i>Absolute Watchmen</i>	310.
Figure 29, <i>Watchmen</i> #1 Special Edition.....	311.
Figure 30, <i>Watchmen</i> International Edition.....	312.
Figure 31, <i>Watchmen The Complete Motion Comic</i>	312.
Figure 32, <i>Watchmen</i> Deluxe Edition.....	313.
Figure 33, <i>Watchmen</i> #1 Essential Edition.....	314.
Figure 34, <i>Watchmen</i> trade paperback, 15 th printing.....	314.
Figure 35, <i>Watchmen</i> 2014 printing.....	315.
Figure 36, <i>Watchmen</i> Artifact Edition.....	316.
Figure 37, <i>Watchmen</i> Collector's Edition.....	316.
Figure 38, <i>Watchmen Noir</i>	317.
Figure 39, <i>Watchmen Annotated</i>	318.
Figure 40, Dubble Bubble ad, 1946.....	318.
Figure 41, Bazooka Joe ad, 1948.....	319.
Figure 42, Dubble Bubble ad, 1950.....	320.
Figure 43, Dubble Bubble ad, 1954.....	321.
Figure 44, Blony wrapper, 1957-58.....	321.
Figure 45, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #9.....	322.

Figure 46, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #7.....	322.
Figure 47, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #25.....	323.
Figure 48, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #29.....	323.
Figure 49, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #22.....	324.
Figure 50, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #17.....	324.
Figure 51, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #39.....	325.
Figure 52, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #45.....	325.
Figure 53, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #56.....	326.
Figure 54, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #38.....	326.
Figure 55, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #46.....	327.
Figure 56, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #2.....	327.
Figure 57, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #20.....	328.
Figure 58, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #47.....	328.
Figure 59, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #11.....	329.
Figure 60, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #27.....	329.
Figure 61, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #33.....	330.
Figure 62, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #52.....	330.
Figure 63, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #54.....	331.
Figure 64, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #50.....	331.
Figure 65, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #12.....	332.
Figure 66, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #13.....	332.
Figure 67, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #14.....	333.
Figure 68, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #10.....	333.

Figure 69, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #28.....	334.
Figure 70, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #36.....	334.
Figure 71, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #44.....	335.
Figure 72, <i>Dubble Bubble Funnies</i> #46.....	335.

Introduction

Reading Comic Books as Material

“Comic books, first of all, are junk.” — Jules Feiffer

The American Senate’s Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began their 1953-5 “investigation of the mass medium of communication” with research into “so-called comic books” (United States Congress 2). Defining the scope of their investigation required the Subcommittee to ask “What are ‘comic books?’” Researching the question, the subcommittee found the term to be a misnomer: many were “neither humorous nor books” (2). Instead,

they are thin, 32-page pamphlets usually trimmed to 7 by 10 1/2 inches. Most of them sell for 10 cents a copy. They are issued monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, semiannually, or as one-time publications. They are wire-stitched in a glossy paper cover on which, in the crime and horror type, there has been printed in gaudy colours an often grim and lurid scene contrived to intrigue prospective purchasers into buying them. The inside pages contain from 3 to 5 stories told in pictures with balloon captions. The pictures are artists’ line drawings printed in color, intended to tell part of the story by showing the characters in action. (2)

The Subcommittee’s definition of comics includes some information peculiar to their inquiry and their context; as they acknowledge in the next paragraph, “not all comic books were considered in this investigation” (2). For example, most Canadian comic books of the 1940s were printed in black and white rather than color, and over the next few decades it would become increasingly less accurate to characterize American comics as containing three to five different stories.

However, the Subcommittee’s definition also distinguishes comic books from other objects with a physical description. That description—“pamphlets trimmed to roughly 7 by 10 1/2 inches and wire-stitched to a glossy paper cover”—describes the physical form that American comic books would by and large continue to have through the twentieth century. Even with the occasional use of stitching and gluing (“perfect binding” Sassienie 182) to replace staples, and with small fluctuations in standard size, comic books have continued to be much the same object into the twenty-first century—in the words of Charles Hatfield comic pages are still “roughly half-tabloid” (Hatfield 2005 4).

Comic books are material objects. In most cases in twentieth-century America, one of the three major sites of the format’s success,¹ they are periodicals printed on paper. This dissertation argues that the materiality of comics matters for reading comics. Specifically, comic book materiality changes how we understand both the value of texts and the meaning of value within those texts. Value in this case means both the semiotic portrayal of what is valuable and what is not, and the way that texts construct their own value—in all cases referring both to a fixed, monetary value and a less precise sense of value as importance. To demonstrate what I mean, I have chosen to look at four series—Carl Barks’ “Back to the Klondike”; *Richie Rich* as published by Harvey Comics; Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen*, and *Dubble Bubble Funnies*—in terms of the relationship between their fictional narratives and the materiality of the objects in which those texts are embodied. The first two of these objects gain a particular

¹ The other two major sites for the development of comics in the twentieth century are Japan and Francophone Europe (Beaty and Woo 14). The origin of comic books is in dispute and depends largely on the exact definition of “comic book,” and particularly on the significance of distribution method—as Thierry Groensteen suggests (Groensteen 2014 96), Japanese manga has a different set of definitions. What is indisputable is that late 1930s New York City saw the beginning of a publishing fad that would grow for decades, migrate to other media, and attain international significance. For the American explosion, see Howe 12 and Ricca 157. Duke 114-117 provides an American-only overview concentrating on growth from postwar sales of 60 million copies per month to 1977 sales of 200 million copies a year, over the entire American industry.

thematic significance for their portrayal of enormously wealthy characters in an enormously cheap context, a tension spread across the next two case studies which feature the remarkably acclaimed and often expensive *Watchmen*, and the distinctly inexpensive *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. I have found that all four of these postwar American comics present value in ways that readings can be deeply complicated by their materiality.

I follow the stance of Katherine Hayles in conceptualizing “materiality” as “the interplay between a text’s physical characteristics and its signifying strategies” (67). Therefore this dissertation presents four case studies in the signifying strategies of comics with particular physical characteristics. My method is primarily presenting detailed descriptions of physical characteristics, in the bibliographical description tradition of book history, and then building a set of possible readings that take those characteristics into account—in other words, what things might this object make a reader think about this story which would otherwise be obscured or absent. My methods—primarily bibliographic description but also distant reading derived from traditions of machine reading in the digital humanities—are reminiscent of Maurizio Boscagli’s “vitalist materialism,” which insists on the role of culture, suggesting a refinement suited for the analysis of literary texts: “Culture matters, as it provides a purchase on history, including material history, the history of matter itself, of subjects’ encounters with it and vice versa” (23). Boscagli’s vitalist materialism provides an explanation for the importance of studying the more traditional features of cultural material.

In the field of Book History, Roger Chartier has described a binary opposition between the hand of the author and the mind of the printer (the latter standing for the variety of later agents who intervene in a text’s materiality), suggesting that the tension between the text and its materiality is not to be neutralized by critical inquiry but rather studied in its particular

expression. In another vein, speaking more of the role of representation in scientific texts that figure the object as represented by science, Karen Barad argues that the discursive creation of the difference between subject and object is essential to the figuring of materiality. In the course of researching this dissertation I became aware of how often even basic descriptions of comics materiality—what they feel like, how big they are on a ruler—were missing from research and thus unable to be included in any form of analysis. These dimensions and their descriptions matter to me because they are the traces of the actions and ideas of the “printer” as they attempted to shape our view of materiality; they are the materiality of the printer. This dissertation is only one step towards accounting for materiality in the study of comics, and it is interested both in portrayals of value and the material incarnations of value.

This dissertation follows the observation of material cultural studies that material properties provide an additional set of meanings beyond what the objects symbolize. In this dissertation’s case studies, material properties (advertisements, autonomous installments of serialized stories, the presence of food, and circulation in a supermarket context) are a part of the fictional narrative in the comic and suggest exponentially more readings of the text’s portrayals of value than the ones that are only present in the text. This dissertation works by considering the relationship between an object’s materiality and narrative portrayal of value—and it works by comparing and contrasting representations with materializations.

Though this dissertation is interested in the materiality of representation, it should be said that the representation-focused field of comics is most in need of critical rematerializing. Rhetoric abstracting comics from their materiality is common in critical and popular discourse: editor Leslie Cabarga’s remark in a collection of reprinted comics that “What’s great about this book is we get to see the artwork in all its glory, unencumbered by off-register colours and bad

printing” (10) makes explicit the subtext of many critical studies of comics at this time. In this dissertation, I argue that such material features as off-register colours, bad printing, paper quality, advertisements, ephemeral seriality, and circulation in commercial contexts are an important part of understanding comic books and their associated forms. Comics have a material existence; in this study, I consider that material existence as something that needs to be understood not simply as signs of comics’ cheap production but in terms of the study of book history. That is, this dissertation undertakes to bring together comics studies and book history in order to consider the ways in which comics’ materiality participates in their production of meaning as texts for readers. To frame this discussion, I first outline a history of the comic book after a brief clarifying note regarding their relationship to ‘comics’ more generally; present overviews of Book History and Comic Studies, the two academic fields in which this inquiry takes place; and finally, outline my chapters.

What are Comics?

“Comics”—the thing frequently found within comic books—is a notoriously difficult term to define. Surveying the controversy, Thierry Groensteen sorted the range of theoretical perspectives into “essentialist” and “relativist” camps. The “essentialists” believe that comics can be described in such a way that some feature of the form—with “invariant distinctive features shared by all the works produced across the whole period” (Groensteen 2014 103)—defines comics and distinguishes them from other forms of art. As Groensteen is quick to point out, there is no agreement about what this essential feature is, with two influential perspectives being theorist-practitioner Scott McCloud’s idea of the sequence, and others, such as historian Robert

Harvey, who nominate the hybridization of images and words (Groensteen 2014 105)².

Essentialist definitions have as a recurring feature the tracing of comics backwards and the finding of comics' ancestors in the cave-paintings of Lascaux, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the Bayeux tapestry. Cultural critic Gershon Legman's 1949 claim that comics' "descent can be roughly seen in the bison-drawings of the cave-dwellers" and through Egyptian hieroglyphics, friezes, graffiti, tapestries, woodcuts, scrolls and paintings (Legman 29) is paradigmatic for popular and academic histories. In 1975, comic historian Ron Goulart humourously described this cliché: "You always get the history from at least the Middle Ages on; sometimes they take you all the way back to the cave paintings at Altamire" (9). Joyce Goggin and Dan Hassler-Forest have suggested that at a basic level "comics" are the assumption that two sequential images have more than an arbitrary relationship (1), giving "comics" an astonishingly long history. Scott McCloud, after tracing features back to ancient Egyptian paintings, admits that he has "NO IDEA WHERE OR **WHEN** COMICS ORIGINATED" (15), but mentions the Bayeux Tapestry, Aztec picture manuscripts, and Trajan's Column. James Danky and Dennis Kitchen mention "Goya, the Greek and Roman frescos, the Bayeux Tapestry, and the cave walls of Lascaux" (17). It is difficult to overlook both that these histories of comics both root the form in a long and storied history of importance, and also that they include objects generally not considered to be comics.

By contrast, relativist definitions such as those offered by Thierry Smolderen and Harry Morgan argue for a variety of "historic forms of comics, which are all equivalent from a theoretical point of view" (103). In this figuring the multiplicity of objects that have been called

² Ann Miller disagrees, arguing that while formalist analysis of comics has been unable to come up conclusively with a definition, the conversation centres around the idea of a hybrid form of words and images (152-153). In Groensteen's terms, Miller believes that this essentialist school is predominant.

comics—whether printed in newspapers, in pamphlets, on the internet, or on bubblegum wrappers— “are all equally valid... the researcher should confine him/herself to mapping out the multiple definitions that have been proposed” (103). However, Groensteen wisely raises the point that this “does not make it possible to situate the point where comics emerged as an autonomous medium” (104). Groensteen traces the lack of agreement between relativists and essentialists, and the lack of agreement as to the beginning of comics generally, to the fact that unlike such art forms as cinema, comics “does not use any technology that is specific to it as a medium” because it consists of a procedure of using words and images in a certain way, and “this difference renders the question of origins far more complex: do we know whether it is in fact possible to put a date on this procedure, and to give it a birth certificate at some point in the long history of narrative images?” (102).

One nominee for the time and place of comics’ birth reappears more frequently than others. Groensteen’s suggestion for a birth certificate—the self-published educational stories of Swiss teacher Rodolphe Töpffer, first circulated in 1827—is not unique. Indeed, elsewhere Francis Lacassin had already used the birth metaphor: “Comics were born around 1827, almost clandestinely. The birth took place in Switzerland, where the school master Töpffer circulated a hand-drawn album entitled *Les amours de M. Vieux Bois*, not published until ten years later” (41). Unlike Lacassin, for whom Töpffer is the first instance of the essential characteristics of comics (words inside images, varying angles, a page broken into many frames), for Groensteen the meaning of this publication is its social significance: though Töpffer named his work “les histoires en estampes” [stories in prints], before him there was no particular name that distinguished narrative pictures with text. Before Töpffer, Groensteen argues, comics “did not exist as a cultural object” (103). Resolving the question of origins and definitions by referring to

commonly agreed-upon cultural understandings may be somewhat circular (comics are what we call “comics” or something like “comics”), but it is appealing to studies such as this which are concerned with the materiality of publishing formats.

Due to my interest in describing the object as it has been understood, I follow Groensteen’s thinking, applying it to forms associated with the comics. My focus is primarily the standard comic book which exists as a periodical, the graphic novel/trade paperback which borrows the form of the book, and bubblegum wrappers. While my later chapters provide more detail about the graphic novel and its various physical forms, and the parallel history of the bubblegum wrapper, the comic books that form the subject of my first three chapters are predominant in American culture. In the United States, the area of my inquiry, and particularly in the middle of the twentieth century where most of my case studies originate, the cultural role of the comic book format is central, and a history of comics materiality in American culture is often a history of comic books.

A History of “Comics”—Papers, Strips, Sections, and Books

“Newspaper strips and comic books share many traits of visual language, such as the use of word balloons and captions placed within an image’s panel borders. So what, then, makes them different? It’s got to be more than just the staples, right?” — Chris Ryall and Scott Tipton

13

The stapled pamphlets described by the Subcommittee—standard American comic books—have their origins in three specific technological developments. The first is the industrialization of European print culture and the resulting rise in very cheap, large-run print periodicals. Phillip Gaskell describes the period from 1800 to 1950 as the “machine-press period” of printing (230) which made it possible for industrial presses to produce cheaper

products. The “Dime Novel” of mid-nineteenth-century America, an ancestor format for comic books via its descendant the pulp magazine, was notable partially for its cheap price, as the name implies (Davis 35), as was the “penny dreadful,” a booklet format that serialized long stories and sold for a penny beginning in mid-nineteenth century Britain (Anglo 11), and one particularly associated with younger readers (Kirkpatrick 5). While the Victorian shift toward large numbers of cheap periodicals is a trend within print culture, it has also been argued that print culture more generally supported a shift towards ephemerality beginning in the early modern period (Eisenstein 88-89). Comic books, as an extension of the magazine formats of the dime novel and penny dreadful as well as the newspaper, would represent a late stage of this shift towards ephemeral, cheap printing.

The second development allowing for comic books to take their twentieth-century form is the emergence of pulp paper, another nineteenth century innovation. The development of paper made from wood pulp rather than fabrics, between 1840 and 1850, accelerated the machine press’ ability to print cheaply (Katz 217). As Rob Banham notes, “paper made from esparto grass and wood pulp is not as strong as rag paper, but these substitute materials allowed virtually unlimited production of low-cost paper which greatly reduced the unit cost of books and other printed items” (274). According to Robert Kirkpatrick, the price of book-quality paper, one shilling and sixpence a pound in 1800, had reduced to two pence a pound by 1900 (Kirkpatrick 5). This also led to an ensuing explosion in the amount of waste paper generated by societies that used newsprint (Strasser 91). The developments of the machine-press and pulp paper functioned to ensconce print in the realm of mass consumption.

The final nineteenth century technology of particular importance to comic books was the wire stapler. As Philip Gaskell points out,

The stabbing of pamphlets was superseded in the later nineteenth century by wire stapling. Wire staplers were first introduced in about 1875 in detail of satisfactory book-sewing machines... unfortunately the staples soon rusted and became brittle. Consequently the book-stapling machines were generally replaced by sewing machines by the late 1880s; the stapling of pamphlets, however, had come to stay.

(234)

Staples, which existed alongside the ancestor formats of comic books, would eventually play a crucial role in physically and culturally distinguishing comic books from older, unstapled print formats such as the daily newspaper, and allying them with the sphere of pamphlets, autonomous and somewhat more permanent collections of paper.

Though it was technologically possible to create the modern comic book by the 1870s, comic books would emerge from a later cultural and commercial context. This context was rooted in nineteenth-century periodical culture. Richard Noakes has noted the early nineteenth-century history in British periodicals of “comic journalism”:

These included the weekly satirical print issues by engravers...; cheap radical satirical journals of the 1810s and 1820s, such as the *Age* and *Satirist*; literary magazines with humorous content, such as *Fraser's Magazine* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; miscellanies that included comic material, such as the *Mirror* and *Bentley's Miscellany*; expensive journals of genteel humour including Thomas Hood's *Comic Annual* and George Cruikshank's *Comic Almanack*; and above all, the cheap satirical weeklies of the 1830s—such as *Figaro in London... Punch in London...*and the Paris-based *Le Charivari*.

(96)

In all of these, Noakes notes, “cartoons” and “vignette illustrations” were stock elements (96). “Cartoons”—a reference to the preliminary sketches, used as models, of early modern fresco painting, which were called *cartones* in Italian—were typically humorous and appropriate for the publications that included them, which described themselves as “comic papers” and “comic weeklies” (Noakes 98). This adjectival use of the term “comic” would eventually result in the “comic book,” and therefore the comic journalism of the mid nineteenth century is an ancestor of the concept of the comic book.

Thierry Smolderen has suggested that the visual culture of the late nineteenth century was the “crucible of comics” in that “new ways of seeing” enabled by cultural and technological change provided imitative examples for cartoons. Rather than treating such phenomena as x-rays, the kinetoscope, Japonism, daguerrotypes, or the microscope each as an “autonomous sphere, each with its own structure of interpretation and expertise, cartoonists set about integrating these innovations into the common language of visual signs” (Smolderen 2014 48). While Smolderen is invested in the effect of such cartoons on all visual culture, Lynda Nead has noted this turn-of-the-century culture’s heavy visual engagement with motion, and the eventual arrival of the sequence in comics in approximately the same period finds a powerful resonance in Nead’s discussion of the “strip” of film and the use of film to reveal the human body in motion, scientifically and pornographically (Nead 171-197). The visual style of the comic “strip,” including the key element of a sequence of pictures, emerged out of the complexity of late Victorian visual culture.

In the late nineteenth century Anglophone world, weekly humour magazines such as *Puck*³ and *Judge*⁴ were called “comic weeklies” or “comics” for short (Harvey 17). In such magazines the sequential cartoon stories were called “comic series” (Groensteen 2014 93). In Great Britain, this development led quickly to autonomous publications of reprinted cartoons— for example *Comic Cuts*,⁵ a name which drew on the “large cuts” or centerfold illustrations of earlier comic weeklies (Noakes 94). The term “cuts” is presumably derived from “woodcuts,” since “the infrequent periodical illustrations of the 1860s and early 1870s were woodcuts” (Johanningsmeier 331). In America, newspapers of the 1890s—notably publisher Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World* and publisher William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal* (Reitberger and Fuchs 12)—began to imitate the comic weeklies by including a full-colour Sunday supplement of such cartoons, using colour as a consumer inducement over the black-and-white weeklies (Harvey 17). According to historian and artist Jerry Robinson,

The drama began in 1893, when Pulitzer bought a Hoe four-color rotary press in an attempt to print famous works of art for the Sunday supplement of his *New York World*. This effort was not successful, and the press was used instead to reproduce large drawings. (12)

³ First published in New York City in September 1876 as a German-language publication (*Puck Illustrirte Humoristisches Wochenblatt*) *Puck* (in an English-language edition beginning March 14, 1877) was a politically conservative, pro-Democratic Party magazine which ran until September 1918 when then-owner William Randolph Hearst “transferred its good name to the Sunday comic section of his many newspapers” (Kahn and West 11-15).

⁴ First published on October 29 1881, *Judge* was founded by cartoonists from *Puck* and became a staunchly pro-Republican paper for decades (Mott 552).

⁵ *Comic Cuts*, first published on 17 May 1890 as a halfpenny reprint magazine, ran until 1953 (Sassienie 12).

Pulitzer began to publish a color humour supplement in 1894 (Nasaw 108). The anecdote about Pulitzer's (automated, steam-driven)⁶ rotary press⁷ suggests the importance of relatively lavish color reproduction in the concept of the comics supplement. Historian Robert Harvey points out that this innovation followed a history of newspaper supplements and even colour newspaper supplements, but was specifically new because it focused on comics, even though most were single captioned images (18). Hearst called his eight-page inducement—which first appeared on October 25, 1896 (Nasaw 108)—a ‘Comic supplement’, and “most of the other major daily newspapers followed in his footsteps: there was a rash of ‘Comic supplements’ and ‘Comic sections’ nationwide” (Groensteen 2014 93). The comic supplements would provide the immediate frame in which the regular newspaper comic strip would be created in the mid-1890s.

In the United States, imitation and competition between newspapers in the 1890s led to the development of recurring cartoon narratives. Richard Outcault's “Hogan's Alley” series of cartoons, beginning in 1895, had as the most prominent recurring character the Yellow Kid—and Christina Meyer has argued that the Kid's reappearance in (and eventually outside of) the strips was a key part of the success of this “comic figure” (293). Eventually the recurring form of single image cartoons became sequential within each installment, producing tiers or “strips” of “comics,” possibly first used as a regular feature in Rudolph Dirks' December 1897 *Katzenjammer Kids* (Harvey 28; Reitberger and Fuchs 12). The precise date of linguistic slippage between “comic supplement” and “comic strips” and “the comics” is unclear, but as Groensteen notes, by the early 20th century the adjective “comic” migrated from the “comic

⁶ Johanningsmeier 331.

⁷ R. Hoe & Company had introduced the rotary press in 1847, vastly increasing printing speeds: “A power rotary could print from 12,000 to 16,000 sections, not simply sheets” a day (Katz 218).

journalism” of the 1850s to become a noun for cartoons, regardless of genre (Groensteen 2014 94).

The early comic strips were still embedded in the context of newspaper publication and would remain so commercially until 1929. Though the “strip” development led to the 1907 advent of “Bud” Fisher’s *Mr. A. Mutt*, “the first successful strip to appear in daily instalments” (Reitberger and Fuchs 15), the strip, about a racetrack gambler, appeared in the sports pages of the *San Francisco Chronicle* rather than a distinct “comics” section (McDonnell, O’Connell, and de Havenon 45). While the Sunday papers had comics in a particular section, comics in the daily newspapers were generally scattered throughout the paper (Walker 28), and did not begin to appear on a regular schedule until Fisher’s strip (Holtz 14). Despite the existence of comic sections, the “comics” were not yet autonomous.

White and Abel identify the origin of comics as “capitalist competition—the newspaper feud between Hearst and Pulitzer” (42). The comics supplement’s flourishing was driven by competition with the comic weeklies and with other newspapers. From 1896 until 1929, these supplements were exclusively packaged with newspapers but were also physically and conceptually distinguished from the rest of the newspaper, to the extent that some supplements had different titles than the newspapers they came with.⁸ For example, Hearst’s Sunday comics supplement—called a “color comic weekly” in advertising (Robinson 26)—was titled *American Humorist* (Nasaw 108). Pulitzer’s *New York World* supplement was, by 1900, called the *Funny Side* (Robinson 47). In this stage, the “funny papers” were distinct from the “news papers” not

⁸ Others were conceived of as part of the newspaper, for example *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, in which the comics of 1906 appeared in either “part four, comic,” or the “comic section” (Robinson 66-67).

due to a material difference but because of their content: they contained “the funnies” (synonymous with “the comics”) instead of “the news.”⁹

The earliest reprints of comic strips drew the comics away from the newspaper sphere by taking the material form of a book: printed pages were folded into signatures and then bound within covers to create more expensive, durable, and autonomous objects. While a 1911 collection of *Mutt and Jeff*¹⁰ strips “in an 18 x 6 inch landscape book, available by sending in six coupons clipped from the newspaper” the *Chicago American* is often positioned as the first comic book (Sassienie 13), the term and the object are slightly older: a 1902 advertisement for cardboard-cover books reprinting newspaper strips described them as “comic-books” (Goulart 2001 8). Comic books, in the sense of books reprinting comic strips, existed throughout the next three decades. Variations arose such as the Whitman Publishing Company’s Big Little Books, first created in 1932, in which “the text was based on the narrative of the comic strip sequence being adapted; the pictures were actual panels from the strip” (Goulart 2001 16). It also seems plausible that in this period comic supplements were sold second-hand as autonomous objects.

Though the name “comic book” came from the format of book reprints, the modern form of the comic book came from experiments with the Sunday supplements. In 1929 pulp publisher Dell Publishing (Wright 3) released *The Funnies*, a tabloid-sized Sunday newspaper supplement that was sold alone—and importantly, stapled as a separate item from the newspaper (Sassienie 13). Eastern Color Printing of Waterbury, Connecticut, was a printer of comics supplements for several East Coast newspapers (as well as *The Funnies*), and became the site of key innovations

⁹ The phrase is also evocative of the “story papers,” another name for the more respectable “penny dreadfuls” in the United Kingdom, and the “illustrated weeklies,” the illustrated weekly newspapers following the model of the *Illustrated London News* after 1842 (Korda 19).

¹⁰ The eventual title of “Bud” Fisher’s *Mr. A. Mutt* strip mentioned above.

in the 1930s.¹¹ Sales employees at Eastern conceived of using supplements on their own as premiums—inducements offered with the purchase of an unrelated product—and, according to Bradford W. Wright, discovered that “the standard seven-by-nine-inch printing plates, used to print Sunday comic pages about twice that size, could also print two reduced comic pages side-by-side on a tabloid-sized page. When folded in half and bound together, these pages would fit into an economical eight-by-eleven inch pulp magazine of color comics” (3). The size of the resulting magazine is significant, because as Wright’s language implies, contemporary pulp periodicals were approximately the same size (Lefèvre 76). In the early 1930s Eastern Color created premiums in this magazine format for companies such as Gulf Oil’s *Gulf Funny Weekly* (Goulart 2004 181) and Proctor & Gamble’s *Funnies on Parade* (Harvey 17). Eastern salesman Max Gaines eventually conceived of selling the pamphlets directly to children (Wright 2). In 1934 *Famous Funnies*, a premium for Woolworth’s department stores reprinting newspaper comic strips, appeared instead on newsstands (Ryall and Tipton 13).

Despite this important physical autonomy from the newspaper, these early comic books reprinted newspaper comic strips and had yet to take their final step toward being an original format. However, one illicit product was anomalously ahead of the trend: beginning in the late 1920s, smaller pamphlets—“pocket-sized pornographic stories featuring celebrities in hard-core action” (Gluckson 143) using the comics form to tell original stories—began to circulate through American “newsstands, cigar stores, second-hand bookstores, bars, and burlesque houses” (146) from an unknown origin. These “Tijuana Bibles”—also called “Eight-Pagers,” “Eight-Page

¹¹ As scholar Michael Barrier has pointed out, most information about the 1933 advent of the comic book comes from then-sales manager Harry Wildenberg’s 1949 recollections of events. In the standard account, salesmen M.C. Gaines and Lev Gleason loom large. In Goulart’s interpretation (2004 144), Gaines and Gleason conceptualized the two-printed-pages-per-sheet idea and Wildenberg figured out how to execute it. Because Gaines was deceased by 1949, Barrier suggests Wildenberg’s account might be somewhat unreliable. Wildenberg is consistently credited with the idea of comic books as premiums.

Bibles,” “Bluesies,” “Jo-Jo Books” or simply “dirty comics” (Gluckson 143)—are mysterious but, according to Bob Adelman, contain the first comics stories originating in the pamphlet form (28).

In a subtle transition completed by the later 1930s, mainstream comic books had begun to rely on original material, though they were still subordinate to comic strips: David Hajdu cites Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, the publisher of National Allied Publications, who told a writer, “I see these magazines more or less as brochures to interest the newspaper syndicates in an idea. It’s much easier to sell a comic strip if you can show it in already published form” (quoted in Hajdu 20). According to illustrator Creig Flessel, Wheeler-Nicholson ran out of sample strips and began soliciting original work (Hajdu 21), sometime in 1935. National Allied Publication’s 1935 *New Fun: The Big Comic Magazine* #1 was “the first comic book consisting entirely of original content instead of reprints of newspaper strips” (Meskin and Cook xxii). Four months later, *New Fun* would be retitled *More Fun*, and boast in a first-page editorial that “everything between these covers is BRAND NEW, never before published” (quoted in Goulart 2001 47). While reprinting continued as a practice, the idea that comic books were primarily subordinate to the real business of newspaper comic strip syndicates would wane over the 1930s.

There is evidence that in the 1930s in America, when comic books became primarily newsstand publications, comic books were considered a business venture between newspaper strip syndicates and pulp magazine publishers. Ron Goulart suggests that original comic stories began to appear in pulp magazines as early as 1934 with *Spicy Detective*’s “Sally the Sleuth” and *Spicy Adventure*’s “Diana Daw” (Goulart 2004 284).¹² Wright notes that many early comic book publishers were “pulp” publishers (so-called for their use of cheap wood pulp paper) and branded

¹² Much like the Spicy pulp genre itself, *Sally the Sleuth* and *Diana Daw* were also pornographic, though much less so than the Tijuana bibles.

their comic books in the manner of pulp magazines (2)—and comic books were sold using the same distribution system as pulp magazines, the newsstand. Many early comic books are extremely physically reminiscent of pulp periodicals, and not only in their size. For example, Timely Publications' *Marvel Comics* began with a cover design similar to pulp magazine *Uncanny Tales* from the same publisher (Figures 1 and 2). The *Marvel Comics* logo was soon changed to resemble magazine *Marvel Science Stories*, again from the same publisher (Figures 3 and 4). The similarity of branding suggests that comic books were initially seen (at least by publishers) as a pulp magazine genre. In these two examples, the Marvel brand distinguishes between their “stories/tales” and their “comics,” or, to look at it another way, between prose and comics. Blake Bell and Michael Vallasso have argued that an understanding of Marvel Comics requires an understanding of the pulp operations undertaken by the same publisher (8), but in a larger sense I would argue that the specific materiality of comic books emerges out of the context of pulp magazine publication. As Jean-Paul Gabilliet puts it, for comics “the development of a specific identity was also mediated by pulp magazines” (13).

After the 1938 appearance of Superman in National's *Action Comics* #1, American comic books saw an explosion of titles and an almost-total switch to original material. Despite the fact that by the 1940s most comic books were neither reprints of comic strips nor featured characters originating in comic strips, and that a substantial number of the most popular comic books were not comedic in nature, the name “comic book” persisted. Furthermore, the “book” half of “comic book” persisted despite comics' more obvious status as magazines. Aside from the fact that most comic book publishers were magazine publishers, comic books circulated using the newsstand distribution system already in place for magazines, and, as Michael Feldman notes, in the United States they were legally magazines for the purpose of mailing (17).

The idea of books and magazines, often in seeming contraction to each other, is frequently invoked in comic book paratext after the physical form had stabilized in the 1940s. While earlier language had been inchoate—a 1936 advertisement for the forthcoming *Detective Comics* referred to it as a “narrative-cartoon magazine in the comic field” (Goulart 2001 54)—American comic books from the 1940s and later are more likely to refer to themselves as magazines or books, for example in the phrase “The World’s Greatest Comic Magazine,” an intermittent part of the *Fantastic Four*¹³ logo since 1962 (Figure 5).

Despite their declared magazine status, however, comic books from the 1950s and 60s also frequently make paratextual reference to “book-length” stories (that take up the entire pamphlet). One example is the blurb on DC Comics’ *Showcase*¹⁴ #61, promising a “book-length” story (Figure 6). Some comic books do both, as on the cover of *Fantastic Four* #12 (March, 1963), in which the world’s greatest comic magazine presents a book-length epic (Figure 7). These invocations of bookness, sitting oddly with mentions of periodicals, should also be seen in light of comic books’ efforts to present themselves as worthy of the cultural acclaim bestowed on books, an argument made overtly in the editorial which appeared in Marvel’s *Venus* #4, cover-dated¹⁵ April 1949 (Figure 8).

In this polemic, the editors liken the cultural position of comic books in 1949 to that of the novel in “the 18th century,” invoking the pro-novelistic stance of Samuel Johnson to liken twentieth-century critics of comic books to “the people who called Robinson Crusoe ‘slop’.”

¹³ Created by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee for Marvel Comics in 1961.

¹⁴ Running from 1956 until 1970, *Showcase* in this period featured the character of the Spectre, written by Gardner Fox and drawn by Murphy Anderson.

¹⁵ Throughout this dissertation I discuss a great variety of issues by cover date. Generally in this period comics were cover-dated three months in the future, the cover date being the last month retailers should have sold the comics. If you want to know the actual month a comic would have appeared on newsstands, subtracting three months is a good rule of thumb.

While comic books were physically and legally a kind of magazine, they could aspire to the status of being, like the novel, a kind of book. This is itself a reaction to the positioning of comic books as distinctly worse than other media. Scholars have noted that in American culture, comic books have long been associated with harmful, poor quality.¹⁶ Sometimes this referred to their physical quality: the same issue of *More Fun Comics* in 1935 that proclaimed “all new material” also boasted that “all the pictures, type, and lettering are clear and legible... no eyestrain” (quoted in Goulart 2001 47).¹⁷ At other times it was simply their cultural positioning: in a chart of “everyday tastes” printed in a 1949 issue of *Life* magazine, comic books appear (along with pulps) as the only named “low-brow” reading materials (Travis 349). By far the greater focus of anti-comics discourse was their supposedly immoral contents, with the most notable moral panic beginning in the late 1940s. With the physical format of comic books stabilized, their cultural place would undergo significant shifts in the context of the widespread belief that comics were undeserving of the status of literature.

The Association of Comics Magazine Producers, an association of publishers, was formed in 1948 in the context of a Supreme Court decision (*Winters v. New York*) ruling that the regulation of violent content in the media “ultimately remains the responsibility of the media industries and their self-regulatory bodies” (Nyberg 39). The failure of the ACMP to self-regulate led directly to critiques of the industry by politicians, lawyers, psychologists, and

¹⁶ Unlike comic strips, which were held in some regard due to their popularity with adults, comic books’ association with children left them vulnerable to criticism (Smith and Duncan xiii). In the words of Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester: “Although some readers [in the 1920s] continued to object to the content of individual strips, the cultural status of newspaper strips stabilized over time, particularly in relation to comic books” (xi).

¹⁷ Goulart makes the case that this advertising was connected to the poor quality of earlier reprints such as *Famous Funnies*, noting that in such magazines “Sunday pages usually ran at one-fourth of their intended newspaper size” (2001 20), but the point remains that comic books were still overtly attempting to establish their quality as reading materials.

journalists, most notably surrounding the Senate Subcommittee hearings mentioned above.

Historian Mariah Adin offers the case of the Brooklyn Thrill-Kill Gang—in which four teenage boys, readers of comic books, committed assaults and eventually a murder for no obvious reason during the summer after the Subcommittee hearings—as an example of how general discourse about juvenile delinquency seized on comic books as a particularly odious example of media influences:

What made comic books distinctive from these other forms of mass media is that they were a genre whose audience (by and large) did not include adults. Even worse, unlike television, which typically sat in the family living room, or public movie theatres, comic books were cheaply accessible, easily hidden, and therefore often existed outside of parental purview (106).

While many historians (see Nyberg, Hajdu, Adin, and Beaty) have complicated the historiography of the “Great Comic Book Scare” of 1947-1955, all agree that the resolution, in which the American comic book industry agreed to regulate itself with the Comics Code Authority board of approval, represented the producers of comic books agreeing that they were ultimately “specialty items for adolescent boys and collectors” (Hajdu 330) rather than literature.

In the 1960s, cartoonists began producing comics outside of the mainstream comic book industry. Called the “undergrounds” because of their resemblance to and associations with the “underground” independent newspapers¹⁸ such as the *San Francisco Free Press* and the *East Village Others* (Danky and Kitchen 17), the underground comics (or “comix” to further

¹⁸ “While the term ‘underground press’ suggests an illegal, hidden status, these papers were generally not covert publications in the same sense as papers put out by the French Resistance under Nazi occupation, or Russian samizdat. Rather the term expressed a sense of opposition and advocacy... the term expressed that such material was subversive” (Garvey 393); “The *Los Angeles Free Press* was the first underground paper to publish on a sustained basis, beginning in 1964” (Garvey 394).

differentiate them from the “straight” industry) enabled creators to circulate their work outside the strictures of the Code. The size and format of comix varied wildly, from photocopied zines to magazine-format comics to comic books. The underground distribution system, in which publications were sold wholesale rather than on a returnable basis, became the “direct market” in the 1970s because periodicals were purchased directly from the publisher rather than a distributor (Hatfield 2005 22).¹⁹ Charles Hatfield notes the appearance of increasingly ambitious comic book stories in this period, particularly in the “alternative” comics industry of independent direct market publishers which followed the undergrounds, and traces the origin of the “graphic novel” concept to this market situation: the graphic novel “owes its life to the direct market’s specialized conditions” (2005 30). As Emma Tinker notes, the phrase “graphic novel” first appeared in 1964 in a fanzine essay by Richard Kyle, but is most often traced to cartoonist Will Eisner,²⁰ “who used it in 1978 to describe his *A Contract With God*” (1171). In terms of size and content, however, the products of this period were not necessarily direct forerunners of the more general term “graphic novel”—for example, the *American Splendor* comics of Harvey Pekar, published annually since 1976, are self-published, magazine sized chronicles of Pekar’s own life (Witek 121). The development of the “graphic novel,” the most notable change in the cultural place of comic books, was due to the two “economic and institutional factors” of the direct market and challenges to the Comics Code Authority (Weiner 3).

¹⁹ As Hatfield notes, “... this crucial transitional period [the late 1960s to mid 1970s] remains thinly documented... it remains difficult to show precisely how much underground and mainstream comic books overlapped in these early shops” (2005 21). Jean-Paul Gabilliet nominates Marvel’s *Micronauts* (1979-1984) as a key transitional series because with issue #38, February 1982, it became exclusively sold via the direct market (144). While this may make the series pivotal as a transitional point, it was not the first to be sold only to specialty shops: that was Marvel’s *Dazzler* with its first issue in 1981 (Goulart 2001 298).

²⁰ Paul Williams and James Lyons discuss the reason why “*A Contract with God* soaked up such acclaim for bringing the ‘graphic novel’ into the English-speaking world,” concluding that Eisner, who claimed to have invented the phrase, was making an honest mistake, but that his status within the comic world has led to a debate over the origin of the “graphic novel” (xiv-xv).

The key moment in the popular uptake of the concept and phrase “graphic novel” is usually taken²¹ to be the appearance of three works in the mid-1980s: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen*, published in a collected form in 1987; Frank Miller’s *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* collected in 1986; and underground cartoonist Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale Volume I: My Father Bleeds History*, also in 1986. While all three of these texts were originally serialized, journalists and publishers seized on the concept of longer-form, more expensive, and more complex storytelling, even if this was somewhat deceptive: the term’s “adoption by comics creators and publishers’ marketing teams in the 1980s represented little more than the lucrative repackaging of comics to appeal to an audience more comfortable with book-length works of fiction” (Tinker 1171). As Charles Hatfield points out, the term “graphic novel” continues to be more of a marketing category than a genre: “a graphic novel can be almost anything: a novel, a collection of interrelated or thematically similar stories, a memoir, a travelogue or journal, a history, a series of vignettes or lyrical observations, an episode from a longer work—you name it” (2005 5).²² In Hatfield’s words, the primary significance of the “graphic novel” is that it is “a recognizable commodity within bookstores” (2005 30). In a sense the significance of the “graphic novel” is precisely the expansion of comics from newspaper and magazine formats sold on newsstands to a book format sold in bookstores.

In other words, the graphic novel has a marker of distinction which the comic book does not. In the words of Julia Round, the phrase invokes “notions of permanence, literariness, and artistry” (2010 14). As Douglas Wolk points out, the phrase “graphic novel” “implies that the

²¹ For invocations of the so-called “big three,” see Tinker 1171, Imray 127, Hatfield 2005 29, Meskin and Cook xxiv, and Hoberek 8.

²² As Casey Brienza points out, in the early to mid 1990s the term “graphic novel” was also applied to reprints of Japanese manga, under a marketing theory that only Japanese culture stripped of “Japaneseness” succeeds in the United States (107).

graphic novel is serious in a way that the lowly comic book isn't", which he notes makes the concept "open to being co-opted" by creators and publishers (63). In this sense, the branding of comic books as "graphic novels" is the taste-creating strategy of the *petit bourgeoisie* described by Pierre Bourdieu: "What makes middle-brow culture is the middle-class relation to culture—mistaken identity, misplaced belief, *allodoxia*" (327)—the last term meaning the application of old categories (in this case "the novel") to new situations (expensive reprints of comic books).²³

Robert Hutton also uses Bourdieu's work to explain that "this shift could be described in Bourdieu's terms as a change from a committed mode of production centred on characters and brands to an autonomous one centred on individual artistic expression" (40-41). Rather than seeing the "graphic novel" as a struggle against corporatism, Hutton's use of Bourdieu serves as a reminder that the more "art-like" comics are positioning themselves differently within the same cultural field. Nevertheless, Paul Lopes' earlier work with Bourdieu cautions against ascribing only one strategy to the eclectic realm of the "graphic novel": Lopes perceives both a "highbrow" strategy of literary merit (exemplified by *Maus*) and a "middlebrow" or even "lowbrow" "popular genre" strategy as seen in *Watchmen* (Lopes *passim*). The "graphic novel" label also pragmatically obscures the distinction between fiction and nonfiction: the epitomal *Maus*, and many of the most popular "graphic novels," are not novels, unlike *Watchmen*. The use of Bourdieu's ideas illuminates how clearly the use of the "graphic novel" is an attempt to position certain comics within a larger field of cultural production; that is, as worthy of critical acclaim and existing as expensive commodities. Intriguingly, collections of comic *strips* originally printed in newspapers (or increasingly, on the Internet) are often classified as works of

²³ Bart Beaty and Benjamin Woo argue that the reception of Japanese *manga* in America constitutes *allodoxic* reception in Bourdieu's sense (118), but a geographic misunderstanding rather than temporal.

the Humour genre rather than “graphic novels” despite their physical similarity to the “graphic novel” and wildly divergent subject matter.

In the present, comic books and newspaper comic strips continue to exist, but they now exist in a culturally subordinate relationship to the graphic novel, to the extent that some distinguishing language is necessary. Though fans also call comic books “issues” (language borrowed from magazines) and “floppies” (by contrast with sturdier collected editions), and the term “booklets” has also been used, in this dissertation I use the word “pamphlet” to distinguish this physical format from the other forms in which comics appear. The “comic book,” as a physical object (a pamphlet of comics, folded and affixed together) never substantially changed: *Action Comics* #1001, July 2018, meets the Senate Subcommittee’s definition as closely as does its ancestor *Action Comics* #1, printed eighty years earlier.

Method: materiality and text

In each case study, my method has been to juxtapose a material description of an object or a series of objects that contain comics with the narrative text of these comics. With this juxtaposition, I consider different ways readers might be affected by this interaction. My reason for considering both elements of equal importance is an attempt to answer a critique offered by Bill Brown of the “material turn” in the humanities since the 1990s. In his description of the material turn, in which the study of “object culture”—“the objects through which a culture constitutes itself” (2010 62)—has become prominent, Brown points out that literary studies typically focus on literary representations of this object world, rather than the way that texts themselves appear in the form of objects and thus are examples of, rather than simply reflections of, the material world. In Brown’s telling this is a criticism “in the thrall, let us say, of an object (say a novel) that, utterly consumable and disposable as it is, works to establish itself not beyond

the market, but beyond the laws of decay, precisely by holding the decaying object world within a kind of stasis, as though transfixing it in amber” (2010 65). Brown’s own work follows this trend: his 1996 *The Material Unconscious* begins with the mission statement that he will be using the work of novelist Stephen Crane to look at the 1890s in which Crane wrote, “because literature has the capacity to preserve (however marginally) residues of phenomena that remain in some sense unrecognizable (if not unrepresentable) in our existing historiographic genres. Within literature the detritus of history lingers, lying in wait” (1996 4).

It is my contention that the field of Comics Studies closely resembles the field of literary studies as described by Bill Brown, as will be seen in my overview of Comics Studies. However, the interdisciplinary field of Book History, which holds promise for analyzing the material dimension of comics, goes curiously unmentioned by Brown. Curious because, in its focus on the material embeddedness of texts, it would seem to partially answer the shortcoming that Brown sees in studies of material representation. To further position this dissertation in each field, I will now present an overview of Comics Studies followed by one of Book History.

Comics Studies

In the words of Jake Jakaitis and James F. Wurtz, “generally speaking, the scholarship of comics is a nascent field” (1). This statement resonates with the fact that “Comics Studies is a liminal field, defined by the unresolved nature of its very object of study”— it has “been an ad-hoc phenomenon, a field generated not by institutional mandate but by the eager scurrying of independent actors, opportunistically seeking niches here and there in which they can study this neglected art form and its culture” (Hatfield 2017 xi). Comics Studies is a nascent field not only because of the recent appearance of its subject—though “arguably younger than literature, certainly older than moving pictures... [comics] have received less critical attention than either,

and more importantly they are the only one of the three media not to have an academic discipline devoted to it” (Berliner, Ecke, and Haberkorn 1)—but also nascent as a formal American academic field due to the influences of many other academic disciplines, most prominently art history, cultural studies, and literary studies—and the influence of fandom outside academia.

Because comics began as a mass medium, the academic study of comics in the United States began with a focus on popular reactions to newspaper comics. Comics’ status as a new late-Victorian commercial product intended for mass circulation led many early reactions positioning comics as inherently representative of modern popular culture, with many focusing on comics’ distinctive combination of text and images. In a 1906 article in *The Atlantic* magazine, critic Ralph Bergengren noted that the strip “is not humour, but simply a supply created in answer to a demand, hastily produced by machine methods and hastily accepted by editors too busy with other editorial duties to examine it intelligently” (10). Bergengren’s critique, focusing on the speed at which comics are produced, is epitomical in that it associates comics with modernity. Later critics would see also comics as representative of a specifically American modernity: the relatively respectable status of comic strips in the United States led to a series of “behind the scenes” studies in the 1930s and 40s (Heer and Worcester xiii), including titles such as W.A. Murrell’s 1933 *A History of American Graphic Humor*. At the same time, comic books were immensely popular among specifically young Americans: as Carol L. Tilley (2013) notes, drawing on 1940s sources:

In the United States, the free voluntary readings of comics by young people, as determined through both market and educational research, reached its apex in the 1940s and 1950s. During these years, more than ninety percent of elementary-aged students and

perhaps more than eighty-percent of high school-aged students read comic books regularly (cf Armstrong 1944; Kessler 1948; Sones 1947). (14)

This fact meant that the first organized studies of comic books were driven by educators and sociologists. Tilley (2017) outlines several 1930s and 40s theses written by teachers in training (5-7), noting that discussion of comics as pedagogical tools began in 1910 (3); she also names sociologist Harvey Zorbaugh as one of the “chief advocates for comics as education tools” in the 1940s (7), and who ultimately organized the Workshop on the Cartoon Narrative at New York University, the earliest formal comics studies program (8-9). Zorbaugh’s 1949 article “What Adults Think of Comics as Reading For Children” indicates that his method was primarily driven by statistical surveys to establish actual public opinion. These major themes—popular culture, American culture, and commercial children’s culture—would determine the ways that formal academic Comics Studies has constituted itself across academic disciplines.

Sociological interest in comics could be seen to swell during the “Comics Scare” of the 1940s-50s, to which Zorbaugh’s survey work was an explicit response (Zorbaugh 225). Psychiatrist Fredric Wertham was a notable participant—“the figurehead for the charge against comic books who warned America of their dangerous nature” in the words of Christina Blanch and Thalia Mulvihill (36)—in the “Comics Scare” for his many public conjectures about the (negative) role of comics in the cultural lives of his patients (Nyberg, Hajdu, and Adin *passim*). The ensuing devaluing of comic books meant that newspaper comic strips remained the more respectable face of comics. The title of David Manning White and Robert H. Abel’s 1963 *The Funnies: An American Idiom* is representative of a more positive sociological impulse at the time: White and Abel position their study as an answer to the question “What do the comic strips tell us about American culture?” (vii). This line of study would lead to works such as Arthur Asa

Berger's American Studies dissertation, published in book form in 1970 and the first book concerning a single comic strip, of which Berger states (in a 1994 afterword):

I was astonished at the fact that a text such as *Li'l Abner*, that was read each day by hundreds of millions of people, was virtually ignored by critics, though there were some random articles on the strip written by sociologists and other scholars. I saw an elitist bias at the basis of this situation and asked a question in my book that has continued to interest me: "why is popular culture so unpopular?" Comics were useful, critics suggested at the time, only for one reason—to wrap garbage. (177)

In fact the first PhD in Comics Studies had already been granted to Sol Davidson of New York University for his 1958 dissertation "Culture and the Comic Strips," arguably the first work of Comics Studies. In his conclusion, Davidson notes that he has examined the strip "as a means of communication, as an art form, as the folklore of today" (962), foreshadowing the future major strands of comic studies—though to Davidson all these aspects are secondary to the fact that "the comic strip is essentially a form of entertainment" (965). Though he seems to have been simply unaware of Davidson, Berger's point is fundamentally sound, in that it would be some time before the academic study of comics became remotely frequent.

At the same time about which Berger is writing, the 1960s, an increasingly organized comics fandom continued to take comics very seriously, and provided the other trajectory for their appearance in American academia. The first fan publication about comic books was 1952's *The Story of Superman*, mimeographed by a fan named Ted White (Goulart 2001 338). The 1965 volume *The Great Comic Book Heroes* by cartoonist and fan Jules Feiffer is the first single volume professionally published in the United States about comic books, while 1970's *All in Color for a Dime* edited by Dick Lupoff and Don Thompson collects articles written for fanzines

in the 1960s. The work of fans in performing historical research—most notably in assembling bibliographies and interviewing practitioners—remains foundational to academic Comics Studies, including this dissertation: a history of Harvey Comics would be nigh-impossible to assemble if not for the work of fan historian Mark Arnold in his ‘zine *The Harveyville Fun Times!* (first published in 1990). Furthermore, despite the tension between academic and fannish ways of knowing (Smith and Duncan 2017 xv), “the standard narrative of the history of the format is based primarily on the work of fans, and that perspective has been hard to escape” (Puszt 201). The work of fans, and their interest in learning “the truth behind the work” (Beaty 113), bears a strong resemblance to later academic work in their interest in evaluating and analyzing comic books from years earlier, but it would be fans of the then-current comics of the 1960s who would have the greatest impact on Comics Studies as they became academics.

Publisher Stan Lee claimed in 1967 that the Marvel comics he was printing were being used in a dozen English Literature courses but as Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner note, the first accredited university course on comics was the one taught by fan Michael Uslan at Indiana University “in the early 1970s” (Syma and Weiner 4).²⁴ Uslan’s course was sponsored by the Department of Folklore at the University, and fans seem to have been more inclined to treat comics as expressions of modern mythology (see Weiner 2017 12-13), in a way that parallels the sociological interest in comics as representative of (or causing) cultural trends. Prominent literary critic Leslie Fielder remarked in a 1955 essay that “... the comic books... are seen as inheritors, for all their superficial differences, of the inner impulses of traditional folk

²⁴ The exact date of Uslan’s course is surprisingly difficult to establish: Syma and Weiner cite, as is common, “the early 1970s”, but mention that Uslan also “wrote one of the very first textbooks on comics, *The Comic Book in America* (1971).” Elsewhere Weiner quotes a 1974 article by Uslan giving the date of the first accredited only-comics course as 1972, but also takes note of a 2011 memoir by Uslan describing a course the year previous, taught in an experimental program within Indiana University (Weiner 2017 13).

art” (Fielder 126), one of these impulses presumably being the way that they reflected contemporary culture. In a 1971 article for the *New York Times Magazine*, Saul Brown emphasizes the “relevant” nature of comic books by referencing a proposed course prospectus at Brown University that “sets out the case for comic books as Native Art” and relates that “an Ivy League student was once quoted as telling [Stan Lee], ‘We think of Marvel Comics as the 20th century mythology and you as this generation’s Homer’” (91). The sense in American academia in this period seems to have generally been that comics offer valuable insight into the modern American culture that produced and consumed them, in the same way that folklore offers anthropological insights.

The first phase of American Comics Studies, lasting from the 1920s until the very late 1960s, consists of scattered dissertations and courses, driven by the individual interests of students and teachers. In the next phase of Comics Studies, academic studies of comics fit neatly into a paradigm shift in which popular culture was increasingly the subject of organized, formal study. This trend manifested outside academia in such publications as the 1971 *The Penguin Book of Comics* by George Perry and Alan Aldridge as well as Les Daniels’ 1971 *Comix* (despite the title, an overview of all comics). Parallel academic moves in Europe manifested in such English-language publications as the 1968 *A History of the Comic Strip*, an exhibition guide by French academics Maurice Horn and Pierre Couperie; and German academics Reinhold Reitberger and Wolfgang Fuchs’ *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium* in 1972. The “cultural turn” described by Ray Browne, towards analyzing the objects of mass media and popular culture using academic methods and forms, found in comics a noteworthy example of a remarkably popular current form of art and writing in America.

This trend continued in the 1970s. Horn's *World Encyclopedia of Comics* in 1976 can be thought of as a culmination of the vast fan projects to catalogue comics, but was written by an academic. Tension between fan culture and academic disciplines has persisted due to this ancestry for Comics Studies. As Charles Hatfield suggests, "The fear that academic study would "lose sight" of the joy of comics and an insistence that Comics Studies take place in an environment friendly to fans and creators as well as career scholars has strongly influenced the growth of Comics Studies ever since" (2017 xvii). Hatfield further argues that comics themselves are a challenge to the idea of academic disciplinarity, in that the disciplines of literature, art, mass communications, media studies, design, philosophy, sociology, "and many others" have studied the same object from very different vantage points. Mark Berliner, Jochen Ecke, and Gideon Haberkorn describe the field from another vantage point by noting that unlike print and cinema, two media to which comics is often likened, "no university has a department of comics studies" (1). The three suggest that this lack is partially because comics are strongly identified with popular culture, but more compellingly because comics "are not as distinct from the subject matter of the existing disciplines as these are from each other... because they are a hybrid form, it is deceptively easy to focus on their similarities to other media, and ignore their uniqueness" (1). Matteo Stefanelli, in a global overview, has argued that the main perspectives (communicational, structural, and cultural) have combined in different proportions, with the communicational—and an "emphasis on messages and effects" in particular—characterizing the earlier phase of Anglo-American scholarship (Miller and Beaty 10). Nonetheless, a look at 1970s Comics Studies in English after the 1970s reveals more eclecticism than Stefanelli's generalization suggests, and underscores the validity of Berliner, Ecke, and Haberkorn's point.

As one would expect if Berliner, Ecke, and Haberkorn are correct, a great many examples of Comics Studies construct the object of their studies as something else entirely: as literature which happens to be profusely illustrated, or as films whose frames happen to be arrayed on pages. For example, Russell Belk's analysis of wealth themes discusses a variety of American comics but essentially never acknowledges that the stories involve (indeed, consist of) drawn images. This quality is not necessarily a problem: Henry Jenkins argues compellingly that the field of Comics Studies should remain "radically undisciplined" (2012 7), while Charles Hatfield approvingly positions the field as an "anti-discipline" (xx)—but elsewhere notes a contrasting history of "mere multidisciplinary" which arises unintentionally (Hatfield 2010). Matthew Smith and Randy Duncan's 2017 overview *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies* is deliberately plural: the editors liken different approaches to comics studies historiography to "examining a facet of a gem" (xxiv). From some perspectives this lack of discipline makes Comics Studies resemble a series of deferred moves towards disciplining: in the words of Philip Troutman, "Comics studies, at least among Anglophone scholars, is always coming but never quite arriving; it is routinely described as emergent, nascent, embryonic" (120).

Within the many different aspects of comics that Comics Studies looks at, and the varying methods used to do so, some general trends can be observed. One significant debate concerns the related actions of defining comics and tracing their history, a debate that typically takes place in the discipline of Art History. Art historian David Kunzle's 1973 *The Early Comic Strip*, the first volume in his *History of the Comic Strip*, is the Anglophone origin of this debate—and a revised version of his 1964 PhD thesis for the University of London (Horton 60). The debate (described above by Groensteen as one of "essentialists" against "relativists") is

partially a reflection of an art-historical approach to comics, and partially a result of the need for comics to have a discernible history to be considered art.

The history of comics in the field of literary studies specifically is significantly shorter but equally predominant. Barbara Postema credits Joseph Witek, in 1989's *Comic Books as History*, as "probably the first American academic to explicitly call for the sustained critical analysis of comics based in literary theory," a call which Postema notes was a response to the appearance of comic books written to be literature, such as Spiegelman's *Maus* (93)—though Spiegelman has been insistent since at least 1991 that *Maus* should be classified as nonfiction, and that "literature" is strictly an evaluative category, indicating that if the division was between "literature and nonliterature," "literature" would simply be a compliment (Spiegelman 150). While the pictorial element of comics may have struck early observers as putting comics into the field of visual arts, the "graphic novel" turn has led to a predominance of literary approaches. Bart Beaty and Benjamin Woo contend that "recently reimagined as a kind of literature rather than a distinct medium or form, comics has borrowed so much from the literary field as to replicate it in miniature" (15) and that "comics studies is dominated by scholars in departments of languages and literatures (and especially English literature)" (28). The most frequently studied graphic novels, which could be said to constitute the nascent canon of a nascent field, support this conjecture: Jennifer H. Williams' remark that "it can be tempting to teach comics and graphic narratives as traditional print narratives that happen to have illustrations" (193) underscores the extent to which the academic "canon" of graphic novels values literary qualities imported from the study of textual novels. The relatively large numbers of academic studies of works such as *Maus*, *Watchmen*, Marjane Satrapi's 2000/2004 memoir *Persepolis*, and Alison Bechdel's 2006 memoir *Fun Home*—seen in Beaty and Woo's analysis of the field—indicates

the validity for academia of Roger Sabin's 1993 diagnosis that the "graphic novel" turn "served to remake comics in prose literature's image" (qtd. In Nyberg 163).

Along with this remaking has come an emphasis on the singular author/illustrator, or auteur, of the comic. This figure, analogous to the author of a work of prose fiction, persists even in the more typical situation where the finished product is the work of many hands. The influence of prose fiction as a model also obscures significant generic differences. Hillary Chute uses the term "graphic narrative" (2010 3) to foreground the extent to which lifewriting has been made illegible by the "graphic novel" concept. In fact, many of the most popular "graphic novels" (including the three examples in the previous paragraph) "are not novels at all" (Chute 2010 3). The influence of the study of English literature has distorted features of the comics field that do not resemble prose fiction.

A variety of other fields influence the eclectic methods of Comics Studies. In Stefanelli's analysis, the communicational aspect of "language" (as distinct from "messages" and "effects") has been predominant in French-language comics studies, and indeed to some extent an understanding of comics as a language has persisted in American comics studies. Arthur Asa Berger describes his 1974 *The Comic-Stripped American* as making "extensive use of psychoanalytic and semiotic theory" (178), and the semiotic approach persists in varied works such as Thierry Smolderen's 2000 *The Origins of Comics*, which traces a variety of repeating visual gags. This approach seems particularly popular with practitioner-theorists: cartoonist Will Eisner's 1985 *Comics & Sequential Art* is essentially a guide to using the sequence in order to direct the reader's attention, as well as a theory book about how the art sequence functions as a language. More notably, cartoonist Scott McCloud's important *Understanding Comics* follows Eisner and makes the case for comics to be understood as sequences of juxtaposed signs and

symbols. Paul Karasik and Mark Newgarden, also both cartoonists, make a significant contribution to this practice with 2017's *How to Read Nancy*, which deconstructs the visual and textual elements of a single comic strip.²⁵ Bryan Dietrich has implied that some element of semiotic thinking underlies the construction of the comics' academic canon by remarking that Moore and Gibbons' often-studied *Watchmen*, by using unusually complex networks of representation, begs for symbolic or semiotic cataloguing (138).

Overlapping the semiotic consideration of comics is the influence of the linguistic and cognitive field. As Neil Cohn points out in an article critiquing comics studies, influential theorists like McCloud actually suggested methodologies very far from traditional humanities research: corpus analysis and experimental manipulation of sequences (69). Cohn's point that the majority of comic theory considers comics as a branch of literature or arts and thus has rarely attempted to catalogue how the phenomenon occurs (70) is well taken, and the emphasis on how the medium pragmatically does function perhaps highlights why cartoonists themselves often engage in theoretical approaches closest to semiotics and linguistics. Cohn and others (most notably Hannah Campbell and Kaitlin Pederson) have attempted to approach comics cognitively with experiments and studies. In 2013 Cohn and other researchers inaugurated the Visual Language Lab as an effort to create a larger corpus for the purposes of analysis.

Related to linguistic, semiotic, and cognitive approaches is the recurring focus on the form. As Ann Miller points out, "the urge to delimit 'comicsness' or to track the chimera of a 'true' lineage has faded as the need to secure the cultural legitimacy of the medium has become less pressing" (2017 151), but early comics studies were particularly invested in identifying and

²⁵ Newspaper comic strip *Nancy* was written and drawn by Bushmiller from 1938 until his death in 1982. Originally a "flapper" strip created as *Fritzi Ritz* 1922, Bushmiller's creation of the young girl Nancy proved to be so popular that the strip was renamed (Karasik and Newgarden 57-59, 65).

tracing the forms unique to comics. Later important theorists identified by Miller as having formal approaches include Groensteen and Smolderen in their attempts to understand comics as a form; David Carrier's 2000 *The Aesthetics of Comics* is similar. The boundaries between formal, linguistic, semiotic, and cognitive approaches are blurry in the extreme, and it is rare to encounter a work that only engages in one approach at a time. Miller also notes that "comics has always been a self-reflexive art" (161), perhaps explaining the rarity of Comics Studies works which do not touch on formal issues. Furthermore, the field of philosophy seems to address the same concerns: Aaron Meskin's essay considering whether a comic is an object, a collection of objects, or an abstract object with physical incarnations is representative of the methodological similarity to formal analysis (Meskin 31).

What each of these interdisciplinary approaches have in common, despite Neil Cohn's efforts to ground these approaches in actual readerly practice, is an overlooking of materiality. Since this dissertation is overtly concerned with the material, approaches which do read comics as material are directly inspirational to the present work. Sociological approaches have approached materiality in different ways by approaching the actual rather than theoretical role of comics, and both sociology and cultural studies are extremely important in the history of comics studies. As my history above indicates, among the first scholarly approaches to comics were sociological efforts to understand the role of comics in society, typically using qualitative and quantitative methods of surveys and interviews.

A key work in the transition from the study of comics as a sociological phenomenon to the sociological approach within comics studies was Reinhold Reitberger and Wolfgang J. Fuchs' *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium*, published in Germany in 1970 and translated two years later. Informed by the academic study of communication, Reitberger and Fuchs' book was

nonetheless published by non-academic press Little, Brown & Co., at a time when very little scholarship on comics was available (as pointed out by Hatfield 2017 xvi). Perhaps the most influential sociological work of comics studies is Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart's *How to Read Donald Duck*, written in Chile in 1971 and translated into English by David Kunzle in 1975. While Dorfman and Mattelart's work has been criticized (see Andrae 9-12; Tomlinson 40-44, and Kunzle's foreword to the second edition), its critique of Disney comics as cultural imperialism rests on the way the stories themselves portray culture and value, an approach that continues to influence. As John Tomlinson suggests, a weakness of Dorfman and Mattelart's argument is that it simply constructs a politicized reading and takes this as proof of the politic effect of the story: "They simply *assume* that reading American comics, seeing adverts, watching pictures of the affluent *yanqui* lifestyle has a direct pedagogic effect" (Tomlinson 44). While later sociological and particularly cultural studies work on comics adopts a Gramscian model of readers negotiating with hegemony (Gordon 2017 123), Dorfman and Mattelart's method has remained a way to reconcile text with its social role: in an almost completely unrelated 2007 article by Mike S. Dubose the shadow of Dorfman and Mattelart can be seen in Dubose's effort to discern the relationship of the Reagan presidency to contemporary plotlines in *Captain America*. This approach was established relatively early in the history of comics studies: Max J. and Joey Skidmore's 1983 article "More than Mere Fantasy: Political Themes in Contemporary Comic Books," published in the *Journal of Popular Culture*, seeks primarily to establish that such themes exist at all, an issue which would become less pressing as the field of cultural studies gained prominence. Another influence in the shift towards scholarly study of the relation between context and the plots of comics may have simply been the lack of respect accorded comics in the discipline of social history: despite Warren Susman's conclusion in his 1984

Culture as History that Mickey Mouse might have been more important to Americans in the 1930s than President Roosevelt (102-103), his book is hardly concerned with the Mouse at all, much less his appearance in comic books and strips. Even as late as 2004, there is still a necessity for Garyn G. Roberts to conclude of comics that “it is surely time for anyone interested in American culture to understand them” (216).

Nonetheless, while comics studies may not be very influential in the field of sociology, the reverse is untrue. One sociologist in particular, Pierre Bourdieu, is cited frequently enough to require explanation. Simply put, Bourdieu’s theory, outlined in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979, translated into English in 1984), is of enormous utility to scholars working on an art form long marked by a harshly negative social judgement. In Bourdieu’s analysis, cultural artifacts are defined by their relative positions (4) associated with zones of taste “which roughly correspond to educational levels and social classes”: legitimate taste (which increases with educational level); middlebrow taste (which “is more common in the middle classes than in the working classes... or in the ‘intellectual’ fractions of the dominant class”); and popular taste, which “varies in inverse ratio to educational capital” (8). While Bourdieu is a sociologist who engages in detailed surveys and statistical results, Comics Studies has taken up his theory of cultural positioning and cultural capital, the means by which “the dialectic of conditions and habitus... transforms the distribution of capital, the balance-sheet of a power relation, into a system of perceived differences, distinctive properties, that is, a distribution of symbolic capital, legitimate capital, whose objective truth is misrecognized” (168).

Bourdieu influences (and is explicitly cited by) Comics Studies workers such as Paul Lopes, in his 2004 “Growing Up: The Popular Genre Strategy in Transforming Mainstream Comic Books”; Jean-Paul Gabilliet in his 2005 *Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of*

American Comic Books; Adele D'Arcangelo in her 2008 “‘Slime Hero from the Swamp’: The Italian Editions of Alan Moore’s Horror Saga the Swamp Thing”; Casey Brienza in her 2009 article “Books, Not Comics: Publishing Fields, Globalization, and Japanese Manga in the United States”; Robert Hutton in his 2015 “A Mouse in the Bookstore: *Maus* and the Publishing Industry”; and Bart Beaty in influential work such as 2007’s *Unpopular Culture*, 2012’s *Comics vs Art*, and 2016’s *The Greatest Comic Book of All Time*, the latter with Benjamin Woo. In all these cases, Bourdieu is useful to theorists seeking to understand the changes in American culture’s perceptions of comic books. If the coming of the “graphic novel” is the most important shift in the history of comic books, Bourdieu is perhaps the most important sociological theorist in the history of American Comics Studies. However, the academic field which has, as whole, exerted the most influence on the existence and practices of American Comics Studies is clearly Cultural Studies.

Comics Studies was, as we have seen above, the beneficiary of the “cultural turn” in the humanities around the late 1960s and early 1970s. Ray Browne, founder of the *Journal of Popular Culture* in 1967, published works dealing with comics, such as Wolfgang Max Faust’s 1971 article close-reading the cover of *Action Comics* #368 (Gordon 2017 121). Though formal Cultural Studies first developed in the United Kingdom in the 1950s-1970s, comics were first visible to American academics as part of this turn (Miller 2017 151). Cultural Studies, which studied how people actually do read items like comic books “in a myriad of ways that ran counter to the dominant, Frankfurt School-inspired assumption that the media indoctrinated the masses into adopting specific ideological and hegemonic beliefs” (Brown 281), fed and continued this turn in American academia. In a sense, all academic studies of comics are part of the cultural turn in which, to state it in Bourdieu’s terms, new subjects became subject to

academic ways of knowing (4). However, some works of comics studies are more prominently influenced by cultural studies, particularly those which focus on the subculture existing around comics' creation and consumption: Ian Gordon's 1998 *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture*; Michael Sokolow's 1998 article "More Often than Not, It's Put in a Bag': Culture and the Comic Book Collector"; Bradford Wright's 2001 *Comic Book Nation*; Aaron Delwiche's 2014 "Scanner tags, comic book piracy and participatory culture"; Gregory Steirer's 2014 "No more bags and boards: collecting culture and the digital comics marketplace"; and Dan Gearino's 2017 *Comic Shop*—all prominent examples in which the influence of a Cultural Studies focused on popular culture and subculture can be seen in an interest in how readers and producers of comics have actually treated comics.

Alongside Cultural Studies, the other interdisciplinary field which influences Comics Studies' approach to materiality is Media Studies. Comics Studies work influenced by Media Studies often resembles formalist approaches but Jan-Noël Thon and Lukas R. A. Wilde note that the central idea of "medium" is usually understood to be referring to "to a complex multi-dimensional concept, which allows one to distinguish between at least a communicative-semiotic, a material-technological, and a conventional-institutional dimension of media and their mediality" (233), pointing towards the centrality of a material approach. Aaron Kashtan's 2013 analysis of Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* summarizes media-specific analysis for comics as conceptualizing "comics" to be a phenomenon without an existence separable from its instantiations in particular media and technologies (92). In other words, Media Studies analysis of comics stands in direct contrast to the "essentialist" school of thought described by Groensteen—and to some extent in opposition to formalist and linguistic approaches distinguished by essentialist thinking (such as those described by Miller, 152-153). A

representative example of Media Studies approaches to comics is Stuart Moulthrop's 2009 analysis of the "under-language" present in Moore and Gibbons' *Watchmen*, in which Moulthrop argues that the graphic novel, by using comics-specific devices such as the persistent juxtaposing images and text, illuminates "the boundary zone between dominant and nonconforming media" (Moulthrop 2011)—raising the point that, as Moulthrop has argued elsewhere, the film adaptation of *Watchmen* was unable to present the same complex system due to its medium.

Sebastian Bartosch has also noted a tendency in media studies to consider the medium as distinct from the content of any given instance of that medium, and insists instead that an understanding of comics' mediality needs to "leave behind the notion of a vessel or channel for information" (243). Bartosch notes Katherine Hayles' observation that this distinction evades the dimension of materiality (242). In this context, I take seriously Lee Konstantinou's fierce critique of Moulthrop and the appropriateness of Media Studies as a means to study comics: "The term 'medium,' even as a metaphor, doesn't serve us well in the analysis of cultural objects.... Another way of putting this is that we need to attend not only to media but also to the mediation of media." Konstantinou points out that Media Studies analysis of comics tends to find meaning only in the formal properties of comics, echoing Bartosch by noting that Moulthrop's analysis of *Watchmen* avoids a seemingly unavoidable element of the text, namely the fact that *Watchmen* is a metafictional story about superheroes. Konstantinou suggests instead drawing inspiration from Platform Studies, a field deriving from the study of video games, which emphasizes the peculiar affordances of specific media, calling for a "thickening of the sociological, technological, and historical models" we use to describe media such as comics (Konstantinou). In this dissertation I have tried to follow this call, not by describing the possibilities available to the creators of comics but by concentrating on detailed models of

context. By doing so I hope to shift emphasis towards the construction and circulation of the text and the material history of comics.

Materiality in Comics Studies

Because of Comics Studies' complicated origins, materiality has a tenuous relationship to the field. While the prevailing trend continues to dematerialize comics, and the vast majority of Comics Studies is not concerned with materiality, there are many examples of formal, academic Comics Studies that are concerned with comics materiality. One version of materiality in Comics Studies focuses on paratext: In a 2012 chapter, Michael Millington argues that advertisements as a feature of original publication are important to the reading experience (214). Andrew Bredehoft explains why this might be, by arguing that “comics works irresistibly pull structures that otherwise appear to be paratexts into the body of the text itself, because of the way in which comics works are productions-in-reproduction” (167)—that is, the original work is not relevant to comics-as-works as an ideal: rather the first reproduction is an original. The same year as Millington, John A. Walsh made much the same point, that “the intermingling of comics-based narrative with commercial advertisement becomes a key element in the production of meaning in the text” (27). One example might be Daniel Wolf-Meyer's 2003 explanation of what he calls “accidental media”: the appearance of an advertisement for the board game RISK, which raises unintended resonance for being printed on comic books during a plotline about the morality of superheroes seizing control of the world's computer systems (Wolf-Meyer 515). Such observations are exceptional: as both Walsh and Millington point out, both reprints (upon which the majority of scholarly work depends) and scholarly work tend to overlook these features in favour of the comics sequence, removing the overtly commercial elements of the text and irrevocably altering the actual object itself. The assumption that the narrative story remains the

same regardless of surroundings and material context seems to underlie the logic of discussing comics as though they were never physically connected to paratexts such as advertisements. As Daniel Wüllner states in 2010, “we are in need of an approach that takes into account the ‘historical materiality’ of comics” (Wüllner 54)—a paraphrase of statements made separately by Ole Frahm and Christopher Couch.

A more prominent version of the “material turn” within Comics Studies has been prompted by the remediation of comics into the digital. In 2015, and referring to a “huge increase of studies on comic books’ physical and corporeal properties in recent years” (7), Lukas R.A. Wilde argues that the advent of digital comics in North America has made the preceding physical form of comic books unusually visible as a materially distinct form (8). The quiddity of physical comic books was made more visible by the rise of trade paperbacks, but is now extremely visible due to the widespread conception of digitalization as a radical break: Jaime Lee Kirtz’ 2014 “Computers, Comics and Cult Status: A Forensics of Digital Graphic Novels” expresses the digital/physical trend by analyzing the way that in a digital context, “typewritten documents assert authority and authorship” (14). From another direction, Torsa Ghosal’s 2015 consideration of Chris Ware’s physical *Building Stories* project indicates that digital projects provide the impetus to experiment with books’ bodies (94). Wilde points out that even the phrase “digital comics” seems to betray the same kind of anxiety as “graphic novel,” in cultural positioning by identifying itself as a variation of a familiar form (8). Kiene Brillenburg Würth, as part of a 2011 argument that the division between the digital and the material is not a binary opposition, describes this situation with a term from Alan Golding: “rematerialization,” defined as a shift in material medium (in this case the rise of digital comics) that raises new questions about texts in general (121). Scholars such as Ian Hague, Lukas R. A. Wilde, and Lee Konstantinou argue that

Comics Studies has failed to respond to this situation appropriately, continuing instead to treat comics as texts distinct from the objects in which they materialize—an argument that is compelling for the majority of Comics Studies despite the existence of many comics studies that respond by materializing comics.

There are exceptions to this trend: critics such as Bart Beaty and Ian Gordon, who approach comic books as cultural commodities in their studies *Comics vs Art* (2012) and *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture* (1998) respectively, are particularly attentive to the way that comics exist as physical objects, due to their interest in the culture surrounding comics, in which materiality plays a significant role. For example, Beaty suggests that the “collectors” mentality which treats comics as objects to be preserved takes place by contrast to the physical ephemerality that prevents comics from being art in most cases (174); similarly, Gordon writes, “Comic books owe their existence to the success of comic-art-style advertising in the early 1930s” (129) noting that comic books are a remediation of a form which circulated as a different commodity. Ann Miller repeats Harry Morgan’s reference to the “codexité” or “bookness” of comics, and Jan Baetens and Pascal Lefèvre’s note on the importance of paratext in comics (Miller 158). Pascal Lefèvre elsewhere engages in a model of physical analysis with a detailed description of the object containing the comic he is analyzing (76) though his ultimate purpose is simply to establish the narrative as “pulp.” In an outlying “sensory” analysis of 2014, Ian Hague has figured comics in sensual terms, as objects with very specific physical features, noting that fans often consider comics in terms of how they feel and smell: “Given the awareness of the physicality of comics that is frequently demonstrated by their producers and consumers, this is something we cannot afford to forget. The question now is not so much whether these factors will be incorporated into comics scholarship, but how” (7). The most prominent advocate for the

study of materiality in comics is Ernesto Priego, who argues that comics express themselves as “a kind of materiality that is specific to itself and only itself” (Priego 2010)—a material version of the essentialist claim, and one that underlies this study despite Priego’s disclaimer that this materiality is different than that of any other medium, including books.

Many studies of comics materiality focus on exceptional examples rather than the “standard” comic book. Michelle Ann Abate’s 2015 consideration of Art Spiegelman’s 2004 *In the Shadow of No Towers*, for example, is a model of the material approach: Abate rightly asks “What new interpretative insights do we gain if we view the format as a key facet of the text rather than as an incidental feature of its physicality?” (41). However, Abate’s analysis is clearly motivated by the fact that *In the Shadow of No Towers*, an oversized volume printed on paper stock ordinarily intended for children’s books, is an extraordinarily unusual comic book (and unusual book). Similarly, Candida Rifkind’s analysis in the same year of Seth’s 2009 *George Sprott (1894-1975)*, focuses on the “very big book (14 by 12 inches) that is awkward to read without a table, to transport in a bag, or to fit onto a standard bookshelf” (229). Rifkind’s starting point, that comics have always been defined by their materiality (225), is well taken, and raises the question of the materiality of the standard American comic book format which predated the graphic novel by decades.

This dissertation follows these scholarly works that highlight the material nature of comics by incorporating an awareness of materiality when discussing texts that are rarely if ever considered, texts which feature materiality notably marked by the actions agents in the publishing system. While there are other ways to classify this dissertation within the field—most notably, all but one of these texts are children’s comics originating in the 1950s—reading materiality is most theoretically relevant to classifying this work. With some exceptions, the

history of the paradigms that govern Comics Studies was first that comics were more quotidian than “literature”—and thus counted as folklore or the culture of “mass man”; then that the more “literary” comics were worthy of serious treatment as opposed to the average comic; and finally that with advent of the digital “standard format comic books have become the old legends to which contemporary media pay tribute” (Roberts 210). To some extent all of these paradigms—in which the field of the standard comic book is secondary to the standards of other fields of study—continue to the present. However, “standard format comic books” and the culture surrounding them, far from being old legends, have yet to be adequately understood.

Aaron Kashtan’s 2018 *Between Pen and Pixel* is the best example of a recent work suggesting that Comics Studies has a role to play in influencing other fields rather than primarily being influenced by them. Kashtan’s work, deeply engaged with the materiality of comics, also reveals a still-unwritten role for the study of the materiality of comics. Kashtan concludes that comics have a particular significance in terms of materiality, and indeed notes that despite a significant bias towards “an incomplete account of materiality” caused by the relatively small canon of graphic novels (and their genre, typically nonfiction) (2018 13), “comics scholars have increasingly recognized that our interpretative and affective experience of a comic is fundamentally conditioned by the particular form in which we encounter that comic” (2018 12-13).

Kashtan’s interest is specifically the significance of comic books in the age of digitization: he argues that comic books “offer valuable lessons about the continuing role that printed books might play in a digital age” (2018 3) because they are a form of print which, despite the rise of digital media, remains “even more curiously resistant to replacement by digital equivalents than other genres of books” (2018 3). Kashtan’s ultimate provocative claim that every book is a

comic, however, indicates where we part ways. In his focus on the future of the book and what comics have to say, I believe that Kashtan's focus overlooks the materiality of the past. While I agree with Kashtan that it is not only traditional (print) comics that have materiality, and that other forms of comics "have their own modes of materiality which need to be evaluated independently" (2018 28), nonetheless the pre-digital traditional comic book remains undertheorized in terms of materiality. To take one example treated at length in this dissertation, Kashtan:

would contend, for example, that *Watchmen* is not the "same" text when read as twelve individual comic books, or as a perfect-bound trade paperback, or as a digital file on Amazon's Kindle Fire—and that they are all different media through which the art form of comics can be delivered (2018 25)

While I agree wholeheartedly, Kashtan does not explain what happens when we read *Watchmen* as twelve individual comic books. *Watchmen* is an apt example of Comics Studies' neglect of the material: despite being the subject of a very large number of academic studies, very few acknowledge—much less take into account—that *Watchmen* was originally published as twelve individual comic books. One might think that, as the original publication, this would be the default reading of *Watchmen*, but in fact most academic work on *Watchmen* cites the collected edition and only briefly mentions its serialization.²⁶ It seems that the Comics Studies paradigm of discussing the materiality of exceptional or unusual comics-objects—itsself a replacement for considering comics as more representative of ordinary or mass culture than

²⁶ For example Cummings (2015) and Imray (2017) cite collected editions, while Fishbaugh (1998), Hughes (2006) and Prince (2011), and Keating (2012) refer to "chapters" interchangeably with "issues." Rehak (2011), Polley (2013), Hoberek (2014), van Ness (2014) and Wolf (2017) briefly acknowledge serialized publication.

books—may well be replaced by a paradigm in which the materiality of comics is only considered interesting in relationship to the digital.

Underlying this dissertation is the contention that comics have never been adequately and seriously considered as having physical forms. Since I propose to read comics as objects, many of the observations of the field of Book History are useful.

Book History

Very few histories of print culture engage with or even mention the comic book. Just as this dissertation hopes to use the descriptive methods of Book History to illuminate the materiality of comics, and is concerned with specific examples rather than a general history, I also believe that some of the peculiarities of comics' associated print formats are relevant for the history of the book. The methodological position which this dissertation takes is that Comics Studies and Book History can be mutually enriched by the application of bibliographical description methods from Book History to the field of Comics Studies—to read, in other words, comics as material objects much like the book (sometimes, in fact, identical to the book).

Book History studies the objects that have contained texts, and the physical lives of those objects. As editors Ezra Greenspan and Jonathan Rose state in their introduction to the first issue of the journal *Book History*, “historians have always relied on documents to reconstruct the past, and perhaps for that reason they overlooked, until very recently, the history of documents themselves” (ix). The history of Book History began with the book as being tied to the technology of print: in Marshall McLuhan’s 1962 *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which introduced the concept of “print culture,” as well as in Elizabeth Eisenstein’s more elaborate 1979 *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, the invention of moveable type is presented as having absolutely transformed literate societies. While Eisenstein’s focus is the effect of print on fixing

authoritative scientific texts, Benedict Anderson would later (in his 1991 *Imagined Communities*) update “print culture” to “print capitalism” and argue that the concept of the nation as well as that of print intertwine to define each other and modernity itself. While this strain of reasoning has been critiqued as overly-focused on technology, as in Adrian Johns’ critique of Eisenstein on the grounds that “the very identity of print itself has had to be *made*” (269), the conception of the book as a medium has left Book History steeped in the material.

Sarah Hindman argues that Book History is the result of an interdisciplinary collision between two schools of thought. The first is the *Annales* school of French historiography, represented by founder Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin’s 1957 *L’apparition du livre*, in which the historians applied sociological methods—quantitative analysis, most prominently—to consider the book as a particular kind of commodity. The resulting *histoire du livre* is, according to Hindman, a key ingredient when integrated with the second school of thought, the methods and history of the more Anglo-American school of analytical bibliography, “a process of physical description and analysis... [leading to] the construction of a narrative history, which might focus on a variety of topics, for example, on the sequence of editions of a text or on the oeuvre of a printer” (Hindman 4). As Aaron Kashtan points out, the theory underlying these bibliographical practices conceived of the text “as a purely semiotic experience” (2018 8)—one where, in the 1972 words of Philip Gaskell, bibliography’s “overriding responsibility must be to determine a text in its most accurate form” (1)—accurate to the first intentions of the author. Therefore, the concern of the *Annales* school with a text’s relationship to the society which produced it and consumed it was a major departure from bibliographic tradition.

In Leslie Howsam’s account, the relevant bibliographical scholarship took place against the backdrop of 1950s-60s academic New Criticism, in which literary scholars “were

discouraged from any examination of outside influences” (11) preceding the cultural turn described by Ray Browne. Under the influences of the *Annales* school, early practitioners of Book History argued for what Jerome McGann described in 1984 as “extrinsic” studies of texts (2015 115)—aimed at generating “the text of the reader” (2015 117) rather than the most accurate text described by Gaskell. This approach was also defined by D. F. McKenzie in a 1985 lecture as “the sociology of texts” (37). In a 1982 essay by historian Robert Darnton surveyed the field of “the history of books” and, finding it to be “interdisciplinarity run riot” (233) attempted to provide a methodological centre in the form of the “communications circuit,” a diagram with space for all the agents (the binder, the reader, booksellers, printers, the author, etc.) who make any book, revolving around the central emanations of social, political, and intellectual forces (234). In this Darnton presented the paradigm of the *Annales* school as a central methodological rule for Book History: “the roles of these individuals should ideally be studied in relation to all other systems in the surrounding environment, that is, intellectual history, social and economic history, and political history” (Howsam 5).

Since Darnton’s intervention and the contemporary theories of McGann and McKenzie, their work has been enriched and elaborated upon. Leslie Howsam suggests a useful figuring of Book History as primarily interdisciplinary between the disciplines of bibliography, literary criticism, and history, and notes disputes between all three: in 1993, for example, Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker, out of a wish to maintain bibliography as a central concern, created an inversion of Darnton’s diagram which literally centralizes the life of the book (Howsam 33); and in 1997 literary critic Peter McDonald used the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu to make Darnton’s diagram three-dimensional, suggesting the richly layered set of worlds to which each collaborator belongs (Howsam 38). Darnton’s essential point, that the same process gives books

“a material reality and a social meaning” in the words of Matthew Lyons (6), remains the central premise of Book History, now expanded to other material objects and social roles than that of the book, to an extent that strongly resembles Media Studies.

In terms of literary texts—that is, fiction with no qualitative restrictions—one major thread in Book History has been the significance of paratext. Without the concept of paratext, coined by Gerard Genette in his 1987 *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, it would be extraordinarily difficult to describe such features as the history of any given publication format (and thus it appears repeatedly in my history of comic books): as Genette points out

text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations... And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book. (1)

The paratext is the threshold of the text, and while Genette’s insistence that the paratext “is only an assistant, only an accessory of the text” (410) has been convincingly challenged,²⁷ the use of the term to focus attention on a text’s publication history continues. For example, in her 2001 study of Victorian periodicals, Laurel Brake proposes to treat “the wrappers and advertisers that, with the letterpress and illustration make up part-issues and periodicals, as part of what we designate the ‘text’ to be studied” (27). Later theory, exemplified by the “sociology of the text” variety popularized by Jerome McGann in his 1991 *The Textual Condition*, was partially a

²⁷ For example, in Beth McCoy’s 2006 article “Race and the (Para)textual Condition.”

correction to Genette's influence, as McGann charged that the earlier scholar had de-emphasized "such matters as ink, typeface, paper, and various other phenomena... because such textual features are not linguistic" (1991 13). Inspired by McGann's distinction between intertwined "linguistic" and "bibliographical" codes, more recent work has emphasized the physical, as in Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker's conception of specifically periodical codes:

a whole range of features including page layout, typefaces, price, size of volume (not all 'little' magazines are little in size), periodicity of publication (weekly, monthly, quarterly, irregular), use of illustrations (colour or monochrome, the forms of reproductive technology employed), use and placement of advertisements, quality of paper and binding, networks of distribution and sales, modes of financial support, payment practices towards contributors, editorial arrangements, or the type of material published (poetry, reviews, manifestos, editorials, illustrations, social and political comment, etc.). We can also distinguish between periodical codes internal to the design of a magazine (paper, typeface, layout, etc.) and those that constitute its external relations (distribution in a bookshop, support from patrons). (6)

The work of Book History, inspirational to this dissertation, is to connect these features to a larger cultural context.

Perhaps surprisingly given their present cultural role, comics themselves are rarely acknowledged to exist in works of Book History, even those describing the societies and periods in which they existed. In Casper, Chaison, and Groves' 2001 *Perspectives on American Book History*, editorial cartoons are printed throughout, and three sentences concerning underground comix appear as part of the underground literary movement (375). *Dahl's History of the Book*, in the third English edition written by Bill Katz in 1995, has a single paragraph on page 261

positioning Spiegelman's "illustrated-cartoon-narrative" *Maus* as a continuation of the "book in pictures" woodcut trend of the interwar years (261). *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book* offers the illuminating remark that "there is still much work to be done on the bibliography of illustrated books, a highly promising area that could have a great impact on our understanding of artists and author-artist collaborations" (Suarez 209) but by this, apparently, Suarez means the engravings of the sixteenth century. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose's 2007 *Companion to the History of the Book* ends with a Megan L. Benton essay on art books, which terminates the history of the book in a puzzling reference to "the 1986 trade book *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, in which Art Spiegelman used the comic strip narrative model" (505). As John Holbo has pointed out, even in the area of nineteenth century periodicals, the context in which comics were originally created, book historians seem to have a persistent blind spot for comics (28). Comics do persist in the larger imagination as an example of literary studies' interest in material not previously considered literary—when Katherine Hayles speaks of the cultural turn in literary studies in the 1970s and 1980s, she refers to it as a turn "to reading many different kinds of 'texts,' from Donald Duck to fashion clothing" (493). As all these examples suggest, the comic book is underanalyzed as having material, rather than only semiotic, existence, except in the overlap between fields.

Book History in Comics Studies/Comics Studies in Book History

The rise of comics to academic subjects has coincided almost exactly with the rise of Book History, and the methods and concerns of Book History have become part of the interdisciplinary set of ideas influencing Comics Studies. Robert Hutton, for example, analyses the history of *Maus* precisely in terms of its physical history, citing Casey Brienza's call for more research into the production of comics (Hutton 30). Padmini Rae Murray's 2013 call to embrace the "cultural

materialist” approaches (1) of publishing studies and book history notes these approaches as a way to “facilitate a fuller understanding of what it means to both create, publish and read a comic” (342). Murray’s call, which explicitly cites Darnton, has power because in the field of Comics Studies, auteurism is still the predominant mode of criticism, and stories rather than editions are the units of works. Murray also indicates that, as with Book History’s conception of the book as a commodity, this approach would centralize the conception of the comic book as a commercial object. In comics studies, the binary opposition between art and commerce is easily mapped onto the fields of academic and fannish study, and while Murray suggests a study of the publishing industry as it currently exists, I hope to demonstrate that a material history of actual comics, books and otherwise, has a role to play in the academic consideration of comics as items of commerce in twentieth century America, particularly in the way they construct value in and around the text.

In short, the discipline of Book History is one that should have more influence in the field of Comics Studies. Like all texts, and “like all other things human,” comic books are “embodied phenomena, and the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic” (McGann 1991 13). The analogy goes beyond the observation that, like books, comics also have paratext, sociologies, communication circuits, and materiality. Inspired by Henry Jenkins’ call for comics studies to remain undisciplined, the definition of comic books as a print format should not be understood as superseding all other ways of understanding comics, but very few studies have read comics as having materiality in the manner Book History has suggested for other writing. Comics are routinely material objects with their own affordances and histories, as can be seen in the history of one particular series of panels.

The *Annales*-influenced method of descriptive bibliography is central to this project because it allows me to perceive the materiality of these comics, and by doing so, to perceive how they could be understood in terms of their value and the way they portray value. Printed comics are analogous to books in the methods of Book History. This dissertation presents four case studies for comics whose values, and whose portrayal of value, are given new dimensions through the use of Book History.

One additionally relevant method that interacts with but does not originate in Book History is the concept of distant machine reading in which the bibliographic history of an object is describe quantitatively from a far distance. Some variants of this method strongly resemble descriptive bibliography, but the method has different interdisciplinary history than the main streams of Book History. Therefore a history of distant machine reading is offered when I engage in it in my third chapter.

Outline of Chapters

In the five chapters of this dissertation I discuss four comics: “Back to the Klondike” starring Uncle Scrooge McDuck, written and drawn by Carl Barks, which appeared first as a comic book in 1953; the *Richie Rich* series published by Harvey Comics as single issue comic books from 1960 until 1994; writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen*, published as twelve comic books in 1986 and 1987; and finally *Dubble Bubble Funnies featuring Pud* which has been published on the bubblegum wrappers surrounding Dubble Bubble Bubblegum since 1950. These texts are contemporaries in a broad sense: Scrooge McDuck and Richie Rich are both creations of the American comic book industry described above (Scrooge was created by Barks in 1947; Richie by unknown parties in 1953), while *Watchmen* is widely regarded as a key turning point from that comics culture dominated by single issues to one where the product

of the “graphic novel” was central. While they can thus be seen as representatives of the “comic book” at the moment at which it had standardized and at its zenith respectively, the case of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* (a form dating from 1930 and continuing more or less unchanged today) is intended as an example of comic circulation that by departing from the form of the comic book into a less highly-regarded material reveals as much as does the more acclaimed “graphic novel.” Though this dissertation does not offer a diachronic analysis of comics, it will be seen that all four chapters trace their case studies over the decades in which the form of the comic book has remained essentially the same, up until the present day, where different fates await *Richie Rich* (never reprinted, extremely difficult to find), *Dubble Bubble Funnies* (still available for 10¢ each with a piece of gum), Barks’ *Uncle Scrooge* (subject of a series of hardcover reprints), and Moore and Gibbons’ *Watchmen* (reprinted in a dizzying series of increasingly expensive collector’s items).

In the first chapter, “Back to Back to the Klondike: The Good Duck Artist” I discuss “Back to the Klondike,” a 1953 Uncle Scrooge adventure by Carl Barks. The 2012 reprinting of this story by Fantagraphics Press physically manifests a fan/academic recovery of Barks’ works that I suggest is typical of early twenty-first-century comics studies. Both versions of “Back to the Klondike” present the same story, in which the fabulously wealthy Uncle Scrooge discovers that there are more important things than monetary value, a message that I argue is complicated by the material context of the low-quality 1953 printing as well as the exceptionally high-quality 2012 reprinting, and further complicated by the flow of advertisements in a 1977 reprint. As scholar Bart Beaty says, the recovery of Carl Barks as an auteur is “one of the first, and central, accomplishments of organized comics fandom” (Beaty 2012 80); however, Barks’ reappearance in the twenty-first century has required a new material manifestation that suggests new ways of

reading and understanding his earlier printings. It is difficult to perceive the meaning of “Back to the Klondike” (that some things are more important than material wealth) the same way when the story is presented variously as an important work of art, as a cheap pamphlet, and as a delivery system of the advertisement of consumer goods. In other words, a reader might see Scrooge’s revaluation that love is more important than money as compromised, as ironic, or as unattainable given the material presentation of the story; and following this we might read Uncle Scrooge the character variously as a role model, as an ironic caricature, or as an insincere fantasy. The method in this chapter is a traditional Book History project, establishing three different printings of the same story and comparing these printings to the text in an effort to establish hypothetical readings.

In the second and third chapters, “Money Money Money: Reading Richie Rich” and “Dollars and Sense: Not Reading Richie Rich” I discuss the character of Richie Rich, a fabulously wealthy child heir, published by Harvey Comics from 1953 to 1994, and the disconnect between the character as he is presented in the comics and as he is mobilized on social media. In the former role, he historically shifted genres from mildly satirical comedy to adventure, while in the latter, he is primarily a critique of American President Donald Trump, particularly focusing on characteristics that are not present in Richie’s narrative. Theorizing that the answer to this paradox lies in Richie Rich’s existence as a brand rather than a character, I perform a distant reading on the 1721 covers of his comics, the packaging of “his” product. I conclude that the range of emotions displayed by Richie Rich in his comics is dramatically narrowed to smugness on the covers of his comic books, suggesting that the popular image of Richie Rich is not based on the texts of his adventures but rather his iconic packaging. This observation is particularly significant because the cover’s status as packaging is enhanced by

Richie Rich's material circulation in newsstands and supermarkets. I suggest that the way that Richie Rich's stories were sold has subverted the content of stories about him. Where the different Uncle Scooges in chapter two are chronologically sequential and reflect an ascendant comics artist in Carl Barks, the two Richie Riches are synchronic and reflect the gap between a packaging brand and a narrative packaged for consumption. This again has consequences for readers' understanding of Richie Rich's values: the stories are frequently seen as glorifying material wealth, but can compellingly be read as presenting wealth as an obstacle to or simply beside the point of meaningful experiences. In these chapters, a more traditional publishing and social history of *Richie Rich*, coupled with close readings of select Richie stories, is contrasted with the more recent method of a distant reading.

In the fourth chapter, "I Will Give You Bodies: Artifacts and Absolutes in the History of *Watchmen*," I assemble a bibliographical history of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen*, studying and comparing the series of objects in which this text has appeared since 1986. In the process I outline the way that publisher DC Comics has created and used *Watchmen* as a concept, following the observations in the previous chapter about narrative and brands. Much as early modern printers attached apparatuses for meaning to their books, DC Comics has guided the reader to understand *Watchmen* as an essential work, mainly for (what the publisher presents as) its historically significant psychological realism. *Watchmen*'s "essential" status for the medium, as one of the most valued comic books, is inseparable from the materiality DC Comics has designed for it. This reading is directly at odds with other possibilities raised by the text, notably *Watchmen*'s portrayal of material comics culture in the character of Bernie, a child who sits on the sidewalk and reads a comic book called *Tales of the Black Freighter* throughout most of *Watchmen*'s story. As the corporate authors of *Watchmen*'s materiality position it, the value

that *Tales of the Black Freighter* holds to Bernie has little to do with the value of *Watchmen*, a text that cannot be encountered so cheaply. Despite the value the text places on everyday experiences, the material history of *Watchmen* has positioned it as too valuable to belong to the realm of the ordinary.

In the fifth chapter, “Trash Culture: Towards a Theory of Premium Comics,” I discuss *Dubble Bubble Funnies featuring Pud*, comics about a boy named Pud, which are published only on the wrappers of Dubble Bubble brand bubblegum. I present a history of these comics as well as the related cultural phenomena of bubblegum, packaging, trash, and premiums (items offered as commercial incentives) in order to establish the recurring troubling of boundaries associated with these objects, and to suggest that these categories have relevance for considering comic books. Rather than actually being comic books, the small wrappers on which *Dubble Bubble Funnies* circulate present a definitional challenge to many assumptions about comic books. Because they are literal trash as well as literary trash, *Dubble Bubble Funnies* and their jokes about the character Pud emphasize the similarity between the materiality of comics and that of garbage, and in the context of the early twenty-first century, they serve as a visceral reminder of comic books’ past categorization as trash rather than art. Furthermore, the materiality in which stories about Pud circulate makes it clear the simplistic jokes themselves offer an unresolved negotiation between moralistic condemnation of gluttony and the need for recurring consumption in a consumer culture. *Dubble Bubble Funnies* asks the reader to laugh at voracious kid Pud’s ludicrous levels of participation in purchasing and consuming products, but also promotes the particular product, bubble gum, to which it is constantly attached. This dilemma, where critiques of consumer values are embedded in a form beholden to consumer culture, is the same one that has taken place in each previous chapter. My analysis is that the ambivalent categories of “trash”

and “candy” attached to *Dubble Bubble Funnies* offer an element now effaced from the cultural idea of “comic books” as a material form, an element of ambivalence that underlines the problematic nature of comic books’ relationship to consumerism. Once again, the methods of close reading and cultural history are brought to bear on this understudied subject to understand how readers might read bubblegum comics.

Chapter 1

Back to Back to the Klondike: The Good Duck Artist

“Comic book characters aren’t real people. Not as a rule, I mean. Take for example Donald Duck. He’s not a real duck. Just a drawing.”

“Interesting.”

“Well, I don’t know how interesting it is. Every kid knows that. I’ve known it my whole life. Haven’t you ever read a comic book?”

— *Condorman*, a Walt Disney production directed by Charles Jarrott, 1981.

In 2012, Fantagraphics Books began to publish the Complete Carl Barks Disney Library, a series of hardcover volumes “reprinting Barks’ classic stories, with fully restored original coloring and fascinating historical and critical essays by a hand-picked group of Barks experts.” The series releases volumes biannually, each collecting several months worth of artist and writer Carl Barks’ work for Disney comics between 1942 and 1967. Each cover balances “Walt Disney’s” and “by Carl Barks” respectively above and below the name of the central Disney character. Most often that character has been Donald Duck, but there have been two releases spotlighting his rich Uncle Scrooge McDuck. These include the second release, where the front and back cover feature several invocations of value. Scrooge McDuck himself appears above the title—“Walt Disney’s Uncle Scrooge: ‘Only a Poor Old Man’ by Carl Barks”—gleefully diving into a pile of golden coins; below the title the forlorn Beagle Boys sit around a table in their prison uniforms. A pull-quote from director George Lucas’ introduction proclaims that these stories are “a priceless part of our literary heritage.” On the back cover, the description of this volume indicates that the story “Back to the Klondike” “reveals how Scrooge amassed his vast

fortune of one multiplujillion, nine obsquatumatillion, six hundred and twenty-three dollars and sixty-two cents—only to lose his true love!” All these ideas of value—the ironic ‘poor’ of the title, Scrooge’s pile of money, the impossible fictional numbers that describe his fortune, and Lucas’ characterization of these stories as priceless—are pragmatically overruled in my copy by a sticker which happens to rest directly atop that fantastic description of Scrooge’s unbelievable fortune. The sticker reads CAN 35.99.

The understanding of comics as a formerly cheap and disposable consumer object is still one embedded in comics studies, often as the unspoken contrast to the valued work under discussion. The figure of the great cartoonist is important in understanding this disciplinary feature. A significant part of comics studies is based around the search for the *rara avis*, a genius that rises above their context to greatness (Yezbick 30-31). For example, Yezbick nominates George Carlson to join the ranks of those recovered from the mass of creators who “worked desperately and anonymously within or outside of the established systems of labor, distribution, and consumption that controlled that defined the history of comics for much of the last century” (30). In this conception of comics, their present (high) value is an exception to their past (low) value as cheap commodities, a rejection of a system that prevented comics being seen as literature (or as art).

I have chosen to focus on a work by Carl Barks primarily because he is the classic example of an unknown commercial artist recovered by connoisseurs and academics—the value of *his* comics has increased enormously since they were first published. Beaty calls Barks the “central” case of “retrospective credit” assigned to forgotten *auteurs* (8-9). As Beaty puts it,

Barks, the creator of the best-loved stories featuring Walt Disney’s Donald Duck, worked for most of his career in total obscurity, his published work credited to Disney and his

true identity known only to his publisher and editors. The efforts undertaken by a small group of fans to first identify and later lionize the specific contributions of Barks to the development of the American comic book form demonstrate the importance of authorship in the development of comics as an art form. (9)

Since he began writing and drawing Disney comics in 1942, Barks has gone through the three distinct stages that are paradigmatic for the historic “appreciation” of comic books. Originally he was anonymous but solitary—a secret, inchoate auteur. He both wrote and drew the stories of Donald Duck and Scrooge McDuck, the latter of whom he created, and both of which were enormously popular. In fact for some time, these were the *most* popular comic books in the United States, giving them a considerable claim to the most popular comic books in existence.²⁸ But while the conditions of his work would later become the grounds for considering him as a great auteur, these facts remained unknown to any readers.

In the next stage, one which overlapped with the previous for the majority of readers, fannish appreciation of the 1950s and 60s referred to Barks—without knowing his name— as “the Good Duck Artist.” From the perspective of regular readers of Disney comics, some stories were perceptibly better than other Duck tales; at least, this was the judgement of the fan connoisseurs who made up fandom. While this is no less valid than any other artistic appraisal, there are particular assumptions in play about *why* these stories are better. Importantly, the concept of “the Good Duck Artist” belongs to organized fandom, and circulated throughout fanzines, private correspondence, and personal interactions. It is easy to imagine that anyone who read multiple Disney comics at the time could have realized that (despite Disney’s corporate policy of anonymity) some stories were distinct from others. At the same time, the idea that there

²⁸ “The peak came in 1953, when the title [*Walt Disney’s Comics and Stories*] sold more than 3 million copies a month, making it the most popular comic book ever published” (Andrae 6).

was a “Good Duck Artist” suggests an investment of time and money, and it implies a rigorous dedication to scouring the mass of Disney comics. There is a correlation in this period between the fans who studied Disney comics closely enough to form these distinctions, the fans who laboured to communicate with each other about their connoisseurship, and the fans who eventually broke the publisher’s policy and discovered Barks’ identity.

Crucially, the identification of Carl Barks, resident of San Jacinto California, as “the Good Duck Artist” can be imagined as discursively giving a name and body to the half-formed concept of “the Good Duck Artist.” Naming is well within Michel Foucault’s definition of the author-as-function,²⁹ leaving the functions of the idea of “the Good Duck Artist” intact once a proper name was attached. Unsurprisingly most interactions with Barks as an individual centred on praising him and inquiring about his inspiration, methods, contexts, personal life—in other words, on appreciating the man and also trying to limit the meaning of the comics. Barks himself once commented on his feeling that when people praised “Barks” they were describing some person other than himself (Ault 107).

From the 1970s to 90s Barks the Good Duck Artist was publicly celebrated as a great artist. This took the form not just of interviews and fan-mail, but also mass market reprints, academic and popular critical appreciation, and institutional awards. Barks, along with Jack Kirby and Will Eisner himself, was an initial inductee into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 1987, a moment when comics were palpably in the process of becoming both art and

²⁹ “It would seem that the author’s name, unlike other proper names, does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead, the name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being. The author’s name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture” (Foucault 284). “[the author function] does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects—positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals” (Foucault 287).

literature,³⁰ and thus required artists and authors—and Barks, as it turned out, was both, a genuine *cartoonist* in the appreciative sense of the term.

In the third phase, which overlapped with the previous but has taken place mostly after the death of the author, his work has been the subject of academic criticism and art-book style reprints. Unlike Yezbick's George Carlson, Barks had the fortune to live through several decades of fame, and thus become an actual participant in his own critical discourse. In the present, the appreciation that he received in life has continued, taking on a more curatorial tone. Perhaps because of the artist's death, it is possible to conceive of the *complete* works with some finality.

Fantagraphics Books Inc. began printing The Complete Carl Barks Disney Library in 2012. Fantagraphics Books was founded in 1976 by underground comics fans Gary Groth and Mike Catron in order to publish the *Comics Journal*, a periodical of comics criticism. Fantagraphics was highly influential in the art-comics of the 1980s and indie comics of the 1990s (Wolk 46). The publisher is associated with the less commercial and more experimental version of comics promoted by artists such as Art Spiegelman and other publishers such as Drawn and Quarterly (Jenkins 2012 4). Bearing the motto “Publisher of the World's Greatest Cartoonists” and an in-house oral history titled *We Told You So: Comics as Art*, Fantagraphics was financially supported for many years by their pornographic imprint Eros Comix (42). Fantagraphics often reprints as elevated art the work of the “greatest” cartoonists of the less mainstream comics tradition, even when that tradition was enormously commercially successful in the past. The Barks series imitates (and follows almost exactly) other comparable Fantagraphics projects such

³⁰ Will Eisner's deployment of the term “sequential art” in the 1980s (Eisner 5) was chronologically accompanied by the term “graphic novel,” which is of uncertain origin but is generally thought of being popularized by Eisner's 1978 *A Contract with God* (Goulart 2001 332). Eisner's “sequential art” concept is particularly influential on McCloud's foundational 1993 *Understanding Comics*.

as *The Complete Peanuts* and *The Complete Crumb Comics*.³¹ These reprints indicate a particularly material investment in the idea of cartoonist-as-auteur.

I will return to the idea of Barks' *oeuvre* and the Fantagraphics reprints, but I would like to note that from the point of view of a reader encountering Barks, one very significant thing has changed between 1942 and 2012 in terms of evaluating Barks. Barks' work was originally seen as a positive contrast to the work that surrounded it. Implicit in seeing Barks as the Good Duck Artist is the idea that the other Duck Artists were Not Good.³² In 2012, however, while Barks is openly lauded as a master, there is a sense that his work is more valuable than unseen others from the receding past. In the 21st century, a reader is increasingly less likely to find Barks' work anywhere near the work that originally allowed his value to be seen by contrast. The connoisseur judgment, which has not changed except to shift context, is now that the Complete Carl Barks is good *as comics in general* rather than specifically in terms of Disney's duck comics.

The Carl Barks story "Back to the Klondike" has reappeared several times in North America (and been adapted once, as an episode of the animated TV show *DuckTales*).³³ "Back to

³¹ The Complete Crumb Comics reprints all of R. Crumb's work over 17 softcover volumes between 1987 and 2004. The Complete Peanuts reprints all of Charles Schulz's newspaper comic strips, in the form of 27 hardcover volumes between 2004 and 2016. Fantagraphics has also published *The Complete E.C. Segar Popeye*, large selections from the newspaper work of Walt Kelly and George Herriman, and is currently publishing a Hal Foster *Prince Valiant* series as well as the early comic book work of Steve Ditko—all remediated into relatively expensive hardcovers.

³² Other cartoonists who worked on the Duck characters at the same time as Barks include artists Tony Strobl, Phil de Lara, and Dick Moores, who along with their colleagues have never had their work reprinted in editions organized around their work. Al Taliaferro, who wrote and drew the *Donald Duck* newspaper comic strip at the same time as Barks wrote and drew comic books, has been the subject of a similar critical praise, earning him hardcover reprints as part of IDW's Library of American Comics imprint. Despite this Taliaferro never earned the title "the Good Duck Artist." As Neil Gaiman remarks, "[Barks] was the good duck artist because you look at his stuff, and it was better than the other duck artists" (Gaiman, *The Love and Rockets Companion* 117). Interestingly, few other artist were cartoonists like Barks, in the sense that he typically wrote his own material but they very often did not. Since the term originates from fandom, it's apparent that readers were able to distinguish differences between anonymous artist with an ease that did not translate to writers. Strobl, for example, illustrated some stories written by Barks.

³³ "Back to the Klondike," 28 October 1987.

the Klondike” is also generally praised as a prime example of Barks’ strengths by fans and scholars, and therefore is appropriate for my effort to expand the parameters of the comics discussion.

“Back to the Klondike” was originally published in *Four Color* #456 by Dell Publishing. Physically *Four Color* #456 resembles nearly every mid-century American comic book, but their description is usually elided, so I will provide bibliographical details here. *Four Color* #456 is a pamphlet, made up of 8 folio sheets of approximately A4 sized newsprint paper with a cover on one sheet of glossier stock, held together by two staples. It has a retail price of 10¢ and is dated March 1953. Nearly all of those terms become complicated when looking at the actual object. On the cover, the title of the comic book reads “WALT DISNEY’S UNCLE SCROOGE BACK TO THE KLONDIKE” with the three phrases on different lines. The words “Four Color” do not appear, even in the copyright information on the inside page. The number “456” only appears in the copyright information. This is because *Four Color* is what comics historians have chosen to call this series, following Dell’s numbering system to suggest a continuity.

In fact, *Four Color* does not remotely resemble the way most American comic books are numbered. It was an anthology series, which might bear the name of Uncle Scrooge one month, Popeye the next, and Dick Tracy the month after that, never directly stating that they followed each other. Each issue contained *only* stories about one particular character. Furthermore, not only are comics, much like magazines, notorious for cover dates that do not indicate when they appeared on newsstands or were sent to stores, but *Four Color* in particular is known for eccentric periodicity. “With *Four Color*, you never knew what was coming. You never knew *when* it was coming. They came at you three, four, five times a month” (Duin and Richardson 177).

Some facts about the history of this object can be found by contextual research. As the copyright indicia on the inside cover indicates, *Four Color* #456 was printed by Western Publication and Lithographing Company for the Dell Publishing Company. The largest name on the cover is “Uncle Scrooge,” and the second largest is “Walt Disney,” and the logo of “Dell” is significantly smaller; Western is not referred to except once in the indicia. Carl Barks’ name appears nowhere on the cover nor on the inside. All three names on the cover, along with the title, are located in the top third of the cover, which is a feature of newsstand distribution and display techniques. Yet strangely, by researching the history of Barks, Disney, Dell, and Western in this period, the order suggested branding is distinctly rearranged. While Barks and not Walt Disney is actually the writer and artist, the credited company Dell itself also had comparatively little to do with this object. Like all Dell comics in this period, this object was produced at the facilities of Western in Poughkeepsie, New York. As Crider has noted, Western’s comics production was more or less autonomous from Dell, as Western “was responsible in fact not only for production but also for contracts and all editorial work” (93). The fact that Barks and Western are the least-heralded names in *Four Color* #456 indicates the significance of branding over attribution.

Just as the name Walt Disney is a brand that promises a style and quality of story, the name Dell associates this comic book with a corporate presence, though again Western is arguably more significant to understanding the object. Lyle (14-15) reprints a map of Western’s Poughkeepsie facility, a former Fiat automotive plant (Barrier 19). The two-storey building was divided between hardbound books (on the second floor) and paperbacks and comics on the first floor. As can be seen on Lyle’s map, the production of comics differs from paperbacks only in the bindery (since the comics are saddle-stitch stapled and the books are perfect bound, two quite

distinct binding methods). Lyle's map shows the "flow" of products by demonstrating their paths through the building, and the bindery is the only place the paperback books and comics diverge. Dell, a prominent brand in the "paperback revolution" that had swept American culture in the 1940s alongside comic books, thus had their products as the result of near-identical processes in the same physical space. The Dell paperbacks and Dell comic books make a circle through the Poughkeepsie building, ending up in the same truck loading zone / railroad depot. This was *also* where type and photolithographs arrived from Western's facility in Racine Wisconsin, via a shipping network that had trucks "stopping midway in Ohio to exchange loads with trucks coming from Poughkeepsie" (Lyles 13).

These details may seem irrelevant, and perhaps we will never know the unknown location in Ohio where this chiasmus took place. The details emphasize the great degree to which industrial processes were necessary to create the comic book in front of us, and that they were almost identical processes to the creation of the paperbacks which would share the newsstand. *Four Color* #456 is not really a work of art by Walt Disney, nor was it produced by Dell Comics really, or even Western alone—but it is also not exactly a work of art attributable to Carl Barks alone. *Four Color* #456 is an undeniably industrial product.

To step further back from *Four Color* for a moment, the naming of publishers suggests histories that emphasize what comics were and were not in 1953. Dell Publishing had originally been a magazine publisher, of cheap pulp magazines in the 1920s. They had begun to publish comics in the 1930s, when a great many magazine publishers constituted "comics" as a publishing fad. For Dell this would be repeated analogously with their entry into the "paperback" publishing trend of the 1940s, at which they were enormously successful. Dell was hardly exceptional in any of these trends, except perhaps in the degree of their success. Rather, this

corporate history reveals the mutual origins of magazines, comic books, and paperbacks as trends in a publishing corporation's history (Davis 94, Marcus 16, Lyle *passim*).

All three kinds of print existed in the same distribution system. Publisher Dell used the American News Company for distribution. While the American News Co. owned a great many newsstands, their primary business was selling returnable periodicals and books to other newsstands. By "returnable" I mean the classic business model in which unsold merchandise was marked as such (typically by having covers removed), returned via the same distribution system that had delivered them, and "pulped," turned back into paper. The system was enormously popular, and Dell's partner succeeded at it to the extent of being monopolistic: the American News Company was the subject of a federal antitrust lawsuit during the 1950s.³⁴ It was rare and notable for a company to use an independent distribution company before that point; it was also rare for a company to *not* overprint their merchandise on the premise of future pulping. The example of Bantam Books is useful, since their policy of underprinting was exceptional to the general rule (Davis 252). This is the invisible system lying behind *Four Color* #456's smallest but perhaps most significant cover element: the 10¢ price. The system of returnable periodicals; the practices of the American News Company; the industrial efficiency of Western: all served to create this comic book, but also to keep the price of this comic book down, within reach of the purchasing power of the millions of Americans, children and adults, who read it regularly. All of

³⁴ Found guilty of restraint of trade, ANC's wholly owned newsstand subsidiary Union News "agreed to buy, sell, and display magazines on the basis of its own interests, not giving preferential treatment to magazines distributed by American News Company" (Nyberg 125). As a result, ANC lost many distribution clients, and "In July, 1957, the American News Co. disbanded its distribution system..." (Lyles 26). Amy Kiste Nyberg identifies three comic book companies driven out of business by these events, but the collapse of ANC had particularly dramatic and long-lasting consequences for the company that would become Marvel Comics (Howe 32).

these practices are also, of course, ironically why *Four Color* #456 is now worth a considerable amount more than ten cents.³⁵ It was, in short, an ephemeral industrial product.

The copy I consulted is no longer in very good shape. It has a variety of flaws that can be enumerated in the language of collectors. The cover had flaking at the edges. In the interior pages, the paper is tanning from the outside in, well on the way to browning. The pages have become brittle and begun to crumble. As Paul Sassienie has explained, both the turning of white paper to brown and the stiffness is a result of the industrial manufacture of pulp paper, since at the moment of its creation, the natural binder lignin begins to react to the acid added to the mixture, a process accelerated by exposure to oxygen (133). It could be worse; as D.B. Wardle explains, any metallic impurities in the paper can assist in “the conversion of the sulphurous acid [in polluted air] into the much more active sulphuric acid” (4). More precisely, the chemical, rather than mechanical, process of making pulp paper runs less risk of this kind of acidification, so newsprint (apparently generally made chemically) is both better at preservation than many kinds of paper and generally on the low end of the scale of quality—especially compared to hand-made paper.

The quality of *Four Color* #456, and the original “Back to the Klondike,” is poor. In addition to physical degeneration, the tension between art and industrial process is evident throughout. The colouring is subpar. On nearly every page, one of the four colours is “out of registration” with the others. *Four Color* was created using the standard four colour process, in which the page was imprinted with cyan, yellow, magenta, and black ink, creating different colours through their overlaps. Registration refers to these inks’ spatial relationship to each

³⁵ ComicBookRealm.com, a site which aggregates online auction listings, lists *Four Color* #456 as being worth between 3900 USD (in Gem Mint or virtually perfect condition) and 13 USD (in Poor condition, where readability is adversely affected by condition). These are market values: as ComicBookRealm advises in every listing, “... a comic is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it.”

other, so being out of registration or register means that the inks do not overlay each other exactly. In *Four Color* #456 these are often quite visible, resulting in blank space on one side of a page's shapes and a spilling-over on the other. Since black is one of the four colours, it is not really accurate to say that the colours are out of sync *with* the line art. Nonetheless, because we typically read the black lines as the norm, that's how it appears. This discrepancy rarely covers more than a millimetre of space, but is quite noticeable, particularly because it usually transgresses the basic unit of "the comics language"—that is, the colour often spills over the border of each panel into the gutter. This reveals that the gutter and panels are themselves a creation of colouring, making up only one of the four layers of visible marks on the page. A variety of other printing errors, from apparently random blotches to spotty solids to faded lines, distinguish the colouring of *Four Color* #456. As a result, the colouring process, which was not undertaken by Barks but rather by Western's even-more-anonymous colourists, is extraordinarily visible in *Four Color* #456.

"Back to the Klondike" takes up the first twenty four pages of the interior of *Four Color* #456. It is followed by the eight-page story "Something Fishy Here." In the original *Four Color* #456, the inside front and back cover, as well as the reverse of the back cover each display a one-page story by Barks. The two stories on the inside covers are presented in black and white despite being on the reverse of the full-color cover. The story on the back cover is also coloured. Whatever role the colouring plays, the fact that *Four Color* #456 also includes two stories in monochrome creates a contrast within the book. This both emphasizes what the four colour process looks like, and circulates another version of Duck stories, where the lines are prominent—these two stories strongly resemble what comic art looks like after it's been inked but before it's been coloured, though it isn't clear how widely this would have been known.

Rather than implying an artist distinct from the colourist, these black-and-white stories change how we read the other stories, specifically in that they inform any reader that rather than an integral part of the comic, colour is optional. A reader observing the colour stories and looking for the outlines of a black-and-white comic is looking backwards through the process and into something like Carl Barks' work. The final product is far from being the work of only one creator. In contrast to later printings, in *Four Color* #456 there are no advertisements at any point.

“Back to the Klondike” was reprinted in the smaller “digest” format in 1966, as part of a 25¢ collection entitled *The Best of Uncle Scrooge and Donald Duck*. Despite this apparent canonization, it is important to distinguish this from later credit given to Barks, as he apparently went unnamed in this printing.³⁶

In “Back to the Klondike,” Uncle Scrooge is losing his memory, and a doctor prescribes capsules that restore his memory of a cache of “AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS OF PURE NUGGETS” (1977 5.1) which he buried fifty years ago at White Agony Creek in the Klondike. Taking Donald and his nephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie to the Yukon, Scrooge announces his intention to collect a thousand dollars owed to him by “GLITTERING GOLDIE, THE STAR OF THE NORTH” (6.5) a character with whom he had a romantic history. After a lengthy hike over the “Chilcoot Pass,” the characters arrive in the vicinity of Dawson City only to find that someone is living in a cabin over Scrooge’s old claim. A “**LITTLE OLD LADY**” (18.2) uses her pet bear Blackjack to menace the four as they try to dig out the gold, leading to a sequence of traps being sprung on both sides. The old lady turns to be Glittering Goldie, and she and Scrooge agree to a contest to see who can dig “**MORE GOLD IN TEN MINUTES,**” (30.2)

³⁶ I have been unable to locate a copy for consultation.

and the winner will retain Goldie's money. Goldie digs up Scrooge's old cache, and Scrooge bewails that he should have taken more memory capsules.

"Back to the Klondike" next appears in the United States in a comic book titled *Uncle Scrooge* #142, cover-dated July 1977, in an object physically similar to the 1953 book. Unlike *Four Color* #456, *Uncle Scrooge* #142 is traditionally numbered, and on the cover: issues 141 and 143 appeared in the months surrounding it, implying some level of serialization and a sequence, both of which are curious given that this is a reprint of a story that was then twenty-four years old. The numbers do, however, argue that this title and character have a history. Unlike *Four Color*, *Uncle Scrooge* is an instalment of a sequential chronicle of one particular character.

This is a comic book bearing the logo once again of Walt Disney, but this time published by Gold Key Comics, Western Publishing's own successor to Dell's licensed properties. The 1977 "Back to the Klondike" has been recoloured, for the most part dealing with the registration problems and blotches I described above. So on page 8, panel 8, for example, where the 1953 printing has two red marks that cross Scrooge's word balloon and overlap with his hat, the 1977 printing does not. There has been recolouring of another order: Scrooge's overcoat in the interior pages is red, which brings this story into harmony with the majority of portrayals of Scrooge,³⁷ though *not* the original of this story, in which it was green. The cover has been reused from 1953, though flipped into a mirror image, and on the 1977 cover Scrooge's coat is still green. This apparently shallow matter of Scrooge's colour becomes significant if we think of it as part of establishing a "uniform" for Scrooge: not only does he wear the same thing but it is iconically

³⁷ "... the familiar old frock we've seen him wearing for sixty years" (Rosa V5 163).

recognizable as part of his look. It seems curious, then, that the one place the coat wasn't recoloured was the cover, the most public face of the book.

Other more notable differences between 1953 and 1977 present themselves. The 1977 book is approximately five millimetres shorter and a centimetre narrower than the 1953 book. As I stated, the artwork has been reused but recoloured (which is to say that three of the four colours have been redone), including the cover, which means that all the art has been slightly shrunk from the earlier printing. This is only a surface level indication of what should be quite obvious looking anywhere outside the story: *Uncle Scrooge* #142 is a different object than *Four Color* #456. For one thing, it costs 30¢, exactly three times as much as its 1953 equivalent. For another *Uncle Scrooge* #142 is also eight quarto sheets held within a glossier cover—but *Uncle Scrooge* #142 only includes “Back to the Klondike” and none of the four other stories present in the 1953 book. Instead, *Uncle Scrooge* #142 has advertisements.

The role of advertising in 1970s comic books is one that has received study (Figure 9). Judith S. Duke has noted that “despite the fact that the trade magazine *Advertising Age* says the largest advertising vehicles in the children's publishing industry are comic books, most of the industry's income comes from single copy circulation” (Duke 118). The provided table conveniently covers the major American publishers in the first half of 1977 (immediately preceding the publication of *Uncle Scrooge* #142). Gold Key's figures don't list subscriptions, but going by the publishers that do it would be surprising if Gold Key's major source of income was not *also* single issues sold by retail outlets. According to Duke's industry information, Gold Key had the second lowest price for advertising among the major publishers, at \$4950 per four color page, and they are solidly in the lower price range, charging a fraction of Marvel and DC rates (around \$16000). Gold Key's monthly “single issue” sales average around 4 million for the

same period; advertising rates are not exactly proportionate to circulation. Surprisingly, then, for a relative afterthought to the business of comics, these advertisements have a pronounced effect on the story. Even more interestingly, some of them use the comics form.

The following products are advertised in *Uncle Scrooge* #142: Hostess Cup Cakes and Twinkies; the *Starstream* series of science fiction comic book adaptations; a business where the reader can go door to door selling “personalized metal social security plates”; the ‘Handy Andy’ toy tool set; the Mickey Mouse club of comic books and books; Hostess Cup Cakes (again); and a lengthy assortment of novelties and posters from Gandalf Products Co. As Jennifer K. Stuller has noted, the advertisements of comic books can suggest the publisher’s perceived audience, particularly in gendered terms (238). The products advertised in *Uncle Scrooge* #142 skew somewhat towards a pre-adolescent male audience. In the ad for Mickey Mouse comics and books (the ones published by Whitman and Golden Books, also divisions of Western Publishing), two cartoon boys enthuse over the “Puzzles, stickers” and “New stories” to be found at “your favorite store,” while a cartoon girl holding a book with Minnie Mouse on the cover adds “and cut-out doll books” (Barks 1977 [17]) (Figure 10).

As that description implies, the Whitman/Golden Books ad takes the form of a single splash page panel, where three children are reading products presumably analogous to *Uncle Scrooge* #142. They are all drawn in a style markedly unlike that of the main story. Most of the ads in this issue also use the form of comics, though only one, by using multiple panels, can be said to have a sequence. The first ad for Cup Cakes and Twinkies (Figure 11) shows two baseball players about to eat their respective Hostess products out of their gloves, at either side of the page in what is not quite a splash panel because there are no panels at all. Though there is no dialogue and the figures (especially the real baseball players like Reggie Jackson who appear on

drawn images of their baseball cards at the bottom of the page) are drawn in a notably more realistic style, the advertisement seems to be designed to run smoothly on the inside cover of a comic book. This is hardly a shocking revelation, but while we know very clearly this is an advertisement (it is labelled as such by a header at the top margin of the page), it is worth considering that in 1953 the same space was taken up by a one-page black and white Uncle Scrooge comic.

In his study of television, Raymond Williams concludes that the distinction between broadcasting and earlier communications systems is that while previously “items were discrete” (a book, a pamphlet, a meeting at a particular time and place), in broadcasting “the real programme that is offered is a *sequence* or set of alternative sequences of these and other similar events” (81, italics in original). Williams immediately blurs the lines of this distinction, acknowledging that “some earlier kinds of communication contained, it is true, internal variation and at times miscellany” (81) giving as examples the magazine and the modern newspaper. Importantly, in addition to unrelated news items, this miscellany effect includes advertising and different modes of representation such as drawings and photographs. To Williams, broadcasting (radio and then television) inherited this tradition from print and from live occasions, eventually shifting from “from the concept of sequence as *programming* to the concept of sequence as *flow*” (83). While Williams acknowledges that television is still presented as a series of units divided by time, he calls for the reader to consider “the normal experience” of broadcasting (83). While much of Williams’ comments are specific to broadcasting, it is worth considering the way that the overall “flow” of a comic book includes elements beyond the story. Trying to explain the impact of the “‘low’ mass advertising” that filled comic books, critics Miles Beller and Jerry Leibowitz point to comic books’ mass circulation compared to “more respectable publications”

(9) but also quote fan and editor Maggie Thompson suggesting that comic book advertisements are even *more* significant to the reader than on television: “While TV is passive, its commercials just coming out at you, reading the ads in comics is active” (quoted in Beller and Leibowitz, 12). Tom Ballou, vice president of advertising for DC Comics, suggests that comics readers pay closer attention to advertisements as part of a reading style that involves focusing on detail. According to Lynn Spiegel, Williams’ “flow” is “...an entire movement... of textual material that parade before us on any single occasion,” one of the most notable consequences of which is that commercials (or advertisements) are not interruptions but “an integral part” of the “textual process” (xxiv). Underscoring this point, many comic book advertisements, such as the famous Charles Atlas ads, include elements of comics.

The flow of a comic book issue can be seen clearly with the second Hostess ad in this issue. On page 21 of *Uncle Scrooge* #142, we see a one-page comic (Figure 12). Where the main story opens with the logo of “Walt Disney’s Uncle Scrooge” in “Back to the Klondike”, this one has the logo of “Iron Man” in “A Dull Pain.” In it, we see the Marvel Comics superhero Iron Man foil the plan of “Monotony Man,” a character who has “the monotonous touch” and seeks only to make life dull. This dullness is visually represented by the increasing grey scale of the artwork—panel 21.3 is entirely in shades of grey, which incidentally very closely resembles Barks’ method for showing night-time sequences in “Back to the Klondike.” In “A Dull Pain!” one character in the background of 21.3 says “There’s no hope,” while in the foreground a boy with a baseball bat mopes blankly. It’s Iron Man who redundantly explains that this visual device indicates mood: “It’s gonna take more than color to bring people out of this grey mood,” he says as he puts on the Iron Man costume (21.2). In 21.4, we see Iron Man urging people to “BRIGHTEN UP YOUR LIVES WITH... THESE *DELICIOUS HOSTESS® CUP CAKES!*”

Iron Man is tossing Hostess Cup Cakes down at the crowd, and if our eye is drawn downwards by this action, we see beneath the blue-grey sky and the grey buildings, people in full comic book colour, and the protesting outstretched arm of the Monotony Man. In the last panel, Iron Man claims that “YOU CAN’T BE BORED, WHEN YOU’RE EATING *DELICIOUS HOSTESS CUP CAKES*.” And now the Monotony Man, the last grey image in the panel, is running away in the distance. Colour is an important element of the ads as well as the stories themselves, in this case rising to the level of a theme.

If I have described this ad in detail, it is partially because the idea of fun commodities permeates this version of *Uncle Scrooge*. Hostess will bring the reader “full-color” baseball cards, yes, but the Mickey Mouse club books are “NEW! FUN THINGS” and the last three pages of this book are the visually dense ads for “Fun Tricks Free Things” from Gandalf Products. Even the social security plate selling scheme promises that “everyone” will be “amazed and delighted” by the low price of their product. Satisfaction, as Gandalf Products puts it, is guaranteed. The only ad that does not quite promise fun or delight or for that matter boast of cheapness is the one for Whitman’s Starstream line of science fiction comic books, which are instead “A BOLD NEW JOURNEY INTO SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE.”

There is a theme to *Uncle Scrooge* #142 that was not present in *Four Color* #456. Iron Man’s Hostess adventure seems to thematically underscore the importance of “fun” colour in comic books, but rather than fun, “Back to the Klondike” has been described as a notable story for being “the only one to reveal a romantic side” to Scrooge (Andrae 200).³⁸ This is an uncommon side of Scrooge, as underscored by the fact that it is unexpected even *within* “Back to

³⁸ Some readers felt the story (as originally printed) was more ambiguous: “There was a reference to a long-ago dance hall girl, about whom Scrooge seemed to become mysteriously introspective for one meter panel—but nothing more was explained about that” (Rosa 179).

the Klondike”. The story plays with our expectations of Scrooge for suspense: in panel 6.4, Scrooge having regained his memory of the Klondike says that “I REMEMBER A GIRL! (SIGH!)” to which Donald stands aghast and one of the nephews exclaims “A **GIRL!**” In 6.6, Scrooge, looking wistfully off at the sunset, tells them that ‘Glittering Goldie’ was “**THE ONLY LIVE ONE I EVER KNEW!**” In the next panel the nephews and Donald are radiating lines of gleeful surprise. This story has an unexpected focus on something other than colorful “fun.”

But on the next page, a six-panel sequence subverts this subversion of Scrooge’s presumed character (and note that even if we have somehow never realized that Scrooge is not usually a romantic, the other characters helpfully let us know that this is surprising, so within the story he is not usually a romantic). In 7.1 the nephews ask if Goldie was Scrooge’s “sweet-heart,” to which he says ‘BAH!’. In 7.2 Donald asks Scrooge why then he gets a “faraway” look in his eyes whenever he thinks about Goldie, in a panel that includes a gobsmacked-looking Scrooge with a *particularly* faraway look in his eyes. In 7.3 a scowling Scrooge explains that Goldie owes him a thousand dollars, or rather as he continues in 7.4, compounded *interest* of fifty years on a thousand dollars, or one billion dollars, culminating in 7.5 where a deeply satanic-looking Scrooge with dollar signs flying off his brow cackles that he would be glad to see Goldie again. In the next panel, Donald walks away noting that “FOR JUST A MINUTE, THERE, I THOUGHT UNCLE SCROOGE WAS **HUMAN!**”

It would seem that this is a straightforward example of Scrooge’s emotions being transferred from “ordinary” pursuits to his insatiable quest for money, complete with the rank injustice of his desire to find an old (romantic) acquaintance after fifty years in order to charge her a billion dollars. So far these sequences play out the same in 1953 as they do in 1977, and in fact as they will in 2012, though the colouring has changed each time. For the next several pages

Scrooge acts as a reader would expect, forcing Donald to carry him piggyback across the Chilcoat Pass to Whitehorse rather than take a plane, only to be berated by Donald when it turns out that Scrooge actually owns the airline that could have flown them for free. On page 11, Scrooge and the nephews enter the old Black Jack Ballroom still standing in Dawson City. Reminiscing on 11.6, a wistful Scrooge bears more or less the same expression as on 6.6, leading us to suspect the inevitable pattern to repeat itself. In 11.6, Scrooge is recalling Goldie: “SHE WAS SINGING ‘AFTER THE BALL’ IN A VOICE AS PRETTY AS THE CRACKLE OF NEW BILLS!” and on 11.7, the bottom right-hand panel of this page, a grasping Scrooge has reversed to proclaim “HA! ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS AT COMPOUND INTEREST! ... WAIT TILL I GET MY HANDS ON THAT OLD GAL!”

Yet the reverses continue: on page 27, the nephews, who have discovered that the elderly Glittering Goldie has been squatting on Scrooge’s old gold claim for fifty years, and that she lives an impoverished life, tell Scrooge. On 27.5, Scrooge (with the same look as on 6.6 and 11.6), says “GOLDIE!..... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS” and, paralleling the movement between 11.6 and 11.7, reverses into 27.6 to say “HAAA! THAT MAKES IT JUST **PERFECT!**”. On 27.8 he claims he’ll get everything “that old chiseler owns,” but on 27.9 (again, the bottom right hand corner of a page and the bottom right hand corner of a quarto sheet), Donald questions why Scrooge thinks he needs to comb his whiskers to collect on an I.O.U. The next several pages contain many of these reverses, from a ruthless Scrooge on 28.5 becoming deferential when he first sees Goldie in 28.6, to being bashful on 28.7 and enraged on 28.8. On the next page, Goldie reveals that she has very little indeed, having given her wealth to children left orphaned by mining disasters, then leaves to go “TO THE **POORHOUSE**—NATURALLY!” (29.5). Scrooge rushes after her to suggest a deal on the bottom of that quarto

page, but when we turn the page we find Scrooge proposing that he and Goldie race digging gold. The deal gets worse, as Scrooge tells the nephews to dig on a desolate knoll that they all know has no gold, and the nephews call him an “OLD VIPER!” (30.4). Goldie finds the most gold because she has found Scrooge’s lost cache of gold nuggets, in what would seem to be an ironic reverse and comeuppance for Scrooge’s heartless greed. But in the last panels of the story, Donald explains to the nephews that despite Scrooge carrying on about how he forgot where buried the nuggets, Scrooge *has* been taking his memory medication, and that “HE **RIGGED THAT RACE SO GOLDIE WOULD FIND HIS CACHE!**” (30.7). As Scrooge walks off in the distance, feigning (?) upset, the nephews regard him with what might be the epitomal message of the story. “WELL, WHADDAYA KNOW! GOOD OLD UNCA SCROOGE!” (30.8).

The nephews are more or less in the audience’s position, as we find out alongside them that Scrooge can be a romantic, but that he would rather not be seen as such. He is, as Donald put it earlier, human. While this is true of both versions so far, this reprinting is doing different things, because it is a different thing. The 1977 “Back to the Klondike” circulated as only one fictional story, interspersed with ads that proclaim the joy of getting free baseball cards with cup cakes, of making money in free time and implicitly using that money to buy Disney products like these. While *Uncle Scrooge* #142 is not *more* of a product than *Four Color* #456, it contains a different message about products, and postulates some facts about the audience (young men), the product (where it can be purchased), and your other activities and priorities in life. The message that even Scrooge has a romantic side is altered by the suggestion that it is of a piece with the fun on sale “AT YOUR FAVOURITE STORE”—fun to consume to stave off the Monotony Man. Since the story emphasizes that there are priorities for Scrooge that go beyond his greed, the fact that one iteration of this story is filled with artwork and text that attempts to get the reader to buy things

suggests the gap between Scrooge's life and the reader's. If Scrooge stands for acquisitive thriftiness so astonishing that only one woman has ever transcended it, the paratext is discouraging the reader from adopting or lionizing this view, instead pushing fun deals.

The presence of these ads is important to understanding what "Back to the Klondike" is doing, but also of interest is how the ads are situated in the story. To return to the idea of "flow," in *Uncle Scrooge* #142 ads take up pages 12, 16, 17, 21, and 32, in addition to the inside front and back covers, and the back cover (which is identical to the novelty-catalogue ad on page 32). Each ad takes up a full page, with the exception of 12, in which two half-page ads appear on the same page. Pages 16 and 17 are two advertising pages facing each other, and are also the central two pages of the issue—the only place in the pamphlet where a quarto sheet faces itself and the staples are visible. 12 and 21 are also two parts of the same sheet of paper. They would face each other if the central two sheets were detached from the staples. Despite the asymmetry of the front and back matter (one advertising page on the inside front cover is mirrored by three consecutive pages of advertising at the end and the back cover), the effect created is one of regularity. Unlike *Four Color* #456, *Uncle Scrooge* #142 only reprints one Uncle Scrooge adventure. In its presentation of a single episode in Scrooge's life, punctuated by regular breaks for advertising, the "flow" of *Uncle Scrooge* #142 strongly resembles that of the commercial American television episode—in this case, re-presenting a story that was not designed to have ads at all. The closing, where a page of advertising is followed by an inside and outside back cover, resembles nothing so much as an extended repetitious television commercial. In this case because all three pages advertise the wares of Gandalf Products, and two of the ads are identical though printed on different quality paper. The way the ads in the 1977 re-presentation alter the story is through altering the "flow" of the book.

This has consequences when reading the book for the plot. Advertising pages appear in the following places in “Back to the Klondike” the story: first, after the cover but before the title page. Secondly, on 12, the verso page after 11—on the page following the recto page in which Scrooge’s sentiment is interrupted by his greed for the second time. Thirdly, on both the verso and recto pages following 15, a page that ends on the lower right hand corner with Goldie’s voice calling Blackjack the bear off his pursuit of Donald and Scrooge. At this point in the story we haven’t met Goldie yet. Her voice comes from off-panel and is unidentifiable), so it could be argued in the style of Michael Millington that the advertising serves the purpose of suspense. One ad and two panels later, on 18.2, we find out that Scrooge can see “**A LITTLE OLD LADY WALKING AWAY WITH THE BEAR!**” The fourth ad takes up page 21, on a recto page after Scrooge and Donald have successfully captured Blackjack and Scrooge is having honey uncomfortably licked off of him. This is the Iron Man adventure which—along with the Hostess ad—is the only advertisement in the book labelled “ADVERTISEMENT” at the top. The fifth advertising sequence is on the verso page 32, after the conclusion of the story, with two ads facing each other across page 32 and the inside back cover.

Of these five advertising sequences, one (pages 16-17) serves to increase suspense, by enhancing the delay of the reader’s progress. The fourth example is less clear because it ends with the characters having achieved their short-term goal of capturing the bear—when we come back to them post-advertisement, Scrooge is saying “**NOW LET’S PLAN OUR NEXT MOVE**” sometime later (22.1). This is a kind of suspense if not a particularly dramatic one, since we don’t know what the ducks will do once they’ve neutralized the bear, but we also have no reason to think they’ll do anything other than continue what they were doing before interrupted by the bear, in this case digging for gold quietly at night. The second example might qualify as a kind of

suspense as well, but since we have previously seen Scrooge reverse between sentiment and greed in much the same manner, we might accurately predict what we will see next. Of the five “ad breaks” in “Back to the Klondike” in 1977, then, perhaps two out of five enhance any suspenseful quality in the original story. It is the second ad sequence that is most interesting. This is the area of greatest divergence between printings of “Back to the Klondike,” as is particularly clear in the 2012 Fantagraphics reprinting.

In 2012 Fantagraphics published *Only a Poor Old Man* as a volume in their Complete Carl Barks Disney Library. Physically this object is quite different than either *Four Color* #456 and *Uncle Scrooge* #142. It is obvious that it is not what has traditionally been called a comic book, because it is a hardcover approximately an inch thick. Not only is the idea of re-presenting the complete *oeuvre* of an artist based in the objective value of that artist and the consistent worth of all their work, but the books themselves make clear what is valuable. They are palpably more expensive, for one thing, and present *only* the work of Barks, whether stories of any length or covers, and they also include semi-scholarly notes about each story. As this would indicate, it is not a facsimile of the original that Fantagraphics seeks to circulate, but rather a product as close to Barks’ mind as feasible. This edition thus bears the traces of fan history as well as the scholarly approach driven by auteurism.

Another relevant feature is the circulation of Barks’ name and story. Aside from his name on the front cover (approximately the same size as that of Walt Disney), a photograph of Barks appears on the back of each cover. In addition, some version of his biography circulates in each volume of the library. One of the classic examples of Gerard Genette’s idea of paratext, the author’s biography has long been understood to give meanings to the attached text. The story of Barks contains many pieces of information that could change how we read the story: he was a

Westerner, for example, which perhaps changes how we think of his frequent invocation of Western American landscapes and tropes (237). The most significant work done by Barks' biography is the idea that he toiled in obscurity for many years (238). The idea of the "Good Duck Artist" implies that this object is salvage, a recovery from the shipwrecks of pop junk, and valuable because it reproduces "the superiority of his work" (238).

Given Barks' tremendous importance, it is perhaps surprising to discover that every page of *Only a Poor Old Man* has been recoloured. However, colouring is particularly easy to separate from the work of a comics artist from this period, because it was very clearly an industrial rather than artistic process. Rich Tommaso's recolouring of Barks' work in *Only a Poor Old Man* is deliberately immaculate compared to the anonymous labour of whoever did *Four Color #456*. The logic, though, is not quite that Fantagraphics is trying to reproduce the object exactly as it was when Barks stopped working on it. While Tommaso's recolouring is presumably justified on the grounds that Barks never did his own colouring, Barks' 1970s accounts of his work reveal that his labour stopped earlier than one might think: Barks' wife Garé Barks inked and lettered much of his work (Ault 67). In fact they met when Garé sought to become his letterer (68). This is apparently intimate enough to suit the Fantagraphics project of making Barks the central figure, removing the obscuring effect of Western's anonymous colouring. Tommaso's recolouring is good precisely because it remains within the lines drawn by Barks (whether Carl or Garé), and because it is consistent, so it adheres to the goal of invisibility.

It also adheres to the goal of pastiche. Rather than being naturalistic, Tommaso's colouring is an imitation of mid-century funny animal colours. Somewhat less garish than the original, presumably because he was not using a simple four colour system, Tommaso's colouring overall still looks like what one might expect from a 1950s comic book, with some

particular reference to the original “Back to the Klondike.” For example, Scrooge’s coat is back to being green, but the face of the bear is now two-toned and suggests an entirely different animal. I would suggest that Tommaso’s recolouring is not naturalistic for the exact reason that it is supposed to be invisible, and I believe this also explains the changes to the bear’s face. The overall effect is reminiscent of the continuity (or “invisible”) editing style in film, whose use requires “minimal mental effort on the part of viewers” and which became the dominant style in mainstream American film because it is a system to “tell stories efficiently” and de-emphasize the construction of the product (Corrigan and White 149). In “eliminating” colour moving over the lines, the Fantagraphics version of *Four Color* #456 has minimized the traces of industrial production from the storyline itself, suggesting that the Barks work now is seen largely as the carrier of the good Duck stories and only secondly a mass commodity.

There is also the matter of how far backwards it is possible to go. According to Barks, the industrial process for making his comics involved him sending the inked and lettered pages off to the publisher, who would photograph them and then destroy the originals. While IDW has begun to release a series of “Artist Editions” of famous comic books, which reproduce the pages at the stage of the artist’s pencil drawings, this is not an option for Barks since these objects were destroyed as redundant once the photographs for lithography were taken (Ault 90). While Barks sketches exist, very few of them are versions of published images, and so Barks is excepted from the Artist Editions line, where he would otherwise seem to be an obvious subject for IDW’s physical demonstration of auteurist-cartoonist thinking.

Elements of *Four Color* #456 are present in *Only a Poor Old Man* in various ways. There is the green coat, but there is also the context of the story. The flow of *Four Color* #456 is reproduced to the extent of sequencing the five stories. This suggests that the priority is to

reproduce the original context of work by Barks. This is also suggested by the fact that Fantagraphics is republishing all of Barks' Duck work in chronological volumes; these are themselves being published *out* of sequence, so the idea is that eventually a reader will be able to put the complete works in complete order, but only at the end of the project.

In *Only a Poor Old Man* the three one-page stories appear immediately before and after the two stories that made up the rest of *Four Color* #456, "Back to the Klondike" and "Something Fishy Here." These have also been coloured by Fantagraphics in their reprinting. This would seem to complicate the assertion that Fantagraphics, being primarily interested in Barks, is most interested in the art that can be undoubtedly ascribed to Barks (or incidentally to his wife, treated as an invisible transmitter). If the black and white lines of these Uncle Scrooge stories are what Barks sent in to Western, before Western subjected them to a somewhat sloppy colouring process, why did Fantagraphics recolour these stories, *especially* since they originally appeared in black and white? I would argue that the answer lies in the overall idea of the Carl Barks Library: the demands of consistency placed on these stories by the idea of a library suggest that even stories that Western never coloured should be coloured *so that they match Barks'* other work as presented. This is a distinct stand of Fantagraphics, as Another Rainbow, the original art-house reprinters of Barks' work in the 1980s, printed his work in black and white, perhaps hewing even closer to the idea that Barks' work had value nearly unrelated to how it originally appeared on newsstands.

Like *Four Color* #456, *Only a Poor Old Man* contains no advertisements. Very much unlike *Four Color* #456, *Only a Poor Old Man* is distinctly not a cheap product, retailing in fact for \$29.99 USD—nearly three hundred times as much as *Four Color* #456 cost on the newsstand. The paper is higher quality than newsprint and seems to have already been de-

acidified. The traces of industrial printing processes are quite visible in *Four Color* #456 and minimized in *Only a Poor Old Man*. Where *Four Color* has visible staples holding the quarto sheets together, *Only a Poor Old Man* has a woven binding concealed by a hardcover spine. At the bottom of every sheet of *Four Color* #456, four visible perforation marks indicate some machine that handled the sheets; no such marks appear in *Only a Poor Old Man*.

Turning to the 2012 “Back to the Klondike” story, we arrive at the area of greatest divergence. On what is page 12 of both *Four Color* #456 and *Uncle Scrooge* #142, and page 49 of *Only a Poor Old Man*, Scrooge’s sentiment is interrupted by greed for the second time. As noted above, in 1953 turning the page showed Donald entering the room with plot-advancing information; in 1977 turning the page showed an ad for science-fiction comics and a way for the reader to make money in their spare time selling social security plate holders. In 2012, turning the page begins a four-page flashback to Scrooge’s origins. In it, a younger Scrooge brings a giant gold nugget to the ballroom, only to have a younger Goldie leap for it. Goldie tries to manipulate Scrooge through flattery into revealing his claim’s location. Goldie then drugs Scrooge and steals his gold, after which Scrooge returns to the ballroom and in a very large fight panel (50.1) defeats every man in the place. Goldie throws the nugget at Scrooge, which is when Scrooge makes her write an IOU for a thousand dollars (“AT **COMPOUND INTEREST,**” specifies Scrooge, consistent with his earlier musings on 50.5). Then Scrooge abducts Goldie, forcing her to work on his diggings for a month so that she can “**LEARN HOW HARD A MINER WORKS FOR HIS GOLD**” (51.3). The bedraggled Goldie, when Scrooge pays her fifty cents a day for her labour, “**THREW THE MONEY IN [HIS] FACE AND STOMPED OFF**” (51.8).

This version of the story, in addition to showing Scrooge engaged in some reprehensible behaviour toward Goldie, also makes *her* a more reprehensible figure by revealing her shady tactics. It also links Scrooge's punishing of Goldie to his treatment of his own relatives; in the present-day section of the narrative Scrooge comments that he may "RAISE YOUR WAGES TO **TWENTY-TWO CENTS AN HOUR**" (57.5). The nephews subsequently refuse to try to capture a bear for such a paltry sum, as on 59.5 Donald refuses to lure Goldie out of her cabin for twenty-two cents an hour. Despite the harmony of Scrooge's insulting wages, this flashback section shows us a Scrooge who primarily contrasts with the Scrooge of the present. While the present-day Scrooge first appears atop 99 cubic feet of currency, the Scrooge of the Klondike Gold Rush wears patched clothes (confusingly it seems to be the same coat he is wearing in the present, but inexplicably in worse condition). He wears a fur cap rather than a top hat. In this context, his greed seems to take on a different tone: compare his proclamation on 49.6 that "NOBODY CAN TAKE GOLD FROM SCROOGE MCDUCK!" after his drugging and robbery to his vow on 64.7 to "GET **EVERYTHING** THAT OLD CHISELER OWNS!"

So *Four Color* #456 gives us a softhearted Scrooge who pretends to be a viper, and *Uncle Scrooge* #142 gives us a Scrooge whose concerns are a world away from our own, but *Fantagraphics* provides a romantic anti-hero Scrooge. By showing him young and ruthless, and both he and Goldie in their heyday, when she was seductive and he kidnapped her, the character is remarkably different. Because it is a quasi-scholarly art book, the editorial decisions of *Fantagraphics* are more visible in the final product than those of Dell or Gold Key. An explanation for the discrepancies between stories is at hand in *Only a Poor Old Man*: in the notes to "Back to the Klondike" (218-221), writer and comics historian R. Fiore notes that "the entire flashback sequence... was deleted from the first publication in *Four Color* #456, cover-dated

March 1953” (219). In terms of materiality, the endnotes to this story explain that pages 48-51 of *Only a Poor Old Man* did not appear in the original story. As Fiore goes on to explain, the “missing pages were restored” in an earlier complete-Barks project, 1981’s *Uncle Scrooge McDuck, His Life and Times*, for which recovered art and “four replacement panels” by Barks were used. This 1981 reconstruction of the 1953 story necessitated another collaborator, Daan Jippes, to ink the extra panels. Again, the focus on Barks’ original intention is significant: these pages are figured as “missing” despite the coherence of the original story as published, and despite Barks’ possession of replacement art. Who was it missing *from*? Obviously from anyone who read the story between 1953 and 1981.³⁹

In fact, the sequence removed by Dell Publishing in 1953 was deleted precisely for its depiction of “adventure,” both in the sense of violence and sexuality, and particularly because of their combination, when Scrooge kidnaps Glittering Goldie. This certainly indicates a discrepancy between how Barks understood his audience and who Dell believed their audience was. Barks describes the editorial letter from Western as saying that “[he] had violated a lot of their taboos and should have had sense enough to know it wouldn’t work” (quoted in Ault 76). This was so far outside the norm of Scrooge’s portrayals that Dell did not allow it to be printed, and it didn’t appear until fandom’s interest in Barks overwhelmed Disney’s prudence.

Fantagraphics has constructed “Back to the Klondike” as a work of art whose quality is primarily in the story being told, as envisioned by Carl Barks on his drawing board. Several things about the 1953 “Back to the Klondike”—the lack of ads, the black and white inside cover stories, even the invisibly deleted sequence, but most of all the discrepancy in quality between

³⁹ Anyone who read only authorized printings, that is. “... in the early 1970s I got into contact with fellow comic book collectors and Barks fans. One thing the fans shared with each other were copies of a four-page Scrooge flashback sequence that had been cut—actually censored—out of ‘Back to the Klondike’ in 1953” (Rosa 179).

story and the process of its circulation—allow for this kind of recuperative quasi-scholarly fannish reading. This possibility is altered, but not foreclosed, in the 1977 *Uncle Scrooge* #142, which contains an explanation of fun and consumerism that likens “Back to the Klondike” to a cheap cupcake. It’s worth considering the tension with Scrooge’s own spending habits: a one-page strip from *Uncle Scrooge* #6 (June-August 1954) features the duck refusing to spend five cents to read a newspaper article about a business success of his, instead waiting for the public library’s free reading room to open (*Only a Poor Old Man* 203). A strip from *Four Color* #386 (March 1952) shows Scrooge buying a beggar a cup of coffee for ten cents, or rather giving the beggar his free second cup with his own purchase (*Only a Poor Old Man* 34). It is difficult to imagine Scrooge paying for cupcakes or comics; a box of Hostess Twinkies cost roughly \$1.50 in 1977. In this version of the story, a distance between Scrooge and the reader is emphasized by the advertising paratext.

Finally, comparing these three versions of the story demonstrates that the unspoken editor of The Carl Barks Disney Library is fandom itself, and specifically the fandom that is interested in the idiosyncrasies of Carl Barks’ particular vision of Scrooge, the coherence of that image, and the completeness of his work. *Only a Poor Old Man* is an attempt at creating an object out of what had been an abstraction: freeing the comic “Back to the Klondike” from its bounds in the cage of *Four Color* #456.

In 2012 there are few remains of that cage, only some details and endnotes. *Only a Poor Old Man* is not cheap, not fragile, and is not intended to appear alongside the work of the bad Duck Artists. The differences between these three printings of “Back to the Klondike” (which are not even the *only* printings of the story, not even in English) should serve as an illustration of the material circulation of comic books. While different attitudes towards Barks’ art have

motivated these presentations, the result is that “Back to the Klondike” has appeared as different objects throughout its history. It would be too simple to say that Fantagraphics’ 2012 version is the “best” because it presents the most material from Barks, but it would also be too simple to say that the 1953 version is the “real” story. Scholars who address Barks generally concern themselves with analyzing Barks’ individual vision and its appearance in his works. From this standpoint, it is primarily important that Barks can be considered an *auteur* “in the pure sense” (Ault 2004 1), and the history of his publications is irrelevant. Other Barks scholars similarly focus on Barks’ personality: Thomas Andrae posits that “understanding the origins of of Barks’s stories requires looking at the details of his life” (21); and Michael Barrier remarks that the distinctive key to Barks’ “best work” is “that he shaped his stories in accordance with a view of life that was essentially pessimistic” and that “in story after story, Barks revealed his understanding of how people’s minds and hearts really work” (Barrier 113). For an example of Barks analysis where publication history and context could be important but goes unmentioned, consider Geoffrey Moses’ analysis of Barks’ themes of modernity: Barks’ stories often circulated juxtaposed with the literal products of modernity in the form of advertisements. My purpose in this analysis has not been to suggest that other scholars such as Ault and Barrier are wrong, but to shift the object of analysis.

If this is what the analysis means for comic books, what does it mean for Uncle Scrooge, the concept that the comics seem to incarnate? There are two ideas I’d like to suggest by moving outside “Back to the Klondike” briefly but retaining a focus on the material context of comic books: the material context of a reader’s encounter leaves the reader’s relationship to Scrooge unclear, and muddles any one author’s idea of what Uncle Scrooge values. Many of the ideas in Thomas Andrae’s monograph on Carl Barks are about the meaning of Uncle Scrooge, and take

on an interesting light when considering non-Barks stories, the works of the other Duck Artists. To take an example from *between* instances of “Back to the Klondike,” “The Fuddleduck Diggings” (in *Donald Duck* #125, May 1969) portrays some of the issues that are of frequent interest to Uncle Scrooge scholars such as Ault, Andrae, Barrier, and Moses: primarily, the relationship between Scrooge’s thirst for wealth and moral values. In this story, Scrooge’s cousin Rufus Fuddleduck, clad in the traditional outfit of the Western prospector, comes to Scrooge to make him a partner in his diggings. “**WOW!**” exclaims Scrooge, leaping into the air while looking at a sample nugget roughly the size of the one in “Back to the Klondike,” “**WHAT A NUGGET!**” Rufus Fuddleduck, like Scrooge in the earlier story, is afraid of claim jumpers, and wants to bring his cousin into the business to outsmart them. Taking a helicopter (as opposed to “Back to the Klondike” in which Scrooge refuses to even consider flying), they arrive in the American west, only to be robbed by two bandits. Scrooge distrusts his partners to get the job done, but this largely takes the form of him resolving plot dilemmas, as when he explains that he showed up in time because he’s been following the other characters on radar through their whole adventure. The bandits block a hole at the diggings with a boulder, flooding the desert. “**BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE FINDS OUT,**” says Scrooge, “**WE’LL BUY UP THAT WHOLE DESERT FOR PEANUTS AND TURN IT INTO A MILLION-ACRE GARDEN!**” (10.4). This, it turns out, is what Rufus Fuddleduck always wanted to do anyway. When he announces this Scrooge has a face reminiscent of his sinister visage in “Back to the Klondike” 7.5, but this comes at the *end* of the story rather than the beginning, and as Scrooge devises a frankly beneficial scheme and pronounces the archetypal power to turn a desert into a garden. This forms a strange contrast to Barks’ contemporary stories of Scrooge, in which the character becomes a source of ecological dangers (Andrae 272). Unlike in “Back to the Klondike,” in this story we

never doubt that Scrooge is a basically good person, with his greed portrayed as analogous to that of the amiable Rufus Fuddleduck—and the motive for the plot is a request for familiar help. This story also notably is completely disinterested in Scrooge’s past.

In fact it would seem that *Donald Duck* #125 is of a different object again from *Uncle Scrooge* #142, and from *Four Color* #456, just as they are all different from *Only a Poor Old Man*. “The Fuddleduck Diggins” is followed by a five-page story about Goofy trying to operate a tow-truck and instead foiling a bank robbery, a one-page Donald Duck story reprinting a newspaper comic strip, a one-page text story about the Disney version of the Three Little Pigs, and a story about a disguised burglar trying to steal a gem from Scrooge while Donald and the nephews are staying at Scrooge’s home. These are interspersed with ads, primarily for other Gold Key products, subscriptions, other issues, drawings of inventions sent in by readers, jokes *also* sent in by readers, and a brief “educational” page about prehistoric paintings, to say nothing of a comic strip ad for Lee brand jeans, and another for Sea Monkeys. While it is possible to imagine a reprint of Duck comics that included “The Fuddleduck Diggins” in addition to “Back to the Klondike,” elevating the former to the status of art, it is very difficult to imagine a facsimile that reproduces these other parts of the comic books.

My purpose in examining “Back to the Klondike” this minutely has been to provide a case study in considering comic books as material objects. When we consider what Uncle Scrooge represents, it is important to pay attention to what we are looking at. In Dell’s *Four Color* #456 he is a softhearted children’s hero. Two years later, in 1955, as comic book publishers faced government pressure to ensure that “the comic books placed to temptingly before our Nation’s children at every corner newsstand are clean, decent, and fit to be read by children” (U.S. Congress 27), Dell would refuse to join the Comic Magazine Association of America on the

grounds that their clean image would provide an umbrella for unsavoury publishers (Nyberg 116-117).⁴⁰ Instead, Dell would use their March 1955 comics to proclaim an “IMPORTANT” “pledge to parents.” The full-page pledge reprinted an award given to Dell President George Delacorte by the American Legion for “ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING... CLEAN AND WHOLESOME JUVENILE ENTERTAINMENT.” “The Dell Trademark,” explains the pledge to parents, “is, and always has been, a positive guarantee that the comic magazine bearing it contains only clean and wholesome juvenile entertainment.” In a season of moral panic over comics, the Dell code “eliminates entirely, rather than regulates, objectionable material” (Barks 1955 n.p.), outdoing the Comics Code established by the CMAA. While the 1953 Scrooge is part of an effort to provide unobjectionable entertainment, the Scrooge in Fantagraphics’ 2012 *Only a Poor Old Man* is the protagonist of a work of art, a rough but romantic hero created by the genius of Carl Barks, from which we should not be distracted by the shoddy original context—nor, in a world after the demise of the Comics Code, should we be swayed, Fantagraphics posits, by the fears of 1950s editors into suppressing Barks’ art.

Padmini Ray Murray has called for a Book History approach to comic books explicitly in order to counteract the influence of auteurism in Comics Studies, noting that “comics studies initially replicated the model... where the Romantic myth of the solitary genius embedded itself in academic treatments of the graphic novel” (337). Her worry in applying a “production of culture” approach is that the resulting “disenchantment” will obscure the “art object” of comics

⁴⁰ In 1948 Dell had refused to join the comparable Association of Comics Magazine Publishers, who also had a content code, on the grounds that “When the association was first introduced, we, after thorough examination, saw that Dell would be used as an umbrella for the crime comic publishers” (U.S. Congress 30). As predicted, by 1950, the ACMP stamp of approval continued to appear on comics “even though the association was for all intents and purposes defunct and even though none of the comics were reviewed at any point by or for the association” (U.S. Congress 31); the Subcommittee saw “some highly objectionable comic books dealing with crime and horror” bearing the old ACMP stamp (U.S. Congress 31).

(338), and her call for new investigations of comics insists on being informed about “the interventions of those agents in the workflow, from illustrator to editor” (341). Her model for proceeding includes “interviews with people who play various roles in the creative process” (342) in order to make the labour of all contributors visible. This call is explicitly a response to the auteurism of Comics Studies and an attempt to integrate the methods of Book History; it is also oriented towards Thierry Groensteen’s idea of “comparative comics” and the global and digital context of comic circulation in the twenty-first century: in a time of a “dispersed workforce” ranging from the internationalisation of large comics publishers to the near-total independence of the webcomics community, Murray has designed a method for a Comics Studies that will trace the flows and influences of global invisible labour in that industry. However, her focus on the business structure and her case study’s relationship between editor and artist means that her method overlooks another key aspect that Book History draws attention to: historical materiality.

One of the values of a book history approach to comic books is to foreground materiality. More productive than considering comics as a medium, is considering comic books as a kind of print periodical. While Murray focuses on the collaborative nature of comics, calling for attention to the traces left by different workers, it is not really possible to enact her interview-based method to the history of comic books. Furthermore, the processes and affordances of industrial printing and distribution, and the ephemerality of comic books as a periodical, including their use of advertising, leaves other traces and opens other possibilities for these stories. A focus on the story, as has been traditional in Comics Studies, represents neither how the creative labourers construct the story, as Murray wishes to recover, nor how readers experience the object— embodied in paper, complete with ads, as a consumer item. To return to

the original question about the value of comics: if their value is as a medium that transmits the work of an author, then every printing involving more people than the author is a corruption, and every industrial process should be concealed or counteracted to get us as eugenic a text as possible. If, on the other hand, comics have value because they are examples of a publishing format, then closer attention is required to the material aspects of how comics exist.

It has been traditional to consider Carl Barks' work despite its context. "Barks' stories were so popular, and so good, because he took pains where most writers and cartoonists for 'funny animal' comic books did not" (Barrier and Williams 198). As Bart Beaty has explained, fans saw Barks' work as having "a distinctly recognizable personal style and evinced a high level of craft within the aesthetic constraints of children's humour and adventure comic books and the factory-like working conditions of the Disney empire" (82). In this, he stands for the subject of comics studies in general: it has transcended and been refined. Less commonly observed is that in the process of making things like *Four Color* #456 into things like *Only a Poor Old Man*, a new object has been created. "Back to the Klondike" cannot be studied as a comic without a book.

Chapter 2

Money, Money, Money: Reading Richie Rich

“... if all you keep talking about is money, money, money, it gets repetitive.” — Ernie Colón (Cabarga 11)

If you find a comic book with Richie Rich on the cover, the odds are good that that comic book was printed in the 1970s. In that decade, publisher Harvey Comics printed increasing amounts of *Richie Rich* comics. Harvey Comics also replaced their other titles with *Richie Rich* publications and rebranded other titles to feature Richie Rich. As a published character, peak *Richie Rich* occurs sometime in that decade, in what fans have called the “Richie glut”—a period in which dozens of comic books featuring Richie Rich were published every month. In the indicia on the first page of every Harvey Comics publication from around this period, a New York City address is given for legal reasons, indicating the physical origin of this deluge of Richie Rich. The editorial, advertising and marketing offices of Harvey Comics were located at 15 Columbus Circle, in the Gulf + Western Building built in 1970 and rented out by the Gulf + Western corporation and their later incarnation Paramount. That address, as it happens, no longer exists.

In the 1990s, a team led by New York City real estate developer and future President of the United States Donald Trump redeveloped the building. As part of this process they rebranded it. The building was stripped to its frame and coated with a new Philip Johnson design of “bronze-colored glass” (“New Trump Hotel on Central Park”), effectively suggesting the colour of gold. While the building’s new appearance is striking, the building’s address was also changed by making the east side the main entrance. The address of the Trump International Hotel and Tower

became 1 Central Park West, a more impressive address for use in marketing materials. The building was altered and renamed as part of this rebranding. The redesign represented Trump's attempt to engineer a "comeback" for himself, for the neighbourhood, and for the building (Pogrebin). The coincidence of 1 Central Park West being the former offices of Harvey Comics is striking because it is the only substantial interaction between Donald Trump and Richie Rich. The two are, however, persistently linked in popular rhetoric. This link is surprising, not simply because Donald Trump and Richie Rich are figures of unequal reach and significance in twenty-first-century American culture, but also because the history of Richie Rich is a history of expansion and collapse.

The history of Richie Rich is marked by excess. Aside from the central theme of wealth in the comic books about the character, the number of publications about Richie Rich presents an archive that is itself so excessive as to problematize the method of close reading a single narrative. Trying to understand how any individual Richie Rich story works doesn't fully answer the question of why the sympathetic character is so often read in a hostile manner, and so often invoked as a criticism of specific real people, most notably Donald Trump. If we read any particular Richie Rich story, or even a set of these stories, we will see something that doesn't fully explain the character's persistence in popular culture as a transformed figure. The excess of Richie Rich's publication history suggests a new method of reading many comics, and even more specifically the covers that brand them as Richie Rich products. A distant reading, contrasted with the following history and close reading, will foreground the Richie Rich who has garnered such a negative reputation.

Richie Rich is the most notable character published by Harvey Comics in the realm of comic books. While Casper the Friendly Ghost ⁴¹ is more notable in terms of marketing, Richie Rich holds the distinction of having appeared in a staggering number of comic books. To understand the significance of Richie Rich's particular publishing history, it is necessary to understand the history of his publisher and the publishing context in which Richie existed, one defined by ideas of fad and of glut. Alfred Harvey Publications was founded in New York City in 1940 by Alfred Harvey, former managing editor for comic book publishers the Fox Feature Syndicate (Harvey). Confusion persists as to the year of Harvey's founding, probably due both to Harvey's later acquisition of *Speed Comics* and *Champ Comics*, which had been published by Brookwood Publications since 1939, and to the fact that Harvey's first two titles, *Pocket Comics* and *Fun Parade*, were not published until the spring of 1941 (Harvey 2000).

Alfred Harvey's background with Victor Fox, founder of the Fox Feature Syndicate and "one of the world's worst people" according to employee Howard Nostrand (quoted in Duin & Richardson 180), is worth noting. Publisher Victor Fox had left National Allied Publications after their success with *Superman*, forming a company with the intent of imitating the Superman character. In the ensuing lawsuit, it was determined that Fox's character Wonder Man was a legally liable imitation of the enormously popular Superman (Andelman 20). ⁴² In a larger sense, the comic book industry as a whole, as with the comic strip, newspaper, and pulp industries from

⁴¹ Created by Fleischer Studio animators Sy Reit and Joe Oriolo in 1940, the amiable spectre Casper first appeared in a 1945 theatrical cartoon by Paramount, "The Friendly Ghost." Published in comics by St. John Publishing from 1949, Harvey Comics purchased the license to the character in 1952, and published Casper until 1994, licensing him for numerous products and logos, particularly the Boy Scouts of America, the American Dental Association, and UNICEF.

⁴² For many years artist Will Eisner, designer of Wonder Man, maintained that Victor Fox had instructed him to plagiarize Superman and that he had testified to this truth. However in 2010 comics scholar Ken Quattro uncovered the trial's transcript in which Eisner actually bolstered Victor Fox's account of Fox's blamelessness (Quattro interviewed by Andelman, 23-28).

which comic books arose, was defined by an idea of imitating trendy properties, however indirectly. Superman is the most prominent character to create such a fad, but in comic strips, characters such as Dick Tracy (Goulart 1975 75-76) received the same treatment. Indeed, the earliest non-reprint comic book, *Detective Dan: Secret Operative No. 48* (1933) is a transparent imitation of Dick Tracy. While not obligatory or even necessarily predominant, the comic book industry was characterized by “fads”—multiple publishers imitating perceived trends.

The other relevant strategy of comic book publishing which first became apparent in the 1940s was the “glut.” This seems to have originated in the magazine industry, as traced in the career of publisher and prominent practitioner Martin Goodman. Blake Bell and Michael Vallasso have argued that the publishing practices of Goodman’s magazine empire are key to understanding the decisions he made regarding the comic books of the company that became Marvel Comics (Bell & Vallasso 8). Goodman’s particular approach to trends was what Mark Anderson has called the “glut strategy” (10) of exploiting a trend with a great number of titles. In a 1974 interview, Goodman’s editor Stan Lee described the resulting editorial environment:

We’d be very big in Westerns and suddenly the Western field dried up and we had to find a new trend, and we’d be doing a lot of super-heroes and then there was a lack of interest in super-heroes so we had to find a new trend... and we’d do romances or mysteries or funny animals... Whatever. (37)

Unlike Goodman’s firm and a great many other companies, Harvey Comics was not a previously established publisher, nor did it have publications other than comic books. Therefore, discussing the general policies of Harvey Comics as they contextualize *Richie Rich* involves considering the company’s approach to publishing trends in the comics industry. Additionally, the strategies of publishers like Victor Fox and Martin Goodman shed light on Harvey Comics’ creation and

treatment of characters. Richie Rich would later become the focus of a glut, but he would emerge as part of a trend particular to Harvey Comics, the turn to children's humour comics that redefined the publisher's brand. Both aspects of Richie Rich—part of a trend and the subject of a glut—were part of the cultivation of Harvey Comics' publishing brand.

Harvey Comics existed for some time before a stable brand emerged, and the permutations of Harvey show how the historically dominant trend came to prominence. Harvey's original publishing concept, for *Pocket Comics*, had been to produce a comic book with an unusual smaller physical format. According to co-creator Joe Simon, this digest-sized project failed because it was too easy for children to steal copies (Simon 18). As I mentioned above, the next two Harvey comics were titles which had been purchased from another publisher and continued. Harvey Publications became Family Comics during World War Two when Alfred Harvey's twin brother Leon and older brother, accountant Robert, joined the company. According to Alfred's son Alan, the family records are unclear on the precise order of events, and "there were at least a dozen "Harvey" corporations and partnerships coexisting at different times in Harvey history" (Harvey). This multiplicity of companies was common practice: according to Bell and Vallasso, Martin Goodman used 81 different companies over time (35). By 1948, however, the cover of each comic book bore the brand Harvey Comics and the brand had a consistent appearance.

The recurring brand is significant because by this stage Harvey Comics also had a coherent, recurring concept behind most of their titles, a concept connected to yet another comics business practice. The standard business structure of Harvey Comics involved licensing successful characters from other media. A representative 1941 title was *Green Hornet Comics*, based on the radio and film character. Further licensed characters included comic strips *Blondie*, *Dick Tracy*, *Terry and the Pirates*, and *Joe Palooka*. Some titles were reprints of newspaper

comic strips: as Harvey artist Ernie Colón later recalled, his first job at Harvey was as a “paste-up guy”: “...cutting up stats of *Dick Tracy* and *Terry and the Pirates* and pasting them up into comics format” (Arnold 2006 331). This was also not unusual: particularly after the superhero boom had slowed, many companies licensed already successful characters and created series around them. Another element of Harvey’s editorial strategy, which would later become extremely relevant for the character of Richie Rich, was Harvey’s creation of multiple titles featuring each character—combining miniature character-focused gluts with license exploitation. *Blondie* led to *Dagwood* as well as *Daisy and Her Pups*, and *Joe Palooka* led to both *Humphrey* and *Little Max*. *Sad Sack*, created by Sergeant George Baker for the wartime American Army magazine *Yank*, became the most significant of Harvey’s licensed successes, with a comic book running from 1949 to 1982. As a successful series, *Sad Sack* was accompanied by a host of other, shorter-lived spin-offs and variations such as *Sad Sack’s Funny Friends* and *Sad Sack and the Sarge*. By the time Harvey Comics became a coherent publishing brand, it also had a coherent set of business practices which, though existing within the range of industry-wide practices, would exist in Harvey in a particular combination.

The most significant group of Harvey’s licensed characters came from theatrical cartoons and were those that belonged to Famous Studios. Formerly known as the Fleischer Studios, the animation company had been renamed Famous when it was purchased by film studio Paramount. Casper the Friendly Ghost, Harvey’s most prominent character outside the realm of comic books, first appeared in a series of Famous Studios cartoons in the 1940s and 50s. Casper was a very successful theatrical and later television cartoon character, starring in 55 theatrical cartoons, a number reminiscent of contemporary comic strip/cartoon character Popeye the Sailor Man (Gerstein 25). The comic book licence for the character of Casper the Friendly Ghost, originally

acquired by St. John Publishing in 1949, was purchased by Harvey in 1952 along with other Famous Studios characters such as Baby Huey; Wendy; Spooky; Herman and Katnip; and Little Audrey. At least the last two of these are widely regarded as imitations of more successful characters: Little Audrey seems to have been created to avoid paying cartoonist Marge Buell for the rights to Little Lulu (Kremer 61), while Herman and Katnip appear to be obvious imitations of Tom and Jerry (Jacobson 2002 48). In 1958, Harvey Comics bought all the Famous Studios characters outright rather than licensing them (Beck qtd. in Arnold 2017 320). While Casper's 1950s comics have a banner reading "Paramount Pictures famous star," in the 1960s the cartoons would be packaged for television as Harveytoons, inverting the multimedia relationship between brands. While the structure of Harvey's publishing strategy involved licensing successful characters from other media, that strategy also involved a particular kind of content, imitative of larger animation trends. Harvey became deeply associated with the "big-foot" style, so called because of the prominent physical features of stereotypical children's animated cartoon characters (Jacobson 2002 44).

It would seem fair to characterize the editorial strategy of late 1940s Harvey Comics as one where Harvey would imitate inoffensive publishers such as Dell (with its Disney licenses) by publishing existing family-friendly characters who had been developed by other companies. Fan historian Mark Arnold has suggested that St. John Publishing's poor financial condition⁴³ presented a licensing opportunity that would have been a natural fit for Dell, but that Harvey outbid them (Arnold 2017 32). This kind of purchasing was also not exceptional: at the same time, Charlton Comics was purchasing licenses from publisher Fawcett as the latter shut down

⁴³ Arnold nominates as the culprit St. John's overinvestment in the 3-D comics craze of 1953. The timeline seems inconsistent with this explanation: most 3-D comics bear cover dates of 1953, but the Famous characters' moves to Harvey bear dates from 1952.

their comics production (Schenk 82). While the particular choices about what licenses were pursued in Harvey's strategy should be understood in the contemporary context of growing moral panic about comic book genres, this should not be seen as an uninterrupted trajectory towards this kind of "big-foot" content.

Harvey Comics participated in the three most significant comic book fads of the mid-20th century: the genres of romance, horror, and war comics. In 1949, Harvey launched a line of romance comics which would last until the following year. During the industry-wide "Love Glut" inaugurated by the enormously popular *Young Romance* published by Prize Comics in September 1947, Harvey launched seven titles (Nolan 74), none of which reached 10 issues. "About nine months after EC started up their horror titles" (Benson 5), Harvey launched a line of horror comics with *Witches Tales* #1 (January 1951). In June 1951 Harvey Comics attempted to turn an existing title (*Blondie*) into *Chamber of Chills*.⁴⁴ In August superhero title *Black Cat Comics* became *Black Cat Mystery Comics* with the eponymous superheroine having become hostess of a horror anthology; perhaps Harvey was inspired by the October 1949 change of *Captain America* into *Captain America's Weird Tales*. By June 1952, the fourth Harvey horror title, *Tomb of Terror*, had been added. With the exception of some issues of *Black Cat Mystery*, the horror titles were not branded as Harvey on the cover. In the inside indicia, *Tomb of Terror* and *Black Cat Mystery* are listed as being published by Harvey Publications, Inc., while *Witches Tales* and *Chamber of Chills* are listed as being published by Witches Tales Inc., located at the same New York City address. In the letters page of rival EC Comics' title *The Haunt of Fear* #15 (October 1952), that title's host the Old Witch issues a warning:

⁴⁴ The Post Office caught onto this and so Harvey was forced to begin numbering the series again rather than use *Blondie*'s mailing allotment (Arnold 2017 216).

There has been a magazine on the stands for some time... published by a rival company... called WITCHES TALES... This rival organization also publishes CHAMBER OF CHILLS and TOMB OF TERROR. In no way should these magazines be construed as products of E.C. They are not... I repeat, NOT... E.C. Magazines! (EC Comics 98)

The Harvey titles were indeed imitations: as Harvey Comics editor Sid Jacobson remarked later, "...no one else [in the industry] knew anything, except [EC Comics]. And I said, 'Why don't we strive to do this?'" (Jacobson 2009 28). All four of these titles ended after the December 1954 issues, dissolving into other genres. *Tomb of Terror* became the science fiction *Thrills of Tomorrow*; *Chamber of Chills* became mystery series *Chamber of Clues*; *Black Cat* went back to superhero reprints; and most curiously of all, *Witches Tales* became *Witches Western Tales* and shortly thereafter *Western Tales*. During this period, Harvey also published war comics, apparently to tie into the Korean conflict as well as in further imitation of EC Comics. With four titles, Harvey's "war" line was as large as their "horror" series, but lasted nowhere near as long, although *Warfront* was published until 1958. Early 1950s Harvey Comics were not yet fully invested in any one particular kind of content, nor with one audience. The omission of the Harvey brand from the covers of horror titles suggests that that genre in particular was viewed as exceptional for the Harvey concept.

Harvey's imitation and expansion of these trends occurred even as these genres were coming under scrutiny from official bodies. In 1948, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Winters v. New York* held that the right to free expression applied even to lurid crime magazines, establishing the environment that persists to the present:

Laws regulating obscenity and pornography are on the books in almost every city and state, but the regulation of violent content in the media, while it spurs periodic public outcry and

legislative investigation, ultimately remains the responsibility of the media industries and their self-regulatory bodies. (Nyberg 39)

In response to the 1948 ruling, comic book publishers formed the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers, which rapidly became inactive: “The association no longer provided any prepublication review of comics under the six-point code adopted by the association in 1948” (Nyberg 49). An explosion of anxiety around horror and crime comics in the early 1950s took form as the Congressional Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency’s inquiries into the industry, triggering the formation of the Comics Magazine Association of America, whose Comics Code did successfully alter the crime and horror genres in American comics. After the Congressional hearings on comic books in April and June 1954, the CMAA was formed in September, 1954. Nyberg’s narrative that after the Code “Harvey dropped its horror titles and introduced a number of characters aimed at a very young readership, including Baby Huey, Little Dot, Hot Stuff, Casper, and Richie Rich...” (Nyberg 127) overlooks the timeline of events: Richie Rich (and the other named characters save Hot Stuff) were created during the lead-up to the Hearings, not in response to them or to the Comics Code. However, the increased moral panic around comic books should not be overlooked as a context for their creation: characters like Richie Rich were made *as an alternative to* controversial comics.

Harvey’s *Black Cat Mystery* and *Chamber of Chills* were cited in psychiatrist Fredric Wertham’s influential 1954 anti-comics book *Seduction of the Innocent*. Perhaps concern over reception is why Harvey Comics’ horror titles lack the brand on the cover, and two are published by a differently-named corporation with the same address, meaning that nothing but the address existed to tie together *Witches Tales* and the contemporary *Little Dot*. This is the situation referred to by the Congressional report when it mentions that only a small group owns all these

companies: “these corporations, through such devices as common-stock holders and officer and family ties, are in actual fact owned and controlled by a relatively small group of men and women” (U.S. Congress 4). The Appendix to the Interim Report indicates that the government, at least, was fully aware that the Harvey Comics Group included Witches Tales, Inc., so this split must have been for the benefit of less critical consumers. In the early 1950s, a distinction existed between the Harvey Comics brand of more family-friendly titles and their controversial horror comics, despite a shared creative and editorial team. This distinction was not unambiguous: one anomalous example would be the famous *Harvey Comics Library #1* (April 1952) which was sensationally packaged as *Teen-Age Dope Slaves*, but is in fact a reprint of *Rex Morgan, M.D.* newspaper strips (Goulart 2004 330). The packaging of relatively innocuous content which typified Harvey Comics existed as a business strategy along with sensational, controversial material. Emerging from this juxtaposition is a third strategy: the absence of the Harvey logo from the provocative cover of *Teen-Age Dope Slaves* seems to indicate a conscious effort to associate the company with particular values and thus brand their products in a particular way.

This is the publishing context in which Richie Rich was created, and sheds important light on how Richie became so important as a brand and to the Harvey Comics brand. He first appeared in *Little Dot #1*, September 1953, during the horror comics controversy but one year before the institution of the Comics Code and months before the Congressional hearings. It’s not clear how much awareness of the hearings (much less the Code) existed at the time, but the turn towards family-friendly comics must have been obvious as an exploitable trend. The actual Comics Code essentially forbids the hallmarks of crime and horror comics in particular, though Part B’s injunction that “Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with the walking dead... are prohibited” seems not to have troubled Casper; nor did infant devil Hot Stuff or witch girl

Wendy evidently present evil alluringly despite their sinister accoutrements. The treatment of Casper's morbid elements is suggestive of a turn in the general environment: artist Ernie Colón claims that later "we made a conscious effort not to refer to death in any way" (Colón 19), though the original 1940s Casper cartoons had him emerge from his grave. The turn towards a child-friendly style and genre informed even these characters who, like Richie Rich, predated the Code.

The specific origins of Richie Rich are murky. While Alfred Harvey claimed that he created the character, and produced sketches as proof, writer Sid Jacobson claimed that he and artist Warren Kremer created Richie (Kremer 55). Artist Ken Selig, who at the time was not yet working at Harvey, believes that Kremer's mentor Steve Muffatti may have created the design or original stories of Richie Rich (Selig 64-65). Confusing the issue further is Kremer's repeated insistence that Richie Rich was inspired by the CBS TV show *The Millionaire* (Kremer 48), which did not begin airing until 1955, years after Richie Rich first appeared. His claim that Richie was visually based on novel and film character Little Lord Fauntleroy seems plausible (Post 83), while Ken Selig (Post 83) believes the character is based on Perry Winkle, brother of the eponymous Winnie Winkle in the comic strip which ran from 1920 to 1996. Despite the lack of any circumstantial evidence, the three characters do dress similarly.⁴⁵ Later Harvey artist Ernie Colón, who was not present but worked with all the claimants, comments that "Success has

⁴⁵ The outfit shared by all three characters may be so generic as to not be a specific reference: the manchild "Stinky" played by Joe Besser on the contemporary TV program *The Abbott and Costello Show* also dresses in the same manner, the only visual indication that the adult Besser is meant to be a bratty child. Richie's black coat and red tie is also similar to that of board game mascot Mr. Monopoly/Rich Uncle Pennybags, who originated in 1936 as a caricature of financier J.P. Morgan via *Esquire* magazine mascot "Little Esky" (Orbanes 76). Rich child Rollo, from the *Nancy* comic strip written and drawn by Ernie Bushmiller from 1938, dresses in much the same manner as Pennybags and Richie, but with a yellow checked bow tie. All these characters would seem to be (judging by the collars, ties, and cuffs) wearing a descendant of the Fauntleroy suit, named after the protagonist of Frances Hodgson Burnett's 1885 novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, as worn by early twentieth century comic characters Sammy Sneezy and (more famously) Buster Brown (Braun 25-26).

many, many fathers” (Colón 77) and finds it more plausible that a group brainstorm resulted in Richie Rich.

Richie Rich first appeared as a “backup” character in the pages of *Little Dot*, meaning that he did not appear on the cover and his stories were physically secondary. Kremer explains:

in order to get second-class entry [mail] in the comic, you couldn’t have a comic book with all one character, you had to mix it up with a couple of characters and you had to put in like a two page text... If we had *Little Dot*, we had to get a character in the back; that became Richie. Richie was not a big character in the beginning; he was a little five-pager that padded the book for *Little Dot*. (Kremer 48)

This was a common practice: Little Dot herself first appeared as a backup in *Sad Sack* #1 in 1949 (Arnold 2002 29).

The example of Hot Stuff, another Harvey character of the 1950s, is instructive to understand the choices made with Richie Rich. Hot Stuff was apparently created incidentally, as a childish devil in an unrelated comic (Jacobson 2002 44,47), but the design seemed promising and so was developed into a series, beginning in *Hot Stuff* #1, October 1957. The fact that Hot Stuff launched in his own title without any time as a backup character, indicates that Harvey was capable of giving a new character their own title. Presumably they felt that the market would make a Hot Stuff title profitable. The fact that Hot Stuff received this treatment despite concerns about the irreverent concept, while Richie Rich did not receive his own title until 1960, suggests that Richie was not originally seen as a character with as much potential as Hot Stuff. ‘Potential’ in the context of 1950s Harvey might be defined in terms of licensing potential: Casper the Friendly Ghost was seen as the company’s most successful character at the time for his appearances on television cartoons and his use in advertisements. After several years as a back-

up character for Little Dot, Richie Rich eventually proved popular enough to receive his own title, *Richie Rich*, the first issue of which is cover-dated November 1960.

In his study of 1960s Archie Comics, scholar Bart Beaty postulates that “the exclusion of the genuinely popular has obscured the actual history of the field [of comics]” (5). His corrective project in that case was to read “every Archie comic from the twelve-cent era” (211). Reading *Richie Rich* closely, in a method approximating Beaty’s Archie reading, produces results that illuminate how the character was conceived by the writers and artists of Harvey Comics, and how this conception changed over time.

The appellation “The Poor Little Rich Boy”⁴⁶ appears on the front cover of every issue of *Richie Rich*, as a regular part of the logo. It also appears in the title panel of almost every story starring Richie Rich, and at some point in 1962,⁴⁷ became a part of the registered trademark *Richie Rich*. As Ernie Colón states, the phrase began as an appropriate description, but was also a boundary that would be transcended: “With Richie, the character was first called ‘The Poor Little Rich Boy,’ and he was lonely within his mansion. But that wasn’t enough” (Cabarga 11). In the first appearance of Richie Rich, “The Dancing Lessons” back-up story in *Little Dot* #1, Richie wants to go play baseball but his “mater” insists that he practice dancing, because “IT WILL BE VERY *USEFUL* TO YOU” (Cabarga 13.3). Richie sneaks out to play baseball with his friends, and when a bully steals their equipment, Richie uses his dancing skills to outfight the bully.

⁴⁶ The phrase would seem to be a reference to the Broadway play “The Poor Little Rich Girl” written by Eleanor Gates in 1912, which became a popular movie starring Mary Pickford in 1917. The play and film concern the female heir to a wealthy family who yearns for (and is prevented from engaging in) the normal pursuits of a child. The contemporary character Spooky—“The Tuff Little Ghost,” first appeared in September 1953—may have also been an inspiration. It should also be noted that when the character of Wendy first appeared in 1954, she was tagged as “The Poor Little Witch Girl,” presumably playing off Richie’s tagline.

⁴⁷ The story “Snobsdale” in *Richie Rich* #11, July 1962, includes the © symbol, but stories from March 1962 do not.

Other early stories, particularly the early backups in *Little Dot*, similarly feature Richie's wealth as a problem for him because it compels him to behave in ways antithetical to middle-class masculinity. This problem, almost needless to say, is always resolved by the story's end.

At times, Richie's wealth tempts him to behave unethically. In "The Big Race" in *Little Dot* #3, Richie is set up to win a scholarship in a soap-box derby thanks to his superior vehicle: the ethical dilemma is that Richie doesn't "NEED A SCHOLARSHIP, BUT [non-wealthy competitor] JOHNNY **REALLY** DOES!" (Cabarga 19.4). The stories often resolve this problem by explaining that while Richie's wealth, which is impressed upon him by his wealthy parents, puts him in ethical (and often gendered) dilemmas, these problems are ultimately resolvable for the benefit of all. Though his "pater" says "I KNOW YOU'LL DO YOUR **BEST!**" in the race (Cabarga 19.3), Richie sabotages himself, and when his father discovers why he is losing despite having "THE **BEST** CAR THAT MONEY COULD BUY" (21.6), Rich Senior⁴⁸ congratulates his son for not profiting on this venture: "I'M PROUDER OF YOU THAN IF YOU HAD **WON!**" (22.8).

In the stories, dramatic tension comes directly from the gap between Richie's wealth-enabled abilities and his morality. As time goes by, the immoral temptations of wealth begin to be displaced onto other characters. His mean cousin Reginald van Dough (first appearance in *Little Dot* #7, September 1954) is essentially a version of Richie who uses his wealth to belittle and taunt Richie's friends, suggesting that a major difference between them is their attitude towards the less wealthy. In Reggie's first appearance Richie and his friends are enjoying Richie's gigantic pool when Reggie appears and indulges in a series of harmful pranks abetted

⁴⁸ From all evidence, Richie Rich's father is, like him, named Richard Rich. I am not sure when this was "revealed" or became an agreed-upon fact.

by Reggie's suffering chauffeur and other trappings of the van Dough wealth. When Richie and friends are enjoying inflatable pool animals, Reggie hatches a violent plan to destroy them, shouting "HARKINS! GET MY *AIR RIFLE* OUT OF THE LIMOUSINE!" (31.2). When Harkins protests, Reggie threatens to "HAVE FATHER *FIRE* YOU!" In Reggie van Dough stories, Richie becomes the protector of his less fortunate friends against a version of himself.⁴⁹ In "The Boy Miser" (*Richie Rich* #32), Richie's father has a nightmare that Richie is "LIKE HIS *SELFISH* COUSIN *REGGIE!*" (340.4) and refuses the charity that is his responsibility. The nightmare Richie even out-Scrooge-McDucks Scrooge McDuck in refusing to pay two million dollars to build a vault in which to store the piles of money he refuses to spend. The role of charity and kindness in Richie Rich stories clearly posits a proper role for money: in enhancing the lives of those without money, for no gain except gratitude. The peril for Richie in these stories is that there are temptations and pressures to enhance his own life, and that there are other people who seek to misuse money. Despite the importance of altruism, the stories suggest that money is also a reward for such righteous behaviour, since they are insistent that Richie has considerably *more* money than Reggie.

Richie's love interest Gloria Glad presents dramatic tension through her active distaste for money. While many stories present Gloria as a willing beneficiary of Richie's monetary wooing, the stories focused on their romance are quite clear that Gloria is a middle-class girl who finds Richie's ostentation frustrating. In one story, "The Money Touch"⁵⁰ (*Richie Rich* #32), Richie

⁴⁹ The relationship between Reggie and Richie's friends bears a strange but provocative resemblance to two similarly-themed British comic strips which began in the 1970s. In *Ivor Lott and Tony Broke*, the wealthy Lott is an antagonist whose use of money usually results in his comeuppance; unlike *Richie Rich* the protagonist, Tony Broke, is poor. The strip is essentially *Richie Rich* minus Richie. A distaff version, *Milly O'Naire and Penny Less*, was folded into *Ivor Lott and Tony Broke* in the 1980s.

⁵⁰ References to the myth of King Midas, even as subtle was this one, are an unsurprising constant device in Richie Rich stories.

and Gloria are walking in “THE REALLY *WILD* PART” of the Rich estate, where there is “NOT A *SIGN* OF CIVILIZATION OR THE RICH THINGS YOU HAVE IN YOUR MANSION” (335.1). Unfortunately, nearly every innocuous interaction Gloria tries to have with the “wilderness” unveils hidden riches: a safe descends from a tree when Gloria picks a switch concealed as a daisy; an old shack turns out to activate another safe hidden under a false boulder; even an unmoving cloud turns out to be filled with money so that Richie’s mother can cause it to rain on needy children. “THAT *DOES* IT!” declares Gloria, “I’M *SICK* OF ALL THIS *MONEY STUFF!*” (338.6). In the end, retreating to her home to simply have ice cream, it turns out that even Gloria’s home is the site of a secret Rich vault, to which revelation Gloria rolls her eyes in disbelief. In a Gloria story from the same period, Richie sees a psychiatrist at her request to stop himself “THROWING MONEY AROUND LIKE CONFETTI” (345.4) “AFTER *ALL* THE TIMES I’VE ASKED YOU *NOT* TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY ON GIFTS FOR ME!” (345.1). The story ends by suggesting that the transference of wealth is contagious, as Richie’s psychiatrist, now wealthy from the fees charged for curing Richie’s spendthriftiness, is running amok in a restaurant, tossing money into the air and “suffering” from Richie’s “SPENDING DISEASE!” (349.7). Gloria’s presence serves to tell the audience that even well-intentioned spending can be disapproved of by the less-fortunate, particularly when associated with emotional relationships. If the challenge in Reggie stories is for Richie to be virtuously wealthy as opposed to malevolent, the related challenge in Gloria stories is for him to not spend money on inappropriate “goods.” Both stories derive from the original concept of the “poor little rich boy,” where Richie’s yearning to be an ordinary boy is at odds with the temptations and affordances of his colossal wealth.

This recurring theme closely mirrors another relationship in Harvey Comics. In tales of Spooky the Tuff Little Ghost, Spooky's girlfriend, lady ghost Poil, disapproves of his scaring people. In some stories Spooky zealously clings to his *raison d'être* and continues to scare on purpose, while in others he gives into Poil's entreaties and abstains from frightening behaviour. The same result ensues, in which people are ironically scared regardless. This can be seen as a version of a recurring Harvey Comics theme going back to Casper's early inability to stop scaring people, and stretching forward to Princess Charma's inability to believe that Hot Stuff is really a devil. However, the fact that Spooky stories sometimes have Spooky pridefully resenting Poil's intercession suggests that while we are meant to take Spooky's side some of the time, we are not really meant to approve of Richie's helpless spending. The contrast with Spooky and Poil suggests that Gloria is the viewpoint character in stories with her and Richie.

In one recurring theme that plays on the "poor little rich boy" idea, Richie is frustrated by his inability to not turn a profit. The story "It's a Gift" (*Little Dot* #64) turns on the (unknown) writer's deconstruction of this idea. Richie wants to buy something for Gloria for her birthday, and she suggests "SOMETHING *INEXPENSIVE*..." (194.2), a watch advertised as on sale for \$5. Richie has \$25 on hand, but it turns out that the watch actually costs \$500. Richie tries to decide if it would be right to borrow money from his own savings to pay for it, or to ask his father for money, ruling both out but curiously not considering Gloria's pronounced dislike of expensive presents. While pondering this dilemma, Richie is struck on the head by a falling flowerpot, and loses his memory of his own identity. Despite this, various passersby know who he is, and so his confused attempt to buy a nearby painting becomes profitable when a passing wealthy woman repurchases the painting from him, on the assumption that "NO MEMBER OF THE RICH FAMILY EVER BUYS ANYTHING THAT WON'T MAKE A *PROFIT!*" (196.7).

Several other characters operate on the same assumption, as the confused Richie is taken advantage of by a series of people who try to defraud him but in fact inflate his cash on hand to \$2250. This amount of money is heaped around him when he hits his head again and remembers who he is.

It is worth drawing a comparison to the depiction of Scrooge McDuck's money-making ability in a similar situation. In the story "Somethin' Fishy Here" (written and drawn to replace the deleted pages of "Back to the Klondike" discussed in the previous chapter), a prank causes Scrooge to believe that he is "penniless" because Congress has inexplicably made fish "THE NEW *MONEY* OF THE LAND" (Barks 2012 72.2). Scrooge's response is to say "WELL, THERE'S NO USE CRYING OVER BAD LUCK! I'LL GET A JOB AND START LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN!" (72.7). Over the ensuing pages, Scrooge earns payment in fish, trades the fish for a raincoat, the raincoat for two sacks of fish, the fish for a horse, the horse for ten sacks of fish, and so on, until he ultimately winds up with hundreds of tons of fish, a fortune just like his old one, but one that he "donates" to Donald Duck, covering the latter's house and paying back the prank. However absurd this story, both it and the Richie Rich tale show the characters building a fortune. Scrooge's wealth, however, is a result of jobs he does and trades he makes, while Richie's relies on his fame and others trying to take advantage.

In fact some Richie Rich stories portray Scrooge-style business as distasteful and unmanly. For example Richie's cousin Midas in "The Tycoon" (*Little Dot* #51), is unable to "BE LIKE OTHER BOYS" (172.4) and simply play baseball. Midas considers the sport (which he is quite talented at) to be silly, until he buys the local team. Though the characters Richie and Scrooge are both unfathomably wealthy, their wealth is associated with very different meanings and values.

Another variety of Richie Rich stories treat Richie's uncanny profitability as a curse that forever sunders him from leading a normal boy's life. In "Gets Away from It All" (*Richie Rich* #6), Richie has saved money to go on an archaeological vacation, which his father thwarts through impressing a staff into service and purchasing the South American land where Richie wants to explore. Remarks Richie: "**GEE! I CAN'T GET AWAY FROM DAD'S MONEY EVEN FOR *TWO WEEKS!***" (267.1). Richie's breaking point comes when an earthquake reveals that his land is rich with oil. With oil surrounding Richie and his archaeologist friend, Richie angrily yells "**OIL?! THAT'S IT! I'VE HAD IT! I'VE JUST GOT TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL!**" (268.6). Ultimately this is impossible, as Richie's escape to a desolate hurricane-struck bungalow in the Florida Keys ends with him discovering a chest full of jewels. Other stories also conclude with frustrated dreams of not making money: the wordless tale "Any Luck?" (*Little Dot* #40) has Richie on an absurdly profitable fishing expedition, ending with him angrily tossing his fishing pole aside. Of course, it strikes oil and in the concluding panel we are informed that the oil lease has been rewarded to a furious Richie. This is also how Richie's attempt to take his friends on a Florida vacation goes in "Oil's Well" (*Little Dot* #15): "**WE HUNT FOR TWO YEARS AND YOU BOYS FIND OIL IN *ONE DAY!***" says Mr. Rich (80.7). The boys, terrified by their encounters with alligators and a wild boar, simply want to leave the Everglades. The sudden eruption of oil is a recurring device to turn Richie's innocuous activities on their head, but far from the only method of "ruining" Richie's profitless fun, oil is simply the most intrusive form of sudden profit.

In another genre of Richie Rich stories, dramatic tension is replaced entirely with a parade of gadgets. From the viewpoint espoused by Gloria Glad, these are the most vulgar Richie stories. They present an item or a series of items that represent wealth at a level impossible for

the audience, though they do typically try to leaven the implicit moral with an explicit repudiation of this message. In “The Best of Gifts,” for example, Richie plays with a series of birthday gifts from fantastically wealthy relatives—Uncle Cashbucks, cousin Charlie Checkbook, Aunt Money Belt—which are as preposterous as the names of his relatives. These include a toy gold mine that somehow “MINES *REAL GOLD!*” (126.7). Even though these are “WONDERFUL PRESENTS” (129.4), Richie ultimately concludes that “MY NEW PRESENTS ARE JUST GREAT TO PLAY WITH, BUT IT’S MUCH MORE FUN PLAYING WITH [non-wealthy friends] FRECKLES AND PEE WEE!” (129.7). In this kind of story the apparent message is undercut by the narrative’s relentless focus on these gadgets, which are presented for the reader’s amusement but always with an awareness of their impossibility.

From 1960, Richie Rich also existed as a brand for a line of comic books, a line that was increasingly important to Harvey Comics in term of circulation and branding. While circulation statements for individual titles are difficult to obtain, the advertising directory *N.W. Ayer & Sons*, later the *Ayer Directory of Publications*, later the *IMS Ayer Directory*, and later the *Gale Directory*, provide the average monthly circulation for the publisher’s entire output. For Harvey the circulation numbers are based on those provided to the Audit Bureau of Circulation “for the advertisers to look into to see how many books were sold” according to Jeanne Novitz, one of the employees who assembled the reports for the A.B.C. (Arnold 2017 322). While publishers could provide mere estimates, Harvey did not. From 1960, when Richie Rich gained his own title, until 1978 when they stopped reporting circulations to the *Directory*, Harvey’s circulation generally declined. While some of this variation could indicate that business was consistent, the trend is overall downwards:

1961	5,827,678
1962	6,312,248
1963	5,211,565
1964	5,000,415
1965	5,023,281
1966	5,424,386
1967	5,180,796
1968	5,030,641
1969	3,925,296
1970	5,406,790
1971	4,092,263
1972	3,704,482
1973	Volume not available.
1974	5,098,590
1975	3,352,957
1976	3,961,271
1977	3,919,763
1978	3,297,135
1979	3,297,135

All figures based on Ayer Directories, who disclaim: "All circulation statements obtained from the publishers are for the latest dates possible, I.e. They represent an average circulation for six months preceding the compilation of the DIRECTORY in which they appear." All Harvey

Comics circulation statements are based on the June and March A.B.C. statements of the previous year.

This decline should be seen in the context of the comic book industry as a whole. Only four other American comic book publishers remained in business in this period, with the follow circulations reported:

Year	Harvey Comics	Atlas/Marvel	National/DC	Archie Comics	Charlton Comics
1961	5,827,678	2,322,162	6,695,210	3,502,149	4,500,000
1962	6,312,248	2,833,849	6,906,803	3,601,471	4,500,000
1963	5,211,565	2,992,017	6,049,602	3,828,382	4,907,224
1964	5,000,415	3,364,779	6,262,836	3,351,882	4,923,460
1965	5,023,281	3,903,821	6,671,121	3,679,167	5,137,046
1966	5,424,386	4,873,463	6,274,065	4,366,608	5,263,081
1967	5,180,796	5,980,401	6,978,445	4,767,288	3,281,218
1968	5,030,641	6,219,883	5,848,098	4,341,159	2,250,000
1969	3,925,296	7,088,687	5,970,013	5,642,142	3,000,000
1970	5,406,790	7,238,465	5,190,137	6,203,496	4,420,899
1971	4,092,263	6,883,675	5,044,064	5,511,817	4,420,899
1972	3,704,482	6,812,047	4,976,407	5,530,015	4,420,899
1973	Volume not available.				

1974	5,098,590	10,511,982	7,787,105	4,601,361	5,786,570
1975	3,352,957	11,139,134	7,787,105	4,860,533	5,892,932
1976	3,961,271	11,139,134	7,787,105	4,860,533	6,500,000
1977	3,919,763	11,904,584	8,270,121	4,860,533	6,500,000
1978	3,297,135	13,403,622	8,014,821	4,000,000	2,250,000
1979	3,297,135	12,406,038	7,171,036	3,534,901	3,000,000

While all comic book publishers (including the three—Archie, DC, and Marvel—who survived into the 21st century) saw significant changes in average, Harvey began this period with the second highest average circulation of this group, and ended as the second lowest. Though this chart shows a shrinking industry as seen in the five consistent publishers, it also indicates that Harvey’s average circulation, while perhaps absolutely high, was relatively declining as it entered the 1980s. This is the context in which Richie Rich existed for his first 18 years as a brand, providing a context for Harvey’s business decisions during Richie’s period of expansion.

By 1966, all of Harvey Comics’ titles based on newspaper comic strips had been cancelled. *Sad Sack* and *Little Audrey*, neither of whom had originated in newspapers but who had contemporary newspaper versions, continued. The “big-foot” style humour comics were published under the Harvey World cover brand, which would further consolidate significance in the Harvey output. Harvey’s last major experiment with another genre would take place in the mid-1960s. In the summer of 1965, Harvey released a series of one-shots under the Harvey Thrillers cover brand, apparently testing the possibility of entering the superhero market. Because the line, stewarded by Joe Simon, was not released until late 1966, the group of short-

lived titles has been widely regarded as a reaction to the success of the ABC TV show *Batman*, which had premiered in January 1966 (Mougin 90). After the Harvey Thrillers line failed at the beginning of 1967, Harvey began to alter their emphasis again. Prompted by interviewer Shawn Hamilton's observation that "Over the years, Harvey seemed to go in cycles. They'd do all simple comic stories and then they'd do all adventure stories, then they'd do educational ones. Seemed like every Richie story in the late '60s and early '70s was Richie having adventures," artist Sid Couchey agreed that Harvey was beholden to an industry-wide set of cycles: "All of cartooning really goes in cycles" (qtd in Hamilton 71). At the end of 1971, Harvey Comics saw a three-month line-wide publishing gap during which a series of spin-offs were cancelled. "During this period of major restructuring, it was recognized that *Richie Rich* was turning out to be the line's bestseller, and so a new title was ordered—the first new Harvey World spin-off in seven years, *Richie Rich Fortunes* ('71-82)" (Arnold 2006 33).

As artist and writer Ernie Colón states in the epigraph to this chapter, the basic Richie plots described above produce very repetitive stories. Colón himself developed another way to create plots for Richie. Inspired by the Belgian *Tintin* series of *bandes-dessinées* written and drawn by Hergé from 1929 to 1976, Colón adopted the idea of adventure. Likely due to Colón's influence and output, the adventure storylines became more prominent in 1970s Richie, taking elements of the Richie plots and combining them with ideas from non-comedic genres, most prominently adventure, science fiction, horror, and superheroes. A new element of danger becomes predominant in these stories, as shown in the evolution of thieves in the pages of *Richie Rich*. Thieves in earlier Richie stories appear as a necessary consequence of the fabulous Rich fortune, but they are comically inept, and much like the Beagle Boys of the Duck comics, their criminality is often iconically represented by a uniform of the striped shirt and bandit eye-mask.

Later more sinister (and particularly, deceptive) presences make their appearance. In “Mutiny on the Oceanic” (*Richie Rich Success Stories* #23), a would-be pirate called Manta masquerades as the captain of Richie’s new yacht. Criminals are also now armed with more frightening weapons than the cartoon coshes of the past: “MY GOSH,” says Gloria in “Mutiny on the Oceanic,” “THEY’VE GOT **GUNS!**” (231.1) and indeed, the gang constantly threatens to use them. Richie and Gloria of course outwit the villains, but the stakes do seem closer to *Tintin*’s international intrigue than to the idea that Reggie van Dough might wreck a pool party.

In other stories, antagonists very close to supervillains appear. These include a physicist named Paul Diable who, under the influence of “A **BAD DOSE OF THAT RADIO-ACTIVE MATERIAL**” dons red tights and begins calling himself Devil in *Richie Rich* #57. There is also Dr. N. R. Gee, a man with a red lightbulb for a head who menaces Richie throughout the Seventies; Dr. Disguise; the Onion; and other gimmicky criminals. Supernatural characters begin to appear in this period as well, culminating in the *Richie Rich and Casper* series where the two constantly battle weird beings (or mad scientists)⁵¹. Here the money is, as Colón planned, a plot device to involve the characters in adventure plots, rather than the aim of the story. While comedic tales of Richie’s profits are all about his desire to not always be making wealth, the adventure stories focus on attempts to steal or wreck existing wealth. Eventually these stories evolved to the once-unthinkable point of offering a story like “The Missing Crown” (*Richie Rich* #71), in which a race to locate the lost crown of Richard the Lionhearted doesn’t rely on Richie being wealthy at all. It’s the exact kind of thing that happens to Tintin, and therefore epitomizes the adventure trend in Richie Rich stories.

⁵¹ *Richie Rich and Casper* had a recurring device of “doubling” the storylines between the two characters, unintentionally (?) revealing that there is very little difference between menaces based in supernatural or scientific forces.

Over the course of the 1970s, Richie Rich became Harvey's primary character in terms of comic book production. In the 1970s "Richie glut"—which some fans call the "Richie explosion"—other Harvey titles such as *Little Dot* were cancelled and replaced with Richie Rich-centric spin-off titles, to a degree that made Richie Rich the "star" of an unprecedented number of comic books. By 1980, Richie starred in a shockingly wide variety of comic books. Frequent Richie artist Ernie Colón would later comment, "We had something like thirty-three titles all under the Richie Rich banner, all in one month!" (Cabarga 11). Aside from *Richie Rich*, other Richie titles included *Richie Rich Million* (beginning in 1961);⁵² *Richie Rich Dollar and Cent* (1963); *Richie Rich Success Stories* (1964); *Richie Rich Fortune* (1971); *Richie Rich Bank Book* (1972); *Richie Rich Diamond* (1972); *Richie Rich Jackpot* (1972); *Richie Rich Money World* (1972); *Richie Rich Riche* (1972); *Richie Rich & Jackie Jokers* (1973); *Richie Rich & Casper* (1974); *Richie Rich & Dot* (1974); *Richie Rich Billion* (1974); *Richie Rich Cash* (1974); *Richie Rich Gem* (1974); *Richie Rich Profit* (1974); *Richie Rich Vault* (later, *Vault*) of *Mystery* (1974); *Richie Rich Gold and Silver* (1975); *SuperRichie* (1976); *Richie Rich Zillionz* (1976); *Richie Rich & Cadbury* (1977); *Richie Rich & Dollar the Dog* (1977); *Richie Rich & Gloria* (1977); *Richie Rich Invention* (1977); *Richie Rich & His Girl Friends* (1979); and *Richie Rich and His Mean Cousin Reggie* (1979). Even this lengthy list does not include the titles of digests and one-shots. Colón's statement is, astoundingly, barely hyperbolic: in October 1977, thirty titles published by Harvey were under the *Richie Rich* banner. Many of these titles reprinted Richie material from earlier years, meaning that stories could circulate years out of

⁵² Punctuating Richie Rich titles is difficult: dollar and cent signs often migrated into a title's logo over the span of a series, particularly as the Richie Rich logo came to be the *Richie Rich* logo over the 1970s. For example, *Richie Rich Success Stories* eventually became *Richie Rich Success Stories*. I have recorded the title as it appears on the cover of the first issue. Often a "lower-case" \$ is used, or an upper-case ¢. In the case of *Richie Rich Zillionz*, both z's are also dollar signs.

their original context, but almost always with a new cover. The company's belief in Richie Rich as a profitable brand can also be seen from the fact that in 1976, the Harvey World titles headlined by female characters—*Little Lotta*, *Little Dot*, and *Little Audrey*—were cancelled, with the characters revived in 1979 as the co-stars of *Richie Rich and His Girl Friends*. The history of Richie Rich is thus, appropriately, a history of bibliographical excess.

According to Richie artist Warren Kremer, the character was financially successful despite a lack of promotion:

... that character sold on the top of the line. The sales were phenomenal. And we never did any promotion on it, never spent money, we never pushed it, never took ads out on it, never did *anything* on it. Everything 'Richie Rich' became, it became on its own merit, story content, art content, cover, coloring, whatever. Because, now that I'm working at Marvel, I see the money that's spent on ads, promotions, everything to push their product. If Harvey had ever done that, *Richie Rich* would have maybe sold *twice* as much, I don't know.

(Kremer 55)

Harvey tried persistently to imitate Richie Rich with a series of monomaniacal characters, most of whom were indisputably created by Harvey family members. Kid comedian Jackie Jokers became the last major Harvey character to headline his own series in 1973, until after four issues it was changed to *Richie Rich and Jackie Jokers*. Komix Kid—created by Alfred Harvey's son Alan Harvey—as well as Adam Awards, created by Alfred's son Adam, seemingly never appeared outside of advertisements. Billy Bellhops, created by Alfred's son Russell, appeared in a 1977 one-shot which features Richie Rich on the cover, while time-travelling space-kid Timmy Time, created by artist Ernie Colón, only appears in a one-shot from the same year in which the

character meets and introduces himself to Richie Rich. Harvey was unable to replicate the Richie Rich formula with a new brand.

Harvey Comics was also unable to make Richie Rich a success outside of comic books. While Casper the Friendly Ghost, who had first appeared in theatrical cartoons, had a continued presence on television, Richie did not appear in animation until 1980's *The Richie Rich / Scooby-Doo Show*, a 60-minute anthology of shorter cartoons produced by animation studio Hanna-Barbera featuring Richie alternating with crime-solving dog Scooby-Doo. While the Richie Rich segments preserve the different kinds of Richie stories by featuring various segments under familiar comic titles—*Gems, Treasure Chests*, etc.—the design of the characters was altered. Animator Floyd Norman claims that to make the character “cooler” and “not so fancy-pants,” Richie was aged up and put into a different, curiously Archie Andrews-esque costume (Norman). Perhaps influenced by the proximity of Scooby (or Scooby’s nephew, excitable puppy Scrappy) Doo, Richie’s dog Dollar has a distinctly less realistic appearance in this series. Later Richie segments continued to be produced as part of 1982-83’s *The Pac-Man / Little Rascals / Richie Rich Show*.

Despite the glut strategy, or perhaps because of it, “by the early 80s, revenues had almost totally dried up” (Krieger 10). Alan Harvey, son of founder Alfred Harvey, maintains that Harvey’s problems were unrelated to sales: he describes the company as having been “devastated by lawsuits, period” (Harvey). The lawsuits could be referring to *Sad Sack* artist Fred Rhoads’ long-running lawsuit against the company (Arnold 2002 35), or a pay dispute that led Colón to exit the company, or a lawsuit from the family of then-deceased Robert Harvey (Arnold 2002 33). Health problems for Alfred Harvey led him to be ousted by the board of directors and

replaced with editor Sid Jacobson (Jacobson 2002 51). Additionally, the larger context of comic books was not favourable for a publisher like Harvey:

Another big strike against Harvey was the advent of the direct market. During the '70s, fewer and fewer outlets took on comic books into their inventory, considering it a money-losing proposition. The comic industry staved off a debacle by filling their pages with advertising, switching to cheaper paper, using horrible new printing processes, running more reprints, and raising their prices virtually every single year. (Arnold 2002 35)

Colón, at least, claimed that sales on Richie Rich in particular were fine: “Casper did well in marketing but not so good in actual comic sales. Richie was the opposite” (Colón 78). Whatever the cause, Harvey Comics ceased all publication in 1982.

In this period, Marvel Comics had been negotiating with Harvey to begin publishing the characters, suggesting their continued potential from a business perspective, and the imitative value of the Harvey brand. According to Marvel executive editor Tom DeFalco, after Marvel had hired the (now-unemployed) Harvey creators, the Harvey brothers abruptly disagreed with the terms of the deal (DeFalco qtd in Ciemcioch 65); according to fan historian Mark Arnold, Marvel declined to purchase Harvey because of the outstanding lawsuits (Arnold 2002 35). As artist Howard Post remembers it, Sid Jacobson “went over first as an editor... I think Harvey wasn’t publishing much new material at the time” (Post 83). As a result, Marvel’s imprint, dubbed Star Comics, became host to a group of new characters. While some—Heathcliff, Ewoks, Strawberry Shortcake, Muppet Babies, and *Fraggle Rock*⁵³— were licensed and based

⁵³ Heathcliff, a silent cat, was created by cartoonist George Gately and first appeared in a newspaper comic strip in 1973. While the strip is still running, Heathcliff has also appeared in television series, but the Star Comics series were his first appearance in comic books. The Ewoks, small furry aliens created by director and screenwriter George Lucas for 1983’s movie *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, appeared in two made-for-television movies in 1984 and ’85. Fruit-hatted child Strawberry Shortcake, created by illustrator Muriel Fahrion for American Greetings greeting cards in 1979, appeared in a group of animated

on existing media, for four titles Star Comics designed new characters. The most relevant for the history of Richie Rich is *Royal Roy*, who demonstrates that the ability to imitate Richie Rich was closely guarded by Harvey.

Created by longtime Harvey writer Lennie Herman and drawn by Warren Kremer, *Royal Roy* is the prince of a small European Ruritania called Cashalot. In his second issue Roy becomes embroiled in a love triangle with commoner Crystal Clear and Lorna Loot, who is apparently the richest kid in Cashalot. *Royal Roy* strongly resembles *Richie Rich*, although the emphasis on Roy's role in governance distinguishes it somewhat: in the first issue, Roy's crown is hidden by the ghost of an ancestral monarch to teach the boy a lesson about responsibility. Roy's iconography is quite similar to Richie's, although it's difficult to imagine anything more 'old-money' than nobility, and as a result rather than piles of cash *Royal Roy* tends to emphasize castles and suits of armour. *Royal Roy* was cancelled after six issues, apparently because of a threatened lawsuit from Harvey over the Richie resemblance (Jacobson quoted in Ciemcioch 71). In another series created by Herman and Kremer, *Top Dog*, the titular canine is kidnapped by wealthy child Mervin Megabucks, a mean-spirited parody of Richie Rich acting as an antagonist. Creator and writer Lennie Herman had passed away in 1983 before either comic book was printed. The experience indicates that even while they were not publishing *Richie Rich*, Harvey Comics protected their brand from any imitation outside the company.

Harvey Comics resolved their legal issues and returned with comics cover-dated October 1986. In each, a brief letter from "The Harveys" on the inside front cover explained that the

series in the 1980s as well as a vast amount of licensed merchandise. Puppeteer and filmmaker Jim Henson's Muppet Babies, who are child versions of characters such as Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy, and who first appeared in the Frank Oz directed 1983 film *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, featured in a 1984-1991 cartoon series. *Fraggle Rock* (1983-1987) was another Henson project, featuring a variety of species who coexist in and around the titular environment.

company had been reorganizing, and that “We at Harvey are today very happy to once again be doing what we do best, publishing comic books, and from your letters we know that the reappearance of our comics will make you a little happier, and this is the real reason for our happiness” (*Richie Rich* #219). In 1989, appropriately youthful American entrepreneur⁵⁴ Jeff Montgomery bought Harvey Comics. He endeavoured to revive the company and expand their holdings into other media (“Richie Rich Finds a Friend”). Montgomery’s strategy re-emphasized adaptations, both in the sense of comic books based on other media and other media based on Harvey’s comic books. This can be seen as a return to emphasizing Harvey Comics’ pre-“Richie glut” techniques, though perhaps it was also imitating the children’s-license-heavy editorial direction of Marvel’s Star Comics imprint. Sid Jacobson has claimed that he was rehired by Harvey Comics’ new management because of his work on Star Comics, with the new owners unaware that he had worked for their predecessors for decades (quoted in Arnold 2017 501), which would seem to indicate that Star Comics was on Montgomery’s mind more than Harvey’s own history. Maintaining the family-friendly orientation of the Harvey brand, Montgomery-era Harvey also published Nemesis Comics, with licensed titles oriented towards adults: superhero *Ultraman* and TV adaptation *SeaQuest*. Montgomery’s deals resulted in the live-action films of *Casper* and *Richie Rich*, and he also sought to once again pollinate Harvey Comics with existing licenses, from musical group New Kids on the Block to sitcom *Saved by the Bell* to *Back to the Future*, at the time a Saturday morning cartoon series. The New Kids on the Block received a similar treatment to glut-era *Richie Rich*, featuring in seven titles between 1990 and 1992,

⁵⁴ Comparisons between Montgomery (then 24) and *Richie* were as plentiful as you would expect. Their positivity was a marked contrast to later *Richie*-Trump comparisons.

including one-shots and the *Richie Rich and the New Kids on the Block* and *Wendy and the New Kids on the Block* series.

Montgomery's orientation towards Hollywood would produce ironic results. The live-action *Richie Rich* movie, directed by Donald Petrie and released into theatres in 1994, is extremely faithful to the earliest Richie Rich stories and distills the ideology of the Reggie van Dough stories into an anxiety over downsizing and loss of unionized American manufacturing jobs. Richie's father's Chief Financial Officer, non-comics character Lawrence van Dough (John Larroquette) attempts to steal the Rich fortune by murdering Richie's parents, for personal gain but also apparently due to his umbrage over the Rich family's "misuse" of their fortune on charitable causes. The key incident in the movie is the management of the United Tool factory, which Richard Rich plans to support with his own money until it can be turned over to the workers, while van Dough suggests breaking the workers' union and liquidating the factory. When his parents are missing, Richie becomes the head of the corporation, and insists on boardroom paycuts rather than downsizing. Parallel to this plot is Richie's character arc from dissatisfied and lonely child of wealth: "... all we ever talk about is money," he remarks to his prep school peers, "We should be having fun" (0.26.26-29). As in the first Richie story, baseball is a symbol of Richie's desire to be a normal child, particularly when he is told that he doesn't belong in a game organized by the children of United Tool workers. A parade of amusements and gadgets, resembling another variety of Richie story described above, becomes both a way for Richie to bond with his new friends, and later a means to assault van Dough's control over the Rich family assets. The film, like the 1980s cartoon, juggles multiple kinds of Richie stories, linking them together by having the characters experience them in the same plot. For example, the comics' Gloria Glad is here one of the children (played by Stephi Lineburg) who Richie

plays baseball with and befriends, and who assists him in rescuing his parents and foiling van Dough. She is also the daughter of Diane Koscinski (played by Mariangela Pino), the union representative for the United Tool factory, making the class relationship between the two characters quite pointed. A children's movie, *Richie Rich* ends with van Dough sentenced to pick up garbage on the Rich estate and Richie triumphing at baseball and friendship, with his parents commenting that he really is the richest kid in the world, now that he has friends (1.30.20-26).

Despite the film's faithfulness, Harvey CEO Jeff Montgomery did not succeed in all his aims, due to a deal with film studio MCA which directed profits from the film to that studio (Carvell 48). The Harvey Entertainment Group did not see profits from either *Richie Rich* or the successful follow-up *Casper* (1995) (Eichenwald). The last Richie Rich comic books published by Harvey in North America, ⁵⁵ *Richie Rich Million Dollar Digest* #34 and *Richie Rich* #28, have the same cover date of November, 1994. Harvey's final distribution deal, with Marvel Comics, ended in 1997.

Montgomery was ousted by stockholders in 1997 and Harvey's assets were sold to a group of venture capitalists, Classic Media LLC (Arnold 2002 37). As Colón points out (quoted in Cooke 76), the character of Richie Rich has significantly declined in use since the 1990s, with two exceptions. One is the very short-lived *Richie Rich* comics revival by Ape Entertainment in 2011-12. In this series, new artists use a style quite unlike the classic Harvey Comics art. Here, Richie and his friends are focused on adventure almost entirely, running a nonprofit organization called Rich Rescue. Stories were interspersed with reprints, and Ape Entertainment also printed reprint-oriented *Richie Rich* digests. The other exception to Richie's general lack of appearances

⁵⁵ In marked contrast to the global reach of Disney or Marvel/DC comic books, Richie Rich (and Harvey)'s publications outside of North America is totally opaque to me. It appears that there were editions published in overseas markets. I have no evidence to suggest that new stories were printed anywhere after 1994.

is the 2015 Netflix series *Richie Rich*, in which Richie is a self-made millionaire who became wealthy through his invention of environmentally-friendly technology. Therefore, in most markets, *Richie Rich* hasn't been in circulation since the mid-1990s.

As a business, "Richie Rich" stands for excessive expansion and a crash, followed by three decades of near-invisibility. People are not, as a general rule, reading *Richie Rich* stories, nor have they been in significant numbers since at least the 1980s. People are not really reading Richie Rich at all, even as they continue to talk about him. It is my contention that this allows for the character's strange afterlife since the mid-1990s.

Scholar Ian Gordon has remarked that in relationship to the culture of consumption in which they were created, "any number of issues of *Richie Rich*...could be used to demonstrate a variety of points, such as the dangers of conspicuous consumption, the inappropriateness of using things to gain affection, and the duty of *noblesse oblige* that the very wealthy owe the less well off" (Gordon 2011 160). Gordon explains three possible messages, without discussing any specific *Richie Rich* story. He notes that the subtitle "The Poor Little Rich Boy" indicates the theme of conspicuous consumption as being dangerous, but that "on another level, this comic... offered a notion of limits in an age of mass consumption, in that the solutions to Richie's problems lay not in material wealth, but in other qualities," and finally the comic's insistence that material wealth "does not cripple the soul if one has a moral base" is a version of American exceptionalism (160). While Gordon's general remarks are valid readings of *Richie Rich*, and in some ways my reading above demonstrates that all three (and more) are at play in Richie Rich stories, in practice very little discourse about *Richie Rich* is interested in Richie for his own sake, preferring to use the fixed (and seemingly stable) idea of Richie to discuss other people and other matters.

When people on social media site Twitter use the name Richie Rich, they are very often making reference not to the character but to a generic wealthy person. His name frequently appears as an adjective, sometimes hyphenated.⁵⁶ For example, @ShezrehMirza tweets “you are clubbed along the likes of the Richie-Rich Sharjeel Memon.” Closely related to the adjectival use of the name is the use of the character as a hyperbolic reference to wealth as in @RussellTheDrive’s tweet: “Look at Richie Rich over here...” or in an @Digitkame tweet, a reference to British royal infant Prince George, “He reminds me of Richie Rich... just the hair though.” A great deal of references are to Richie Rich, the Oakland rapper; some point to West Indian cricketer Sir Richie Richardson.⁵⁷ Twitter users also use the name to discuss the fictional character as a comic book character, or the protagonist of the 1994 movie, or one of the animated series.

The most prominent and interesting mobilization of Richie Rich in social media, however, is the invocation of his name when discussing American President Donald Trump.⁵⁸ Faced with an image of a young Trump, @IndependentGms jokes “That one is an image of Richie Rich. Can’t fool me.” @MAGerrity announced “We’re all just in a fucking Richie Rich comic now” shortly after the Presidential election in which Trump was elected. In a Wonkette piece about a Republican tax plan, the previewed image is a panel of Richie Rich, leading @mjvdam to

⁵⁶ Richie-rich, as an adjectival construct with or without the hyphen but usually without capitalization, appears to be a relatively popular idiom in Pakistan and East Asia. It is not clear to me if this is a reduplicative idiom derived from the word *rich*, or a reference to the character. The phrase’s presence in the subtitles of the 1951 Indian film *Baazi* (directed by Guru Dutt), made before the creation of the American comic book character, implies that the phrase is not based on the character, but I lack the knowledge of Hindi to evaluate the translation.

⁵⁷ @AfterGrogBlog. “Richie Rich was definitely one of my cricket heroes. #AUSvWI.” *Twitter*, 25 December 2015, 6:29 PM, twitter.com/AfterGrogBlog/status/680576050217107456

⁵⁸ I should note the presence of the comparison between Hillary Clinton, Trump’s opponent in the 2016 election, and Richie Rich, which exists but is considerably rarer on Twitter. More common is the 26 November 2016 exchange between @CalFireDAS and @CraigTaboo, the latter of whom announces “I’d rather have Richie Rich over Cruela DeVile [sic]” *Twitter*, 26 November 2016, 12:40PM, twitter.com/CraigTaboo/status/803337702783545348.

appreciate “the Richie Rich nod.” @Lezingham notes: “Striking resemblance Donald & Richie Rich. Comical times.” In these examples, Richie Rich is not a generic term of abuse for a wealthy person, but rather a specific figure whose appearance is likened to that of Donald Trump. Furthermore, the use of Richie Rich suggests that the message is immediately legible: @ShaynessMac simply states that “Donald Trump is Richie Rich 50 years later #debate,” positioning a Presidential debate as comprehensible through the invocation of Richie Rich. As the Wonkette example suggests, in some instances simply the image of Richie Rich is enough to suggest the idea of President Trump. Richie Rich, in social media, is a sign that can mean Donald Trump.

The satirical point has some history. Animated reality-show parody *Drawn Together*, in which characters parodying different animation styles live in the same house and compete in challenges, blended the characters of Richie Rich and Donald Trump. In the 2004 episode “The One Wherein There Is a Big Twist, Part 1,” as part of an escalating series of narrative twists, the format of the show becomes a parody of NBC reality show *The Apprentice* (2004-present) in which Trump challenged contestants to participate in business-related competitions. In *Drawn Together*, the character of Buckie Bucks visually resembles both Trump and Richie Rich, and puts the show’s cast through a series of bizarre, offensive, and only tangentially business-related challenges. In one, “Buckie” announces “No business is successful without the help of Mexicans. That’s why for this challenge, the team that smuggles the most Mexicans across the border, wins. And, vaya con Dios” (0.10.44-59). Playing off Trumps’ “You’re fired” catchphrase, Buckie has an audible orgasm each time he says the phrase in the process of dismissing a contestant. Ultimately, in yet another twist, the character reveals that “I’m not really a billionaire. I’m, like, broke, and stuff” (0.15.39-40). Since every character on *Drawn Together* is a parody of an

existing cartoon, the conflating of Richie Rich and Donald Trump seems fairly predictable. Since the episode predates Trump's political career, it reveals that the tenor of Richie Rich for the target of Donald Trump already made sense. The use of Richie Rich in reference to Donald Trump has very little to do with Trump's career on television, and more with a converging perception of his character and that of Richie Rich.⁵⁹ One might say that the political situation has reversed the exigence of the juxtaposition, from a need to parody Trump to an inability to discuss Richie Rich without invoking Trump. That Richie Rich would come to mind when thinking of a critique of Trump is far from obvious: in R. Sikoryak's "Unquotable Trump" project, which redraws a wide variety of comic book covers to feature Donald Trump speaking his own quotes, Trump appears with a shame-faced Richie Rich rather than *as* Richie Rich. Richie Rich is, after all, not the most well-known wealthy fictional character, nor even the most well-known wealthy cartoon character. Nor is he the harshest portrayal of an exaggeratedly wealthy person, cartoon or otherwise.

Another parody of Richie Rich hints at why characters such as Scrooge McDuck and Jay Gatsby are comparatively rarely brought up when Trump is the subject. In the 2000 *Simpsons* episode "Behind the Laughter," the titular cartoon family is the subject of a different reality-TV parody. The conceit is that the characters have been playing themselves, and at one point behind-the-scenes events lead to the removal of Bart Simpson from the role of "Bart Simpson." He is replaced by "his good friend" Richie Rich, who is seen pronouncing (a version of) Bart's catchphrase "Don't have a cow, Mother" while effete dabbing crumbs from his lips using paper money (0.14.11-17). The joke in this entire episode is the idea that the Simpsons have

⁵⁹ The tumblr blog Occupy Richie Rich (occupyrichierich.tumblr.com), which ran from 2012 until 2014 and offered leftist critiques of Richie Rich's behaviour, was an early outlier of this trend, apparently inspired by the Occupy protest movement of 2011-2012, but one that indicates how Richie Rich was ready to be seen negatively as Trump became involved in politics.

been, unbeknownst to us, wrestling with lucrative success, and the tension between lucrative fame and their apparent precarious blue-collar existence is the same one that charges Richie's appearance. *The Simpsons* is consistent in its rare references to Richie, as seen in a 1991 episode where siblings Bart and Lisa Simpson discuss two Harvey characters:

Bart: ...I think Casper's the ghost of Richie Rich.

Lisa: Hey... they do look alike.

Bart: I wonder how Richie died.

Lisa: Perhaps he realized how hollow the pursuit of money really is and took his own life.

("Three Men and a Comic Book," 0.01.37-46).

The hostility in *The Simpsons* jokes about Richie Rich indicate the prevalence of a hostile reading of *Richie Rich*.⁶⁰ In a different tone than the *Simpsons* or *Drawn Together*'s jokes, Tim Hensley's 2010 graphic novel *Wally Gropiu\$* primarily spoofs teen comics of the 1960s. The title character, with the appellation "The Umpteen Millionaire," is a pubescent petrochemical magnate who supposedly solves crimes and has adventures, and Hensley parodies the trappings of Richie Rich⁶¹ as part of a surreal and at times horrifying critique of subjects ranging from Archie Comics to Abu Ghraib, Iraqi prison and site of human rights violations of American Army personnel.²¹ In Dan Parent and Fernando Ruiz' comic book series *Die Kitty Die*, a parody

⁶⁰ Roberta Gregory's comic character Bitchy Bitch (1990-2004, not the character's real name) was *not* named in reference to Richie Rich (Gregory). Uniquely enough, the song "Get the Fuck Outta Here" mentioned below rhymes "Richie Rich" with "Bitchy Bitch," though it's unclear to me if the latter is a reference to the character. The aged and sinister mogul Itchy Itch in cartoonist Rick Veitch's 1985-6 series *The One* is as the name would suggest, a parody of Richie Rich. Going by names and similarities, it also seems likely that the title character of the 1981-82 animated series *Goldie Gold and Action Jack*, proclaimed "the world's richest girl" by the opening credits, is an (unusually apt and non-parodic) reference to the name, probably via the contemporaneous Richie Rich cartoon. None of this seems to have any link to "Trucky Trumps", a wartime composition by Belgian jazz great Stan Brenders.

⁶¹ In *Wally Gropiu\$*, the word "TRUMP" appears as a sound effect to signal that a door is being slammed, as the names of other wealthy figures appear as sound effects, for example "HEAR\$T!" when the title character is vomiting money (56.2).

of show business by way of parodying Archie's *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and most of the Harvey roster, Richie Rich is represented by Maxi Millions, a child billionaire with a dollar-sign shaped cowlick who is simultaneously the actual character and the subject of comic books-within-the-comic book. In the 2017 graphic novel *Die Kitty Die: Hollywood or Bust*, Maxi Millions is revealed not only to have murdered his parents to gain their inheritance, but to actually be an aged child star who was forced to "SETTLE FOR A CAREER AS A THIRD RATE COMIC BOOK CHARACTER" (83.5). "Millions" is ultimately torn to pieces by the revenant Sammy Showbiz, a version of Richie's pal Jackie Jokers, accompanied by the reanimated corpses of real-life actress Zsa Zsa Gabor and nonfictional comedian Paul Lynde. The hostile reading of Richie Rich seen in these jokes, which position the character as offensively wealthy, surreally entitled, and despicable is the one that underlies the character's use in critiques of Donald Trump.

A lengthier parody in the December 1991 issue of *National Lampoon* suggests a reason why. The story occupies a midway point between a hostile critique of the stereotypically wealthy and a parody of Richie Rich specifically. The issue's theme is using pop culture to spoof class in America: the opening table of contents illustration suggesting a class war portrayed using comic characters, in which the dirty Pigpen of Charles Schulz's comic strip *Peanuts* hoists Richie Rich's head (bearing an unfamiliar sneer) on a stick. The extremely profane parody of *Richie Rich* in the middle of the issue is drawn by Harvey artist Angelo de Cesare as an exact imitation of the Harvey comics, and written by humorist Larry Doyle. In a storyline that loosely resembles Tom Wolfe's 1987 novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, a sociopathic "Richie Riche" kills a woman of colour and her child while driving his car, and is arrested for the subsequent killing of a police officer. Richie is sentenced to death "by spanking." Shortly before the sentence is to be

carried out, by a ludicrous Riche-brand gadget, a Richie who is sobbing that he is “JUST A POOR LITTLE RICH KID” (page 50, panel 2) is pardoned by the governor, who we discover immediately afterwards has been bribed, a situation never to be revealed since Richie’s family also owns the media. In the ensuing Letters Page, Richie responds to “reader letters” and displays a total lack of sympathy, in one case insisting that in a previous (fictional) story he was right to pursue a thief who had stolen a loaf of bread to feed his starving baby daughter (51). The cover of this issue pointedly puts the slogan “HE’S RICH AND YOU’RE NOT” above the logo. This parody demonstrates that as a character consistently portrayed as enormously wealthy, an exaggeration or subversion of the character is a simple way to satirize actual social situations. Unlike Wolfe’s *Bonfire of the Vanities*, where fictional bond trader Sherman McCoy must be established as a figure of privilege before becoming involved in a racially-charged vehicular crime, Richie Rich begins as an easy caricature for a similar concept. Because he is already a caricature of extreme wealth, Richie Rich lends himself to a satirical mobilization of that exaggeration.

However, Richie Rich was a positive caricature. It should be mentioned that Richie Rich does occasionally appear as an aspirational figure, most notably in rap music. The Oakland rapper Richie Rich mentioned above, who has been releasing music since the late 1980s, does not refer to the character in lyrics or artwork, which would seem to be treating the reference fairly subtly. By contrast, the cover of Justin Great’s 2014 mixtape *Black Richie Rich* consists of Harvey Comics art in which the character’s skin tone and hair has been altered. The album itself makes no specific reference to this, only using the general concept of Justin Great being successful and wealthy. In the following year’s song “Ayo” by Chris Brown and Tyga, Tyga also proclaims himself “the black Richie Rich.” By contrast, in the Mash Out Posse’s 2004 “Get the

Fuck Outta Here,” Lil’ Fame proclaims that his name is *not* Richie Rich while aggressively urging his interlocutors to be more careful in their dealings. Lil’ Romeo’s 2002 song “Richie Rich” is a thematically appropriate meditation on the rapper’s youth and success (he was 13 at the time), though it avoids the seemingly pertinent fact that at the time, Romeo was signed to a record label owned by his father, rapper Master P. Even rappers not sharing the same view make use of the character: in the final verse of Kool G. Rap’s 1992 “Crime Pays,” Richie Rich is linked to the aspirations of violent criminals, in the context of a critique of racial double standards surrounding the illegal drug industry and related violence, though only the name and no other notable elements of the character (for example, his whiteness) are alluded to. Outside of rap, Sandeep Varma has pointed out that the name of British *bhangra* DJ Rishi Rich appears to be a reference to the rapper Richie Rich and/or a reference to the cartoon character, in addition to being a Sanskrit pun on the word ‘rishi,’ a sage in Hinduism (Varma 20). These uses, particularly Lil’ Romeo’s deft avoidance of an awkward similarity between himself and Richie, suggest that even when he is used as an aspirational figure in a context of a desire for extreme wealth, the name Richie Rich itself is the most useful element of the character.

Supporters of Trump can (and do) compare him to wealthy characters with positive associations, such as comic book character Batman’s alter ego, millionaire Bruce Wayne. “Trump is doing what Bruce Wayne should have done instead of dressing in tights,” tweets @HarrimanNelson, accompanied by an image of Trump’s profile projected into the clouds. Yet with negative comparisons, the use of the thrifty Scrooge McDuck or the unsatisfied Gatsby would fail to capture the same idea of smug, and inherited, excess. More commonly, Twitter users pronounce that, as @PrBud72 says, “Trump is a Richie Rich spoiled brat who’s destroying the Republican Party!”; that as @WineCoffeeLove says, Donald’s son Eric Trump “literally

looks like a grown version of Richie Rich”; that in the words of @ItMustBeNice1, “Richie Rich is not for the people”; all to support the idea that ultimately, as @ShaynessMac says, “Donald Trump is Richie Rich 50 years later #debate.” The link between the politician and the character is a reiteration of a shared negative quality between the two.

Many of these mentions, and particularly visual invocations of the character, are direct references to the 1994 *Richie Rich* movie starring Macaulay Culkin as the titular child. Eric Trump, as indicated by images added to WineCoffeeLove’s tweet, does not resemble the cartoon Richie at all, but rather Culkin’s costuming and hairstyling in the movie. The @IMGMalcolm tweet “Money doesn’t mean a happy life... even Richie Rich became a drug addict.....” would appear to be absurdist dark humour, but in fact it collapses Rich and the actor Culkin, who has been arrested for drug possession.⁶² But while Culkin’s life in the years since 1994 is frequently contrasted with that of the fictional Richie, Trump is directly associated with the character in a continuum. This is puzzling when considering that, going by Richie Rich narratives, it is *only* the inherited trappings of wealth that tie them together. The actual plot of the movie has unethical wealthy people seizing control of the Rich fortune from the generous and charitable Riches, a comparison that, if read directly, would seem to be very flattering to the Trumps. Flattery is quite clearly not the idea being conjured up by comparing Eric Trump to Richie Rich. The way that invocations of Richie Rich are a critique of Donald Trump, even when associated with a specific story *about* Richie Rich, are simply not references to a *narrative* about Richie Rich. The film’s sympathetic plot closely resembles Richie’s comic adventures, and joins them in not at all licensing the idea that calling someone ‘Richie Rich’ is a damning insult. There is a pronounced hostile reading of Richie Rich the character, but this hostile reading of *Richie*

⁶² “Actor Macaulay Culkin arrested for drug possession” *USA Today* 17 September 2004.

Rich is not ultimately a *reading*. It does not engage with the fictional narratives surrounding Richie. What else are people thinking about when they talk about Richie Rich as an insult?

It could be contended that readers are simply objecting to the image of an extremely wealthy person. The comic strip which most resembles *Richie Rich* is no doubt the British series *Lord Snooty and His Pals*, which began in *The Beano* in 1938. Lord Snooty (who is indeed a boy earl) began as a bully but eventually became one among a kid's gang of friends, the Ash Can Alley kids, all of whom are quite obviously less wealthy than Lord Snooty. Like Richie Rich, Lord Snooty's strip also came to focus on gadgets and (after the Second World War's anti-Hitler strips) somewhat more surreal, fanciful stories (*The Dandy and the Beano* passim). The name "Lord Snooty" and comparisons to the character do appear in British commentary. In a letter to the *Western Daily Press*, a reader claims that "I am a staunch Conservative but this lot are like something from a comic strip which, if I recall, was Lord Snooty and his pals" ("Lord Snooty needs to get his house in order"). The comparison is frequently applied to Jacob Rees-Mogg, Conservative MP for North East Somerset from 2010 onwards. It appears to be related to his mode of dress: lending comedian Sacha Baron Cohen his own top hat in a 1999 interview, Rees-Mogg pronounced that Baron Cohen was "a dead ringer for Lord Snooty," who constantly wears such a hat ("The 11 O'Clock Show"). However, aside from bearing a more pejorative name, Lord Snooty never became an adventure strip or experimented with longer narratives. The way readers experience Richie Rich has been, for the majority of his existence, longer narratives that involved elements of being imperilled. It is very difficult to find Lord Snooty expressing any emotion but glee, while Richie Rich experienced a much wider set of narratives and emotions. The tension in the field of Richie Rich is precisely the gap between the content of Richie Rich narratives and their afterlife as very specific invective.

I contend that the majority of people invoking the name of Richie Rich are, counterintuitively, not referring to the character as he appeared in fictional stories, whether the film or the extremely large number of comic books. As this history shows, the various plots of *Richie Rich* involve a complicated relationship to wealth and the appropriate role of the same. There are wealthy malefactors like Reggie; there are people who find ostentatious wealth distasteful like Gloria; there are drawbacks to the relentless pursuit of wealth; there are things more important than money; and there are, as Colón would have it, plots more interesting than inventories of Richie's wealth. In Russell Belk's study of different American comics involving "themes of extreme wealth" (26), Belk points out that Richie Rich "might well be known as the world's nicest little boy. Far from being selfish, he uses his wealth to help others" (36) and that the major theme of the Richie Rich series is not making wealth, but having it. In Belk's quantitative analysis, Richie was tagged with more positive qualities than the other wealthy characters (Scrooge McDuck, Archie's Veronica Lodge, and the Fox from DC's *The Fox and the Crow*). This, at least, is the impression a human would get if they read a lot of Richie Rich stories. Yet even Belk's quantitative method, drawn from consumer research, was unable to avoid the fact that humans also read something else in *Richie Rich*: "Despite Richie's prosocial characteristics, coders informally reported less liking for him than for other major comic characters examined" (37). Close reading is inadequate to understand Richie Rich's afterlife. To fully see the Richie Rich who has become a byword of political insult, another form of reading must be adopted.

Chapter 3.

Dollars and Sense: Not Reading Richie Rich

My methodology in arriving at the above conclusion was to read a large number of *Richie Rich* stories, much as Bart Beaty does with Archie in his *Twelve Cent Archie*. Particularly, because they were easiest to find, I consulted Leslie Cabarga's *Best of* collection from 2007. Since *Richie Rich* has been out of print for twenty years, this is by far the easiest way to legally read any *Richie Rich* stories. Circulation of old issues of *Richie Rich* in comic book stores and at conventions is irregular and unreliable. Yet if I were to fully engage in Bart Beaty's project and read every issue of *Richie Rich* from some period of time, I suspect the results would essentially replicate Dorfman and Mattelart's Marxist critique of Uncle Scrooge adventures. Dorfman and Mattelart argue that "just as money is an abstract form of the object, so adventure is an abstract form of labor" (73) and just as with Donald Duck, Richie Rich's adventures are fantasies of Americans acquiring unclaimed natural resources. The imperial meaning of the character hardly qualifies as subtext: a "sample" story prepared by Ernie Colón to explain the pacing of Richie Rich stories features the character using an American flag to "claim" Bolivia, the story's conflict arising from a Bolivian taking exception with a machete (printed in Arnold 2017 465-470). Contrasts between Dorfman and Mattelart's critique of Scrooge and the potential critique of Richie are seemingly minor: unlike Scrooge, Richie inherited his wealth, though it is similarly abstracted from any manufacturing process. Ultimately Richie Rich stories are close enough to Disney Duck stories that substantially the same criticisms could be levelled against them. The major complicating distinction is that Uncle Scrooge is never as central a character as Richie Rich, and more importantly, he is rarely intended to be as sympathetic as Richie. Even in the Barks story I read earlier in this dissertation, when Scrooge chooses love over profit, he wants to pretend that this is not what happened, and continues to act flinty up to the end. Richie Rich, on the other hand, is manifestly intended to capture our sympathy.

The Richie Rich problem is that despite the surface level of all his stories, Richie is the subject of considerably more hostility than Scrooge McDuck, who is enormously esteemed, even widely beloved. It is not so much that the critiques of Richie Rich found on Twitter do not approach the level of sophistication of Mattelart and Dorfman. The problem is that these critiques seem to be of an entirely different character. Dorfman and Mattelart rightly argue that a major feature of these kinds of comics is the way they disguise ideology as “non-ideological” children’s stories, and this disguise is a subtext of the *National Lampoon* parody, where Richie Rich proclaims that he is “just” a poor little rich kid as he’s about to be executed for his crimes. However, to hear people tweet about Richie Rich, nobody has been fooled by this disguise. The hostile or ironic reading of Richie Rich is overwhelmingly the popular reading. It is difficult to believe that most people have formulated a Marxist critique based in close readings of Richie Rich. Studying the Richie Rich problem in more detail suggests an entirely different method of reading.

The problem of these divergent readings is applicable to other texts. Paul Davis distinguishes between a narrative and its reappearances in later popular culture by coining the term “culture text” to refer to texts that live far outside their narrative. As Paul Davis suggests with the example of Dickens’ novel *A Christmas Carol*, texts can come to be “about” different things through adaptation:

Each period re-creates the story in response to its own cultural needs. Each contributes to the evolving culture-text of the Carol by re-reading Dickens’ words and imagining its own text for the *Carol*...For the meaning of the *Carol* is not determined by the words of the author. Its meaning is created anew by each generation of readers. (13)

Pointing out that this is not unusual, Davis argues that the meaning of all literary works emerges from the interaction between “text and culture-text, from the versions of the story created by its readers” (13). Studying the culture-text clarifies the reading process that these readers are engaged in. This has a particular significance for comics studies, in that Western comics typically consist of enormous bodies of text which comparatively few readers have studied in any detail or completeness meaning that characters and narratives frequently exist very far away from any original. Cumulative close reading, as Davis engages in, is one way to perceive a culture-text, but comic books have generally circulated not as a beloved classic adapted through the ages but rather as an enormous number of consumer items encountered in childhood. The culture-texts of comic books like *Richie Rich* require a different kind of reading to fully comprehend.

In Dorfman and Mattlart’s reading of Disney comics, the consequences of their intensely skeptical reading are unsatisfyingly projected backwards onto the author’s intent, so the messages that can be closely read in Disney’s comics are the ones that the creator intended. A more distant methodology, one less focused on secret meanings and more on aggregated effects, is a new way to look at an enormous archive and perceive what cannot be seen in a collection of stories. Furthermore, the object of discussion here is slightly different than “the total of all Richie Rich stories.” After all, those stories evince a suspicion and wariness that tallies quite closely to critiques of Richie Rich: while Richie Rich never becomes a drug addict in the comics, the idea that “money doesn’t mean a happy life” is the explicit moral of a great number of *Richie Rich* stories. In the stories of *Richie Rich*, Richie is embedded in a variety of generic narratives. But no-one, when calling Donald Trump Richie Rich, is implying that Trump has fought supervillains, or that he would rather be playing baseball, or that oil rains down upon him in the

middle of vacations like a petrochemical Midas. Where is this other Richie Rich? In the stories we see Richie frustrated, perturbed, gleeful, triumphant over Reggie, embarrassed about Gloria, terrified at gunpoint. In parodies we see him smug. But where exactly is Richie Rich smug?

The distinction between text and culture-text is useful for *Richie Rich* because of the pointedly oppositional reading between the text and the culture text. In light of the details of *Richie Rich*, the hostile reading would seem to be a rejection of the ambiguities of the narrative. In particular, the textual element that affords this reading is the recurring emphasis on how enjoyable Richie's wealth is, regardless of how far the plot goes to suggest that wealth is morally compromised. This does not answer the question of why exactly the far more popular uptake of *Richie Rich* is the one that does not involve actually reading the narrative. The obvious answer, that *Richie Rich* was never particularly popular, fails to indicate why the character has any popular culture uptake at all.

While Davis maintains that culture texts can come to be "about" different matters than the original text, that explanation sheds no light on why *Richie Rich*, a text with very few adaptations, has a culture text radically opposed to the original text. While the uptake of *Richie Rich* is nothing like the elaborate, continuing life of *A Christmas Carol*, it consists of a development (the rejection of the text's ambiguities) suggestive less of later ironies and more of immediate repurposing. The landscape of parodies, jokes, and tweets that I call the hostile reading is an ongoing adaptation of *Richie Rich*, playing off an existing element of the stories by closing off one dimension of the relatively complex narrative. Unlike *A Christmas Carol*, what is adapted with *Richie Rich* is a set of recurring ideas rather than any one fixed narrative: in the hostile reading, references to specific *Richie Rich* narratives are far and few between. Because

the hostile reading is a shallower engagement with the text, the answer to this mystery won't be found in reading *Richie Rich* more closely, but in reading it more distantly.

Stanley Fish's conservative critique of computer-assisted interpretation in the humanities held that the activity reproduces nothing that a reader would ever be aware of, a point ceded by digital humanities scholars Geoffrey Rockwell and Stéfan Sinclair when they admit that "there seems to be something unnatural about any form of analysis that uncovers something that no author consciously intended and no human would find through reading alone" (160). This specific quality makes distant reading the appropriate tool to investigate the amassed total of *Richie Rich*. What is referenced when Richie Rich is invoked—on Twitter in parodies, in casual conversation—is not the sum of the stories that a human could find through reading *Richie Rich*. In fact since 1994 essentially no-one *has* read new *Richie Rich*, and few read the stories for some time before that. When we do look at Richie Rich stories, the picture suggested is extremely different from the character's afterlife as a culture text. Faced with the puzzle of Richie Rich's movement through popular culture with no actual narrative attached, it is my contention that distant reading of the *object Richie Rich*, will reveal another view of what we collectively know about Richie.

An effort to apply computer-assisted interpretation to comic books presents several immediate difficulties. The most notable is the lack of a corpus or body of information that can be easily read by a computer. John A. Walsh argues that to look at characters like Batman who appear in many titles across time, a researcher "cannot confine herself to a small number of publications, but must consider almost the full output of a publisher or even multiple publishers" (para.12). He calls for digital markup in order to create "Large digital collections of comic books [that] would support the types of searching that is now taken for granted in large digital

collections of literary and other texts.” Other scholars⁶³ have attempted precisely this project, revealing the deeper problems with creating a corpus of comics. The history of comics studies suggests a sequence of attempts to create a corpus that can be read distantly.

The earliest projects that attempt to take a data-driven approach to comic books relied on surveys. In 1949, Harvey Zorbaugh attempted to answer the question “What does America really think about comics as reading for children?” (Zorbaugh 225). This was Zorbaugh’s attempt to quantify the “violent controversy” (225) then raging about comic books, and contrasts (whether intentionally or not) with the extremely anecdotal evidence brought by anti-comics commentators like psychiatrist Fredric Wertham, one of the primary agitators promoting the idea of comic books as a moral hazard.⁶⁴ The 1954 United States Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency also dabbled in data analysis, albeit as part of their effort to give a more accurate picture of the workings and reach of the industry (U. S. Congress 4). Because they were focused on quantifying public response or the industry’s structure, these early data-driven approaches are of limited use. For example, Zorbaugh’s discovery that for most of the adults in his survey comics were not harshly criticized for “sexual deviancy” (Zorbaugh 228) seems to indicate very little about comics themselves. On the other hand, Columbia University researcher Robert Thorndike did a study of comics in an effort to discover their average amount of words and usage of slang rather than standard English (Nyberg 9). Thorndike’s concept was defined by

⁶³ The most notable projects along the lines of Walsh’s description are, in chronological order, the supervisualization projects of Lev Manovich, Jeremy Douglass, and William Huber; and the *What Were Comics?* project of Benjamin Woo and Bart Beaty. The smaller-scale efforts of Igor Juricevic and Alicia Joleen Horvath, as well as that of Giancarla Unser-Schutz, are along the same lines. All three are discussed in the following pages, but I would also like to note “Battle of Sexes: Gender Role Reversion in Wonder Woman 1942-1985,” an undergraduate presentation delivered by Aizhan Myrzabekova at the University of British Columbia’s Vantage College in July 2017 which appears to be an example of the same impulse. The project that comes closest to fulfilling Walsh’s description of the “large digital collection” is in fact the fan-created Grand Comics Database at comics.org, as explained later.

⁶⁴ The late 1940s moral panic over comic books saw a series of book burnings and eventually the formation of the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers (Hajdu and Nyberg *passim*).

moral panic over comic books, since his explicit purpose was to objectively determine how close comic books were to non-slang texts with a “healthy” number of words in them, suggesting that such a method was then seen as a way of legitimizing his results. As Amy Nyberg has pointed out, despite being the harshest public critic of comics at the time, Fredric Wertham made no effort to explain what the “typical” comic book might look like (Nyberg 259) or what his examples had to do with the average comic book. Data, in this context, feels and continues to feel defensive when applied to comics, but the invocation of data as a subject of interpretation is one of the important distinguishing characteristics of the digital humanities. A contemporary development, Roberto Busa’s 1949 conception of a punchcard concordance to the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, emphasizes the second important strand of the digital humanities: the use of tools to create an interpretable object designed by the researcher. As the example of Busa suggests, one key feature of digital humanities is the application of new methods (often drawn from the social sciences) to sources that could also be the subject of traditional reading-based methods.

The related approaches of “distant reading,” “computer-assisted interpretation,” and “data-driven” research continue to be described in terms of traditional research, usually as an improvement and generally as a contrast. As Rockwell and Sinclair say of their project to embed data in analysis,

If you check my interpretation and disagree with my claims, you can criticize the analysis, the choice of texts, the techniques applied, and the interpretations of results—something you can’t do if my interpretation is based on anecdotal quotes or on implied authority.

(228)

To the criticism that these methods reveal things of no significance, Rockwell and Sinclair argue that interpretation can be a way to generate a hypothesis, rather than confirm one (161).

Rockwell and Sinclair also point out that creating a corpus out of a text is itself interpretation, and involves some necessary decisions before visualization or tagging takes place.

Most “empirical” methods for dealing with comic books are adaptations of methods developed for text. John A. Walsh proposes a modification of existing Text Encoding Initiative guidelines into a Comic Book Markup Language in order to turn a comic book text into a corpus (Walsh, para. 11). Walsh’s proposal coincided with Giancarla Unser-Schutz’ analysis of *manga*, in which XML tagging was used to study the use of the male first-person pronoun in girls’ *manga*, a project which needed to consider both textual and visual elements: what is being said; who is speaking; and to whom they are speaking. Unser-Schutz and Walsh are both trying to bridge a perceived gap between images and words as subjects of analysis by translating images into words. According to Unser-Schutz, the distinction can be ambiguous when it comes to comics: “Ultimately this is a text-oriented corpus, insofar as it is an attempt to deal with how to think about and link together non-linear text which is by nature a part of a larger visual structure. Yet the corpus described here could be said to be a part of the trend to try to link the visual and the linguistic” (214) because her tagging method does include visual information. Despite the visual nature of written words, the idea of a corpus continues to be figured not as visual but as the target realm into which visual information must be translated.

Because these methods are based on systems designed for empirical analysis of text, Walsh notes of his tagging language that “significant work remains to be done giving similar attention to the pictorial dimensions of the comic book” (Walsh 45). Walsh’s suggestion is to rely on reproductions of comic book panels. This particular element of Walsh’s method harmonizes with

Douglass, Huber, and Manovich’s use of “supervisualization” (191) in their consideration of a million *manga* pages. Their work is part of Manovich’s larger concept of “cultural analytics,” an effort to use computer-assisted interpretation to look at large amounts of images. As shown in their work, one way to supervisualize a million images is simply to place a million-image sequence in one single image, then use a computer to compare and determine values (221). As they say, “interactive visualization allows us to look at the visual data sets in multiple ways” (221) some of which look like a more complex version of Walsh’s visualizing suggestion.

If Walsh’s markup language heavily tilts towards the textual element of comic books, other scholars have suggested modifying existing techniques for empirical analysis of visual art. In a series of articles and experiments, Neil Cohn has put forward methods drawn from cognitive science and psychology: “They can either manipulate the structure to see how it works, or catalogue and describe how a phenomenon works within a single comic or many comics” (69) by recording the responses of readers. Cohn’s research trends towards the first method. A notable series of experiments with Hannah Campbell interrogates commonplaces about panel reading order for the purposes of determining the principles of “Assemblage” (198), or how readers consider panels to relate to each other. A later project about page layout applied these methods but has been criticized by David Beard for a remarkably small sample set.

Since comics can be understood as a combination of text and images, methods developed for the study of visual art (or images in any discipline) might also be useful for the computer assisted study of comic books. Patrik Svensson points out that

the digital humanities has not had a predominant visual studies interest... In some cases, visual elements have come into the digital humanities through the textual (for example, through images of textual elements), through information attached to artifacts in archives

and libraries, and increasingly through a growing interest in visualization and spatial humanities. (11)

Unsurprisingly, a great many applications of humanities computing to visual art is driven by a need to produce “readability” in historical images. In projects such as Melissa Terras and Paul Robertson’s application of an artificial intelligence system to the Vindolanda texts, the incomplete Roman epistles were effectively translated by the GRAVA system in three stages. However, two of these stages involved the pre-existence of a standardized Latin alphabet (Terras 2006 126), indicating the specific problem faced by a hypothetical automated reader of comic books. More promising is the Griphos project described elsewhere by Terras, designed to reassemble Greek frescos by evaluating “match hypothesis amongst digitized fragments” (Terras 2012), suggesting that manipulation of digitized images can be accomplished by an application to create interpretable images. The practice of 3D printing also typically arises in this context: the creation of a safely manipulable proxy by which to communicate or generate interpretation (Beale, Beale, Dawson, and Minkin), a use which seems to harmonize with the idea of recovering erased elements of palimpsests.

Unlike archaeological practices, for the purposes of studying comic books like Richie Rich we are faced with a very large but complete corpus. In fact, the covers of every issue of Richie Rich, with associated metadata about artists, stories, and dates, have been digitally assembled in a non-academic project, the Grand Comics Database at comics.org. The fan project of the GCD is the largest existing corpus of comics, containing as it does searchable indexical information about the writers, story titles, characters, and other elements of around one and a half million comic books and related publications. Comichron, at comichron.com, is a related fan resource, which contains a set of digitized cover images attached to different metadata more focused on

release dates. The Richie Rich corpus accessible through these digital projects, resembles less the Vindolanda fragments and more SherlockNet. SherlockNet is a project to “radically improve the discoverability” of the vast British Library collection of images hosted on website Flickr, a project in which machine learning concepts were used and adjusted to make the tags and captions useful to human users (SherlockNet). John Resig has described the value of this work for existing archives, and implicitly for the “archive” that is all photographs of art, concluding with an ironic echo of Stanley Fish when he remarks that computers may be able “to find interesting image matches that were likely undiscoverable using raw human power” precisely because computers can be made unaware of the metadata attached to artworks (Resig). Most projects for digitizing comic books are extremely dependent on metadata because they have as their goal the creation of functional archives, from the digital comics pirates described by Aaron Delwiche to the efforts of Ryerson University’s Centre for Digital Humanities to create a repository for information about the moral panics over comic books, The Innocence Project (O’Malley).

While these projects certainly create fruitful grounds for interpretation, metadata has also become the subject of interpretation itself. While The Innocence Project can guide the reader to, for example, newspaper articles about the burning of comic books in the 1940s, there are also tools in the world of visual art that can translate a set of comics into something that can be analyzed itself. Michael Greenhalgh points out that the ICONCLASS system, developed for cataloguing purposes by art historians in the 1950s, classifies visual art by iconography (Greenhalgh 33). This would seem to make it the spiritual forerunner to systems that try to show at a glance the relative occurrence of different visual elements in large bodies of images, or the analysis of tagging.

A version of tagging has also been used by Igor Juricevic and Alicia Joleen Horvath in a promising study of pictorial devices to represent motion. The two researchers determined a body of comic book covers, and then based on their observations of how artists represented motion, developed a set of categories which became tags. For example, some portrayals were metaphorical, while others were literal. It was therefore possible for Juricevic and Horvath to look at their 400 images, determine which were metaphorical and which were literal (and which were some combination of the two), creating a set of data that (combined with chronology) created a sample history of how artists have portrayed motion. A much more ambitious version of this approach would be the *What Were Comics?* Project of Bart Beaty and Benjamin Woo. *What Were Comics?* is an effort to create a “data-driven history of the American comic book” by tagging a large sample size (a random 2% of all comic books, spread evenly over the years 1934-2014, limited to the United States). These will be indexed “for a variety of formal and material elements (story length; page layout; panel composition; volume of text in captions, word balloons, and sound effects; scene transitions; advertising; creator credits; etc.)” (Beaty and Woo). Their effort is geared towards understanding the “typical” comic in contrast to the canonically well-regarded comic books, and serves as a long-delayed correction to Fredric Wertham’s overlooking of the typical.

Methodologically, perhaps the most significant comments about the relationship between interpretation and the digital humanities come from another study of a mixed visual and textual body of work: Whitson and Whittaker’s analysis of William Blake in terms of the digital humanities. Noting Franco Moretti’s proclamation that the current impetus behind distant reading is to take texts and “learn how not to read them” (119), Whitson and Whittaker point out that the major justification behind quantitative methods is as a corrective: “Again and again,

Blake scholars know what we are looking for and so empty naïve text mining methods at best: we find Blake’s radicalism and creativity wherever our gaze falls, and so we fail to see how Blake is actually used online” (119). Whitson and Whittaker dub the way that Blake is deployed outside the academic consensus as “the Blake brand,” intriguingly mentioning the deployment of Blake quotes in the private library of Donald Trump. Yet while Whitson and Whittaker meant this as a prompt to Blake scholars to engage in quantitative analysis, their point is also a warning about the deployment of systems like Juricevic and Horvath’s: without acknowledging the method behind the search, scholars risk reproducing the interpretation that precedes the computer assisted reading. John Resig, in his description of an engine to read photograph archives, writes about teaching computers to ignore things humans can’t—“all the painstakingly-generated metadata” (Resig). One key purpose to examining humanities subjects with digital tools is precisely to perceive something that may contradict a human reading.

From this overview, it is clear that one factor behind the major division in empirical comic book research is resources. The method of Manovich et al. required the use of a supercomputer capable of some degree of visual analysis itself, while Cohn and Campbell and to a lesser extent Juricevic and Horvath were forced to limit their sample size. The Grand Comics Database has succeeded due to an unfathomable amount of volunteer work by an army of enthusiasts. Because I am not thousands of people, and I do not have access to a supercomputer, I believe that a variation on the tagging method is appropriate. To counter the criticism of a limited sample size, I intend to limit my text as John Walsh suggested, to the appearances of one particular character, Richie Rich. In the interest of making my method transparent, I have narrativized it below, but for the moment I would note that the project began with the only limit being the character of Richie Rich.

This immediately proved to be too large of a theoretical corpus. To find a discrete region where Richie projects the negative image he is associated with, I designed a method based around the observation that distant reading creates a new object that reflects certain qualities of the object of study. In this case, I have taken every cover of a comic book published in the Richie Rich “line” (1723 comic book covers) and created a graph visualizing trends in one very narrow aspect. I chose to limit my reading to the covers of these issues due to an instinct that a great many more people are aware of the character from the covers rather than the stories, and also to use a coherent category to limit the search to a (barely, as it turned out) manageable data set. My inquiry is designed to answer a basic question: where is the hated Richie Rich?

My interest was in the variance of ideas being projected onto Richie Rich, and so I decided to focus on one particular visual element of every Richie Rich cover: his face. His face appears on all 1723 *Richie Rich*-branded covers published between 1960 and 1994, as regular as his name. Isolating Richie’s face, we can see that it consists of a very limited number of elements, altered and rearranged to produce different effects. Even though several artists drew Richie Rich in this period, the visual variations are in terms of line rather than basic approaches. This effect paradoxically enhances the minute differences even while the similarities are overwhelming. This paradox is probably the case for all recurring characters, but with Richie Rich the effect is enhanced by the consistency and simplicity of Harvey’s house style. The 1990s run of Richie Rich covers often simply used art from covers from thirty years earlier, because the artistic style had changed so little.

The major elements of Richie Rich’s face are his eyes, his mouth, his eyebrows, and his teeth. This was an observation arrived at by looking at hundreds of *Richie Rich* covers. Richie’s eyes being open, closed, or half-lidded, or the two eyes being different, would all produce

different expressions, and ‘count’ as different faces regardless of the other elements. In terms of eyes, there are therefore three different eye expressions possible within the observed system of Richie’s face. Including the possibility of eyes being different, there are five. If we were to include the distinction between left and right eyes as being significant, we would have seven.

Each element produces another exponential set of possible faces. His eyebrows can be curved downwards, or upwards, or curved in two different directions. Combined with the eyes, this indicates 21 possible faces. If we consider which eyebrow is curved upwards and downwards as significant, we have 28 possible faces. If we include a lower diagonal, then we have another 28 faces possible. Of course, these elements are based on the observed faces. In fact it would be quite possible to draw Richie Rich with his eyebrows straight across, or with no eyebrows at all, or with four eyebrows for that matter. One further piece of evidence for the small-c conservatism of *Richie Rich*’s art style is that a great many possible faces never appeared on the cover of any issue. I chose to overlook the possibilities which were never used at all in the corpus of Richie Rich faces, making my inquiry concerned with trends within *Richie Rich* and not *Richie Rich*’s participation in or lack of participation in trends outside the series.

I have chosen to limit my variations to Richie’s eyes, mouth, eyebrows, and teeth. I deliberately chose not to record as significant instances of Richie blushing, or sweating, or the distinction between him playing a musical instrument or eating. These content-related differences struck me as having very little to do with Richie’s mood, the overall target of my investigation. I also chose not to record such variations as, for example, the thickness of Richie’s eyebrows. My rationale for this exclusion is that it seems to be related only to the decisions of the individual artist, which are sometimes difficult to detect in *Richie Rich*’s overall standards. In short, while I chose to focus my attention away from the variation in artists or in Richie’s

activities, I also chose to limit the difference between Richie Rich faces to a comparatively small set of variables.

These four elements presented significant variation, but they were still tempered by the remarkably limited set of differences in the actual history of *Richie Rich*. In the history of *Richie Rich*, there are 12 different ways to draw Richie's mouth, ranging from a horizontal line to a full circle, from a whistle created by portraying his lips to blowing on a horn, shown by the sudden appearance of his cheeks. Again, while there are a great many ways to represent a human mouth, only 12 of them ever appear on Richie Rich's face in this corpus. These mouths include Richie's occasional jowl, his chin which appears in two mouths, and the varieties of his mouth that include his teeth. Again, there could be further distinctions made: when Richie's mouth is open his teeth are sometimes visible and sometimes not, a distinction that I chose not to record because it doesn't seem to alter Richie's portrayed mood, the subject of my inquiry. It's also worth noting that 8 of the 12 mouths are closed, probably because dialogue appears very rarely on these covers, though it increasingly does so in the chronology.

At this point, before even tagging the actual data, I have already made a series of interpretations which point to features of *Richie Rich*. By far, "positive" mouths outnumber "negative" varieties; or, mouths that are curved upwards outnumber those that curve downwards. Furthermore, the "tags" or categories of faces strongly emphasize the mouth as the site of variation. We have not yet seen what face predominates, and the history of Richie's many faces, but there has already been interpretation. Finally, even only counting the limited elements in the observed features of Richie Rich, there are 480 possible faces. Only 43 different Richie faces, however, ever appeared on the cover of *Richie Rich*.

In the interiors of issues, due partially to the exponentially larger sample size, one would expect more variation, and a casual look at any given issue, where we see perhaps 120 instances of Richie's face, suggests that this is true. On the covers, it would seem that there was a very distinct set of limitations on behalf of the artists. We could see this as a further testament to their artistic conservatism or desire to avoid experimentation and variety. In other words, there is a consistency to *Richie Rich*'s facial expression that begins to suggest what the character means to those who perhaps never read his stories but only saw his covers.

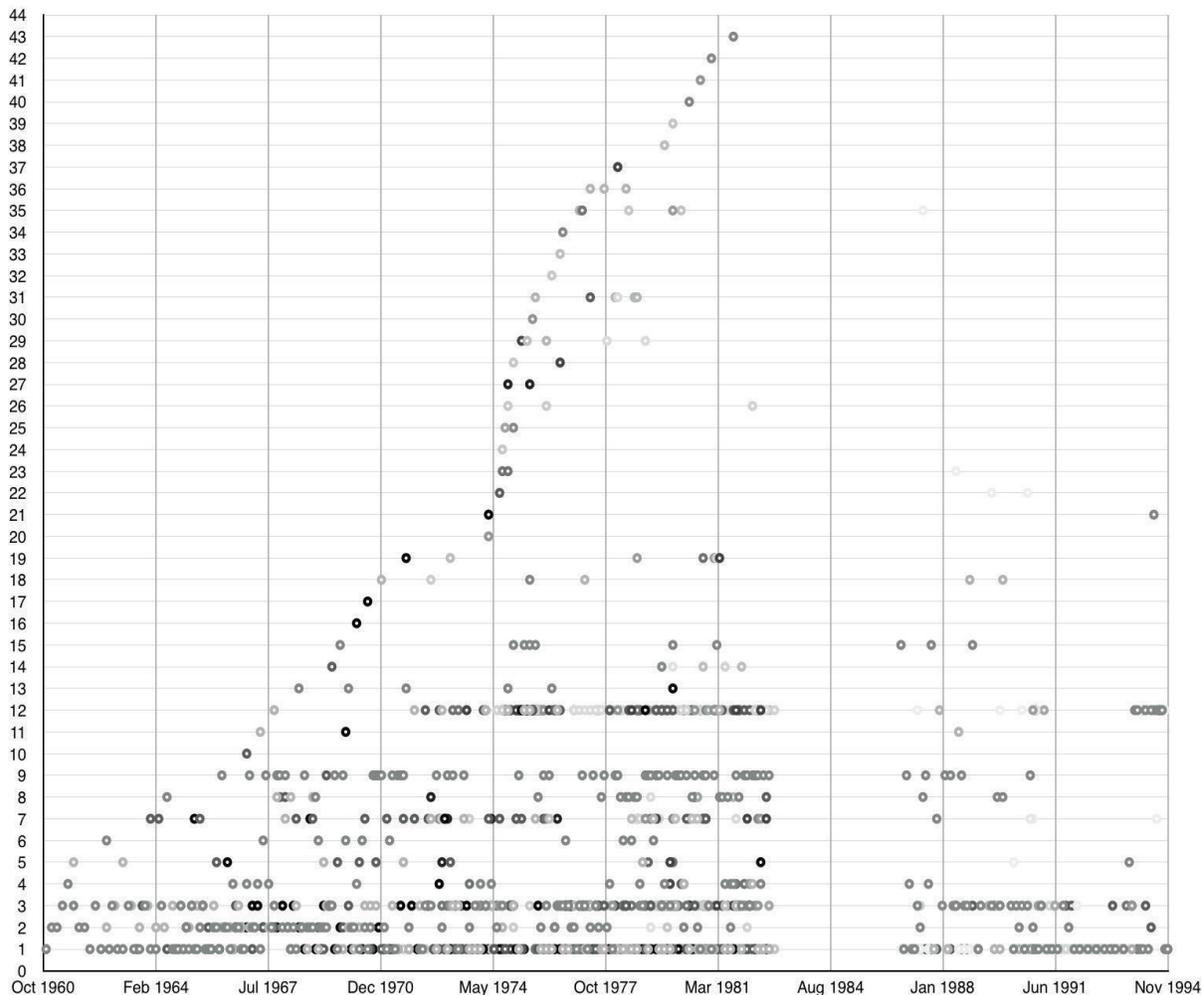
This method turns Richie's face into a series of permutations. I have simplified the elements because I want to see how Richie's expressions recur across a large body, but this means my method does err on the side of not capturing the full complexity of the situation. I should note that I designed this system to take account for any new, further observations. To explain these categories further via example: a Richie Rich with his eyebrows curved up, his eyes wide open, his mouth a circle, and his teeth absent, would indicate an expression of surprise. If the first three elements were the same but his mouth was curved downwards, it would indicate much the same emotion but with a slight edge of dismay because it would add a frown to the other elements. As it happens, the former of these was the eighth face I observed (appearing first in July 1964), while the latter is the twelfth (appearing first in October 1967).

Even these simple elements generated a possible 480 faces. Many of these never occurred in the corpus. Some of them are impossible: if Richie's mouth is absent, his teeth cannot also be shown. Yet there are many possible faces that do not appear: for example there are no covers of Richie Rich where his face is drawn with his eyes closed and his mouth absent. There are covers where his eyes are closed and he is smiling (the first of these appears in July 1961). Already this analysis has determined that there are several Richie Rich faces which never appeared on the

covers of his comic books, an absence that would be difficult to perceive or verify without distant reading.

Due to technical limitations, I translated these faces into numbers. I did this quite simply, by assigning a number to each face in the order in which it appeared on the covers. This transformed the covers of *Richie Rich* from a sequence of images into a sequence of numbers, each reflecting a different combination of Richie's facial elements. Because I numbered them in chronological order, ordinal and chronological order are heavily correlated. This severely affected the shape of my final graph, so the first data point appears in the lower left corner because Richie's face on *Richie Rich* #1 is also Face #1, though there is no particular reason that it should be so except that by doing this the graph becomes a history. While this reflects the fact that *Richie Rich* covers were released in a sequence, it does not have any meaning in hindsight, particularly now that the archive is no longer necessarily encountered in this order.

The other side of this decision is that the graph shows more exceptional faces at the top, because now the x-axis is time and the y-axis is not just the number of faces but also their order of appearance. It is possible to rearrange this data to show the faces simply in terms of how often they appear relative to each other, but I have chosen to visualize it with this chronological element. Here is the graph:



Several anomalies are fairly clear on this graph: the gap in data points around August 1984, for example, represents Harvey's publishing hiatus between 1982 and 1987. Faces 37 through 43 each only ever appear once. The greatest variation in faces occurs in the second half of the 1970s, where two-thirds of all faces Richie Rich would ever evince appear between 1974 and 1981. The significance of different shades of grey is that the data comes from different *Richie Rich* series, and this graph therefore also indicates no significant correlation between any given series and any set of faces, with some anomalies, such as Face #26, which only ever appeared in one series over a span of several years, or Face #12, which in the early 1990s seems to have only appeared in one series. In practice there is some correlation (nearly every cover of *SuperRichie*, in

which Richie is a superhero, has him scowling) but not a strong one (that face does appear elsewhere).

Probably the most significant anomaly is, in fact, the history of Face #12. Despite being the twelfth face ever in evidence on the cover of *Richie Rich*, not appearing until nearly seven years into the publishing history here, it becomes as densely common in the 1970s as the first three faces, with occurrences happening seemingly more than once every month. Within this line, we can also see a strange period ending in October 1977, in which only one series appears to be carrying Face #12s. This stands out as significant, in other words, even without knowing what emotion is displayed using Face #12.

Consulting my codebook, it turns out that Face #12 is eyebrows curved out, eyes wide open, no teeth, and the mouth open but curved downwards—in fact, it is fear. After first appearing in 1967, this expression became extremely prominent in several consecutive issues in the mid-1970s. Beginning in issues cover-dated May 1975, almost all the covers of the 17 series Harvey was publishing under the Richie Rich name bore Face #12, lasting until September of that year. I've dubbed this situation the Summer of Fear to name an extraordinary moment in the history of *Richie Rich*. It seems suggestive of a major creative and editorial course change, one that is presumably related to Ernie Colón's epiphany about how to tell Richie Rich stories. This coincides, indeed, with the majority of Colón's work for Harvey: he was a freelancer with them from 1955 to 1980, but does not seem to have drawn stories until the early to mid 1960s. Whether the change to covers was meant to signal a change in the inside contents, or whether it reflected a change that had taken place sometime before, the Summer of Fear is interesting because it indicates the most significant generic shift in all of *Richie Rich*'s covers. 196 covers, out of 1723, carry Face #12, making it the third most common face in the Richie Rich cover

corpus. Despite the fact that in the autumn of 1975 these covers went away, they soon returned: the period in 1977 when Face #12 was only appearing in one series was due to the continued publication (beginning in November 1974) of *Richie Rich Vault\$ of Mystery*, a thriller-themed *Richie Rich* series. Unlike the contemporary series *Richie Rich Gems* (September 1974) and *Richie Rich Profit\$* (October 1974), which also began with runs of Face #12, *Vault\$ of Mystery* persisted even after July through October 1976, when no Face #12 appeared anywhere in the now-20 *Richie Rich* series. By 1978 and 1979, Face #12 was again appearing intermittently across the line, though after the 1982-1987 hiatus, it was unusually slow to reappear. In the context of the rapidly-expanding number of *Richie* series, usually pointed to as the reason for Harvey's financial troubles and suspension of all publications, the role of Face #12 suggests that generic experimentation, followed by a cautious retreat and a gradual resumption, was an aesthetic method to turn a profit just as multiplying titles was a publishing method for the same purpose.

Generic shifts caused other problems for the concept of this graph. There are some *Richie Rich* covers in which Richie's face appears more than once. For example, on *Richie Rich Dollar\$ and ¢ents* #45 (November 1971), Richie Rich is in a sailboat where the sail has been replaced by an enormous dollar bill, on which an image of Richie appears. This cover also shows an example of major characters, including Richie, appearing in small panels along the left side of the issue. In these cases I chose to record the face of the "real" Richie rather than logo-like elements of his face or representations of that face. This presented some complications: for example, on *Richie Rich Fortune\$* #2 (November 1971), a small Richie Rich is climbing a mountain shaped like his own smiling face. In this case, I chose to record the expression on the mountain, because it dominates the scene and would thus be the Richie face first perceived by a reader on approaching

this object, making it function like the Richie logo. In cases where two Richie faces were of comparable size, I chose the face that belonged to the ‘real’ Richie. Nonetheless this creates some room for inaccuracy, although very few instances of multiple faces exist.

Two anomalous covers are worth noting. The covers of *Richie Rich Succe\$\$ Stories* #43 (April 1972) and *Richie Rich Vault\$ of Mystery* #11 (July 1976) both present an insoluble problem for my tagging system. On the covers of both, Richie Rich is represented by multiple faces because both covers portray a transformation by showing Richie Rich’s ordinary state, a transitional state, and then the ultimate result. On *Vault\$ of Mystery* #11, Richie is transforming into an infant, and goes from an expression of shock to his standard smile. Each of these expressions is already accounted for in the tagging system, but it’s unclear how to record this issue. On *Succe\$\$ Stories* #43, a Richie who is happily drinking a milkshake is transformed into an immense Mister Hyde-like monster. While the ‘first’ expression is standard, the expression of the monster—red circles in his eyes, and a smile from which fangs protrude—is entirely without precedent in other covers.⁶⁵ Predictably enough given the split between covers and interior art, even the monstrous Richie on the cover of *Succe\$\$ Stories* #43 is a good deal less grotesque than the character in the story (Figures 13 and 14).

Fortunately, while the actual classifying of faces doesn’t fit into this graph or my system to deal with multiple faces, the general import of these covers is clear: Richie is being menaced by some transformation. Both covers are part of the trend towards ‘adventure’ in the 1970s series. I left these two data points off the graph, but I think they are explicable with reference to the major shift epitomized by the region of Face #12, the Summer of Fear.

⁶⁵ The series *Richie Rich and Jackie Jokers*, spotlighting Richie’s ‘showbiz’ friend Jackie, frequently parodied movies and, in Issue #8, January 1975, included “Dr. Jackie and Mr. Hide,” a parody of the Robert Louis Stevenson novel and film adaptations. This story was not indicated on the cover of that issue.

As significant as the anomaly of Face #12 or the ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ cover is, the more valuable part of this graph for my original inquiry is instead the most common faces, clustered at the bottom of the graph and also appearing at the far left. These are the faces that appeared first and most often, and in the context of the Richie Rich line, those are the same thing. Quite aside from the general shape suggesting that the character was fully conceptualized in 1960 after his many appearances in *Little Dot*, and that while experiments like the Summer of Fear would occur but only as deviations from the still-dominant faces 1, 2, and 3, they also suggest the ‘average’ Richie Rich face. Face #1, for example, appeared on 898 of all covers—more than half, more than all other Richie Rich faces combined. Face #2 only appeared 89 times but is still the fourth most common Richie Rich face, while Face #3, the second most common, appeared 245 times. The vast majority of Richie Rich faces, in other words, are Faces #1 and #3, with #2 notably less.

My graph privileges two obvious features in addition to limiting itself to Richie’s faces. It privileges both a chronological sequence, and the most common face of Richie Rich. At the bottom of the graph we can see that these correspond. In other words, the *first* face that Richie Rich had on the cover of *Richie Rich* #1 would become the most common face for the next thirty years of *Richie Rich* comics. It can be seen on the graph that the contest is not even close: while there are other common faces, there is one that dominates, and it is the earliest face. As I’ve suggested, this is perhaps a reminder that the character of Richie Rich predates his first cover appearance on *Richie Rich* #1 by seven years, but it still underscores the simplicity and conservatism of the covers.

The art within *Richie Rich* displayed considerably more variation, and it is entirely believable that even a flagship character like Richie could have been drawn with more variation. As the example of the monstrous Richie above implies, the standard Richie Rich style (or Harvey

style, for it was consistent across the publisher's children's output) could even suggest what a 'monster' version of Richie Rich would look like, while the monster in the comic bears only the faintest indications of being a version of Richie Rich. In other words, the covers are perhaps the most consistent and least experimental aspect of a generally standard style. This has more to do with consistency (across time and titles) in portrayals of Richie and his main cast than consistency across different characters within the stories.

Several primary sources indicate visual consistency was borrowed from another medium and implemented for ease of drawing. Artist Howie Post explained Richie's character design as a principle borrowed from animation, suggesting that Casper and Richie Rich don't so much look like each as that they both look like a figure who is easy to draw repeatedly because they are interchangeable (81). Warren Kremer, the artist most associated with Richie Rich's standard style, admitted that he designed a formula to draw the character: a circular head with open eyes, onto which any expression could be created (Janocha 67). Kremer indicated that his own work was an imitation of his mentor Steve Muffatti, the earliest Richie artist, who had been an animator previously (Benson 47). Critic Ken Parille has observed that Harvey's house style is perhaps the longest-running "look" in the history of American comic books, lasting from the 1940s through the '80s... far more visually and thematically coherent than that of any other American comics publisher. (n.p.).

Later artists, most notably Ernie Colón, would retain Richie's design while varying their own style, depending on the genre. Within most Richie 'adventure' stories (a category that includes stories in the horror and superhero tradition), there is a notable contrast between the style in which Richie and his main cast are drawn, and the style in which the other characters appear. Looking a story like the Colón-drawn "Mutiny on the Oceanic," there is a striking difference

between Richie (and Gloria) and other characters. Colón, in fact, seems to play up this difference, focusing on Manta's face in particular (Figures 15 and 16).

I'd like to note that this variation of styles within a single story seems to recur in titles that mix humour and adventure. To choose a contemporary series from another publisher, the 1960s *Three Stooges* series from Western Publishing features a similar tension. In "Knights in a Daze" from *The Three Stooges* #31 (November 1966), the titular Stooges are caricatures with considerably less and simpler lines, while characters like King Arthur are drawn in a less comedic style (Figure 17).

This is also the case in the 1962 comic book adaptation of the film *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules*, where the Stooges are drawn in broad caricature alongside characters with somewhat more detail, despite the fact that as a film adaptation, every single character is based on a real person (Figure 18). This is not required—in the adaptation of "The Three Stooges Go Around the World in a Daze," (*The Three Stooges* # 15, January 1964), all the characters are drawn in the same style (Figure 19).

But it seems to not be a coincidence that series that suture together humorous and "serious" characters draw those characters in a different style. In the 1950s *Three Stooges* series, which was not based on the Stooges' movies and thus did not include the relatively serious subplots of those films, all characters appear in the same comedic style consistently.

I bring up the Three Stooges partially because the comic characters are always representations of real actors. Yet rather than realistic drawings of the actual human Stooges, the comic artists always chose to portray the characters in caricature, revealing how deeply associated the convention of simple caricatures is with the humour genre—and with a presumably younger audience. While it is possible to imagine a history of *Richie Rich* with

considerably richer artistic experimentation, taking advantage of an artist like Ernie Colón who is clearly capable of drawing characters in a different style, that possibility only underscores the fact that the covers of Harvey standardized the character as a children's humour character and this visual standardizing persisted even through changes in genres.

A skeptic might ask at this point what exactly this adds to the conversation that would not be apparent to anyone looking through every *Richie Rich* cover in chronological order, or by looking at a random sampling. In fact, some exceptions would be obvious to anyone perusing the covers manually, such as the "Summer of Fear" explained above. The covers in that cluster change style dramatically and very noticeably in a very short span of time. What would stand out in that analysis would be the exceptions. What this distant reading shows is, as computer-assisted interpretation often does, the most *common* element of the corpus. In this case, it is *Richie Rich*, happy.

Over the course of his stories, Richie Rich is often fearful, neurotic, surprised, confused, worried, or sad. These emotions are rarely ever present on his covers. Setting aside the many theoretical faces which never appeared at all, 16 of the 43 observed faces only ever appeared once. Though the tag 'the Poor Little Rich Boy' suggests emotions like sorrow or envy are a basic part of the character, in fact feelings of joy and happiness overwhelmingly predominate. Yet the less common emotions of Richie Rich's cover face are in fact the range of emotions that come about in the stories within. Within the narratives of *Richie Rich* a variety of things happen to Richie, and he expresses a range of emotions (Figure 20).

But Richie Rich on the *covers* of *Richie Rich* is essentially always happy. This is also significant because on essentially all covers, the character is in the presence of wealth, while

stories often place him in ordinary settings or even deprivation. In other words, the Richie Rich of the covers luxuriates in a way that the Richie of the stories seldom does.

In the covers of *Richie Rich* I have found the hated Richie of the culture text. The significance of my method should become clear when we try to answer the question of why this reading would predominate. If equally unsympathetic characters such as Scrooge McDuck have been redeemed by their culture text, why has Richie been condemned?

The significance of the *Richie Rich* covers is in the context of their material circulation. Between 1960 and 1994, the newsstand market for comic books in North America (a market understood to include venues such as supermarkets, grocery stores, and all establishments not primarily dedicated to selling comic books) reduced so far as to be considered ‘collapsed,’ with comics being primarily distributed through the direct market (a market defined as specialty retail outlets, stores primarily selling comic books). While the newsstand market, and the accompanying system of returnable product sold through a distributor or wholesaler, had been the traditional method of distribution, the direct market arose in the 1960s. Because the 1960s “underground” comix “could not be distributed through normal channels,” the institution of the comic shop arose to sell that product specifically (Goulart 2001 285). As *Publishers Weekly* explains, this method became known as “direct distribution” because the product was being sent to shops directly rather than through a distributor or wholesaler (qtd in Goulart 2001 288). In the 1970s, the two most significant American publishers, DC and Marvel, became involved in the direct market. In 1981, Marvel successfully distributed the *Dazzler* superhero comic book exclusively through the direct market, beginning a decade in which mainstream American comic books became as associated with specialty retailers as underground comics had been. This was accompanied with a precipitous decline in readership, but also a redefinition of comic books

from being a general medium associated with children towards one largely monopolized by older readers. While comic books continue to be sold on the “newsstand” (now usually a supermarket or convenience store), the shift in literal place also altered the cultural place of comic books in North America.

Richie Rich was a major exception to this shift. Its decreased popularity in the 1980s can be seen as a consequence of Harvey’s oversaturation of the market with *Richie Rich* product, or later, more nebulous business decisions made in the 1990s. It can also be seen as evidence that the title was “left behind”⁶⁶ in the older distribution system, available to comics’ more traditional audience when the medium in North America underwent significant structural shifts. As can be seen from these structural factors, *Richie Rich* never became a product marketed towards *Richie Rich* fans and not general audiences, and it was never distributed primarily in venues defined by a self-selecting interest in comic books.

In other words, from 1960 to 1994 *Richie Rich* was a product in the context of newsstands and grocery stores. This means that the cover of any given issue of *Richie Rich* was likely seen by large numbers of people, some of whom went on to buy and/or read the issue, and some of whom did not. Part of the “audience” of *Richie Rich* covers would be people whose engagement with comic books was limited to seeing them during other shopping. What we see when we look at the covers of *Richie Rich* appears to be the covers of comic books, and they are, but they are also the fronts of products intended for display in supermarkets. In the context of a bookstore, *Richie Rich* has covers; in the context of a supermarket, it has packaging. Earlier in this chapter I

⁶⁶ The most significant publisher and group of titles to have not shifted away from newsstand distribution is Archie Comics, demonstrating that business success continued to be possible in that market throughout the 1990s. In fact, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, a newsstand adventure series based on the video game, was published by Archie from 1992 until 2017. This demonstrates that an all-ages title could succeed despite the context of market conditions at the time.

described the ‘story’ of *Richie Rich* at great length, after explaining the ‘culture text’. The difference between them, I suggested, is the details of the *Richie Rich* covers. This element which distinguishes the two, I believe is properly considered the *brand* of Richie Rich.

While brands were originally conceived of in advertising theory as distinct producers of products, as Dean Krugman and Jameson Hayes point out, “The brand can be any device such as a name, slogan, or symbol that is used to distinguish a product or service” (436). The Harvey Comics products bear the “brand” of Harvey, signified by a jack-in-the-box symbol that carried into their licensed cartoons, but their comics also bear the stylized and repetitious images and names of their characters, particularly Richie Rich’s copyrighted logo and a smaller image of Richie’s face. I would argue that, much as the name Trump serves as a part of the system of products and businesses associated with Donald Trump, the unvarying image and name of Richie Rich are key parts of his brand. Brand success is usually conceived of as an attempt to associate that brand with qualities desired by the consumer: advertising scholars Shelly Rodgers and Esther Thorson posit that “repetition is also important in helping advertisers to develop associations between brands and specific attributes, benefits, or emotions in the minds of consumers” (20). Yet advertising theory also unavoidably deals with the fact that viewers of advertisements can form their own, undesirable associations. “While the company provides the signs, symbols, and other forms of information to construct the brand, it is the consumer who ultimately assigns the meaning” (439). Rodgers and Thorson, following the 1980s work of Batra and Ray, suggest that repetition can ultimately reverse consumers’ affect from positive (wear-in) to negative (wear-out) effect, but their conception of promotion as one part of marketing (along with the product, price, and place) suggests that even non-advertising can be susceptible to the skepticism of anyone encountering the product. Brands, in other words, describe how people feel

about something they can buy, as distinguished from anything else they can buy. These brands are not under the control of the people who make the product or even those who market it. Richie Rich and Donald Trump are both connected to brands with unusually contentious relationships between discourse and marketing.

The use of Richie Rich to criticize Donald Trump derives from a resemblance between the two characters. It is not the superficial similarities of their 'narratives' (inherited wealth, unusual hair) that caused this, but rather the similarity in their brands. More pointedly, because they both have the same brand of success, they are both vulnerable to the same negative brand, of appearing smug, spoiled, or out of touch. The claim that Donald Trump, as @ShaynessMac says, *is* Richie Rich 50 years later underlines the strength of the association. I believe that what affords this allusion is the brand of *Richie Rich* as distinct from his narrative, a brand which is itself allowed by the material context of *Richie Rich*'s circulation as a physical product in historical context. Stories that are also products turn the characters into brands. Distant reading enables us to perceive the brand: what all those humans in all those grocery stores simultaneously *know* about Richie Rich. The materiality of *Richie Rich* as, ultimately, a product in a supermarket, is revealed by this analysis, and the method of physical circulation and material context reveals a different aspect of the text.

Chapter 4.

“I Will Give You Bodies”: Essentials and Artifacts in the History of *Watchmen*

“It’s not our fault the book continues to sell.”

—Len Wein, original *Watchmen* editor, quoted in Lance Parkin 220

The question “What is *Watchmen*?” is surprisingly difficult to answer. Most literary criticism of writer Alan Moore, illustrator Dave Gibbons, and colourist John Higgins’ series *Watchmen*, originally published by DC Comics, contains both a summary of the complicated plot and some acknowledgement of the text’s historical importance in the 1980s transition of comics from the status of “trash” to a new level of literary prestige in American culture. That is, in the mid-1980s, the “graphic novel” emerged as a new category of fiction and as a development of the comics medium. *Watchmen* is typically seen as a key text in this transition, along with Art Spiegelman’s Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel *Maus* (serialized from 1980 until 1991), and Frank Miller’s Batman miniseries *The Dark Knight Returns* (published in four parts in 1986). This conception of *Watchmen* elides the fact that it was published from May 1986 until July 1987 as twelve individual comic books of the familiar North American size. Later reprints of *Watchmen* have physically manifested increasing prestige and value for the series. The changes in these reprints have constructed *Watchmen*’s significance as primarily relying on the text’s psychological and historical realism and *Watchmen*’s importance to the history of the graphic novel. The small scale of textual changes has also reinforced the notion of *Watchmen* as an essentially perfect text. In this chapter I will present a descriptive bibliography of *Watchmen* and explain how different editions and versions of *Watchmen* have afforded different readings of the

text, in order to provide a new history of *Watchmen*. The methods of book history detail the role of DC Comics as a corporate “author” of *Watchmen*.

Watchmen has been printed in the following major editions:

1. The original printing of 12 individual comic books between May 1986 to July 1987.

These took the form of comic books of the standard North American size, but printed without advertising and on higher-quality paper than the standard.

2. A trade paperback, first released in late 1987, which became the standard edition.

Significant paratextual revisions to this version occurred in 1995 and the early twenty-first century. Collecting nearly all the material in the original printings at approximately the same size, the trade paperback fundamentally changed the possible encounters of readers with the text.

3. The 1988 release of the series in France, in the form of six larger hardcover books reminiscent of the European “album” format. In addition to translating the text, this release generated new cover artwork that reappeared in later editions and reorganized the story, facilitating yet another way to understand the text.

4. Also in 1988, the release of a limited-edition hardcover, including significant paratextual materials about the conception and history of the series. This edition incarnates the idea of a prestigious reader invested in the text’s background, and importantly became the basis for later prestigious editions.

5. *Absolute Watchmen*, a physically larger and recoloured 2005 version of the 1988 hardcover. Rather than a facsimile of the original, this edition makes the text “as intended” and focuses on the role of the original creators as most significant for the discerning reader.

6. An “International Edition” of 2008, which is a hardcover under a “new” cover based on old promotional art.

7. A “Deluxe Edition” of 2013, which presents a slightly larger version of the standard paperback, with the “bonus materials” of earlier prestige editions.

8. A 2014 “Artifact Edition” which attempts to reproduce original artwork for the series, incarnating a museal logic which looks back beyond the original publication.

9. A “Collector’s Edition” in 2016, in which the series appears as twelve small hardcovers inside a slipcase. This edition, which is elaborately designed, transforms a nostalgic interest in the original serial publication into a remarkably expensive object at 163\$ CAD.

10. A “Noir” edition, also in 2016, in which the series appears without colouring.

11. An annotated edition released in 2017, which licenses the reading of the series for its connections to extra textual information, as well as confirming the text as inherently complex.

Throughout this period, excerpts of *Watchmen* as well as prequels, sequels, and adaptations, have appeared, always tied to marketing of the collected original series. Some of these printings have been part of a larger series of titles released by DC Comics, while others have been produced by other publishers. Reading a graphic novel such as *Watchmen* as book history reveals the investment of the corporate owners of the series in the prestige of such an acclaimed graphic novel. I will move through this history chronologically, foregrounding materiality with a particular focus on paratext attached to *Watchmen* as well as invocations of *Watchmen* in other material by the publisher, to explain how since 1986 DC Comics has defined *Watchmen* as a valuable and exceptional criterion of quality, and defined themselves as the publishers of valuable work like *Watchmen*. In order to consider the history of *Watchmen* in the hands of the publisher, this chapter uses the descriptive bibliography method from the field of Book History. This chapter’s analysis will demonstrate that the methods used in other chapters are also relevant when, far from recovering an abject cultural object such as gum wrappers or

cheap children's comics, this method is used to investigate a graphic novel so prestigious it essentially defines the concept of prestigious graphic novel.

The plot of *Watchmen*, structured around a group of retired superheroes investigating the death of a former colleague and gradually discovering a conspiracy to change the course of the Cold War, has been described as “convoluted” (Dietrich 121), and because of this quality of extreme complexity, scholars have found many incidents and characters worth remarking upon. However, a more relevant element in the circulation of *Watchmen* is its historical importance as a “revolutionary” text in the field of the American graphic novel. In discussions of American comics’ “*annus mirabilis*” of 1986, *Watchmen* is an obligatory touchstone, along with *Maus* and *The Dark Knight Returns* (Hoberek 8). Erin Keating is one of the few critics (along with Jamie Hughes)⁶⁷ who casts *Watchmen* in terms of continuity with other traditions rather than as breaking with those traditions in American comics. While her subject is specifically the treatment of the female characters in the series, Keating also cautions more generally that this commonplace understanding of *Watchmen* as revolutionary has other deleterious effects:

To read the text’s displacement and revisionary aspects alone is to miss half of the story... It is imperative to recognize the many levels that are working in a comic book, not merely the ones that seem the most different and revolutionary. (1286)

Keating’s perceptive comment implies that one major gap in academic treatment of *Watchmen* is to consider the book as a book, and to read it by discussing the differences between editions, something no critics have done to date. Outside *Watchmen* criticism, few scholars have discussed differences between editions of the same comics. Aaron Kashtan’s two 2013 articles about Alison Bechdel’s 2006 graphic autobiography *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*

⁶⁷ Paul Petrovic anticipates Keating by noting that the female characters of *Watchmen* are generally marginalized by criticism, but his focus is the 2009 movie adaptation.

foreground materiality by looking at multiple editions and arguing of two editions that “these two artefacts need to be interpreted as equally valid alternative versions of a single underlying text” (113). In 2006 in the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, Markus Oppolzer provides a history of different editions of David Hine’s *Strange Embrace* (originally serialized in 1993, collected in 2003, ‘remastered’ in 2007 and then collected again in 2008) and charts the changing claims that text makes to value. Discussions of comics materiality have tended to focus on texts with anomalous materiality: Michelle Ann Abate’s 2015 discussion of Spiegelman’s *In the Shadow of No Towers* (serialized from 2002-2004 and collected in 2004) is prompted by the unusual size and paper quality of that work, “a folio-sized text printed on heavy card stock that is used frequently for board books produced for babies, infants, and toddlers” (Abate 41). This approach is the most promising for my inquiry, but unavoidably contrasts *Watchmen* to these texts, as one that is materially epitomal rather than anomalous, and rather than *Fun Home* or *Strange Embrace*, not the work of an author/illustrator’s interventions. Despite *Watchmen*’s status, Oppolzer and Kashtan’s methods have not been applied to variations within print editions to produce a descriptive bibliography.

The method of descriptive bibliography has a long history and a recent refiguring. In their overview of book history, Michelle Levy and Tom Mole trace descriptive bibliography, which “describes in more or less detail the format of the book, how it is constructed, the paper, binding, and type, the illustrations, and where appropriate, any copy-specific information it may contain” (10) to the mid-century ideas of Shakespeare scholar W. W. Greg, who believed that bibliography was “the bedrock on which other investigations could build” (11). More recently, the idea of paying detailed attention to the material history of specific books has been defined in terms of the digital. Kiene Brillenburg Wurth suggests, using the term “rematerialization” from

Alan Golding,⁶⁸ that the innovations of digital media are rematerializing print media by making their particularities more visible. In Wurth’s account, the idea of books transcending their “bodies” emphasizes the historical role of those bodies. Torsa Ghosal makes the similar point that the materiality of books is now more visible because of a widespread cultural feeling that physical books are outmoded. I invoke the body in my chapter’s title as a double reference to the print culture portrayed in *Watchmen*—the line is the headline of an advertisement in a comic book seen throughout—as well as to scholarly consideration of the text’s body at the moment when the physical forms of a text have become unusually visible.

The gathering of details about the materiality of comics is often rooted in the field of media studies. This scholarly field sees comic books in terms of how they differ from other (often digital) media. Studies of comics from a media studies perspective, such as Sebastian Bartosch’s discussion of paper as an actor in comics, routinely acknowledge that the materiality of comics is a specific feature of the medium. As Katalin Orbán claims, “the medium-specific sense of reading comics is still tied to print” (172) and many commentators such as Douglas Wolk highlight the comics-specific materiality when discussing their personal nostalgia for comic books. This kind of “looking-back” at comics materiality is typically linked to digital comics, as in Ernesto Priego’s statement that he wishes to look at comics in the present, “the still-transitional stage in which comics co-exist in different platforms” (1). Priego’s study has led him to the claim “that comics as a communicative language has expressed itself as a kind of materiality that is specific to itself and only itself. This materiality is different to that of any other media” (1). These claims about the comics-medium have themselves been criticized, notably by

⁶⁸ Poetry scholar Golding coined the term in a 2006 chapter to refer to “a shift in material medium or environment that raises a new set of aesthetic and theoretical questions about texts” (Quoted in Wurth 121).

Lee Konstantinou, who points out that media studies of comics routinely repeat the finding that comics are about their own form. While my area of interest is not the creation but the subsequent history of *Watchmen*—*Watchmen* unmoored, as it were, from its original creators—Konstantinou’s point is well taken. In the case of *Watchmen*, where physicality and reading protocols are overtly modelled on the novel through the “graphic novel,” comics materiality is much the same as other print media. My interest is not in how Moore and Gibbons used the platform of comics, but how DC Comics makes these comics a book.

The comics-specific significance of descriptive bibliography is that it focuses attention on the publisher, and the corporate publisher of *Watchmen* is a little-regarded creator of the text. Descriptive bibliography originates in studies of early modern books, in which the printer/publisher is unusually visible, and this study highlights the role of the publisher in *Watchmen*’s history. Comic books like *Watchmen* bear the history not of the dozens of workers who laboured on early modern texts, but rather the labour of employees of a corporation, DC Comics. Though *Watchmen* was the product not just of credited authors and editors but also anonymous labourers, my focus is not on the number of hands but on the corporate actions of this group of employees. Though I refer to DC Comics throughout this chapter as a single entity, it is a corporate author in the sense that the hands that built *Watchmen* are all employed by the same entity. Jason S. Polley usefully distinguishes between *Watchmen* and “The Watchmen Industry,” the panoply of products that have followed *Watchmen* and which are unified by their creator, DC Comics Inc. The many reprints of *Watchmen* are a key part of the Watchmen Industry, and therefore the method of descriptive bibliography traces the actions of DC Comics as they engaged in strategies to position *Watchmen*, Alan Moore, and themselves in the cultural field.

I will explain how different editions and versions of *Watchmen* have allowed different readings, in order to provide a new history of *Watchmen* rather than the “revisionary” text narrative described by Erin Keating above. A *Watchmen* bibliography reveals that a discernible amount of this text’s positioning has been the work of the publisher, DC Comics. This chapter delineates the 11 major categories within the millions of extant copies of *Watchmen* in a descriptive bibliography, in order to consider DC Comics as a creator of the *Watchmen*.

1986 to 1988: DC divides *Watchmen* into tiers of prestige

Watchmen was originally published in the form of twelve individual issues, 10 and 1/8 inches tall by 6 and 7/8 inches wide (Figure 21). These issues each consist of 32 pages of a rougher paper wrapped in a cover printed on glossier stock: seven quarto sheets and the cover, held together with two staples. Each cover shares features of the same layout: the title *WATCHMEN* is present in all caps in a vertical column taking up one-quarter of the page, and in smaller letters at the top left. Each cover was designed by Dave Gibbons to be an image in sequence immediately before the first panel of each issue, and a more detailed version of each first panel. *Watchmen*’s very distinctive cover would later become a trademark of parodies and homages,⁶⁹ but would also provide a blueprint for future iterations of the series itself.

Scholars Matthew Wolf-Meyer (2003), Jamie A. Hughes (2006), Jason Dittmer (2007), and Erin M. Keating (2012), have separately argued that *Watchmen*’s subject matter is in continuity with some contemporary series. However, to take one specific example that Dittmer nominates, Marvel’s 1985-1986 series *Squadron Supreme*, the physical differences are notable.

⁶⁹ For example, the covers of *Critters* #22 (March 1988); *Stormwatch* #44 (January 1997); *Spawn* #225 (November 2012); *MAD Magazine* #499 (February 2009); *Venom* #11 (February 2019), and *Watchmensch* (March 2009) all move their titles to the left side of the cover to parody *Watchmen*’s covers. *Radioactive Man* #5 (1994) and *Big Bang Comics* #8 (January 1997) are rare *Watchmen* parodies/homages that do not allude to the cover style. Notably, both the *Spawn* and *Stormwatch* covers came as part of a period in which the titles were referencing notable cover styles.

Unlike *Watchmen*, *Squadron Supreme* contains advertisements and is printed on obviously poorer paper. The idea of relative “prestige” is a factor in the original publication of *Watchmen*. The absence of ads removes the possibility of friction or resonance between the diegesis and the extradiegetic material. Wolf-Meyer calls this resonance “accidental media,” and its absence from a series like *Watchmen* not only contributes to the series’ positioning as important and valuable, but also centralizes more editorial control over the paratext. Comic book publishing has various degrees of prestige signalled by paratextual moves as much as by the actual plot of the text.

Pagination is distinct for each issue of *Watchmen*, being included in the lower left-hand corner of the lower left-hand panel on each page. This restarting of the pagination in each issue encourages the reader of this format to consider *Watchmen* as twelve linked but distinct physical items, creating the conceptual space in which the reader might “collect” them all. Added to the fact that each issue is numbered out of 12, the collection of a limited series is not just afforded but encouraged. Aside from the material context of *Watchmen*, the fact that it originally circulated in twelve separate objects suggests reading protocols informed by possible encounters. Imagine for a moment three different reading experiences enabled by the uncollected *Watchmen*:

1. A reader finding only one issue of *Watchmen*. While it’s difficult to call any issue of *Watchmen* ‘self-contained,’ there are distinct differences between issues, with some techniques or elements only existing in one issue. Examples of single-issue distinctions include the symmetrical panels of Chapter V, or the Doctor Manhattan narration of Chapter IV. If a reader only read Issue 5, they might well believe that all twelve issues were in the same symmetrical style. The paperback transforms the issues into chapters, emphasizing distinctions between them as well as continuity.

2. Another possible reading encounter would be a reader being unable to find all 12 instalments. This condition was true for all readers until all 12 instalments had been released in October 1987, but the difference between suspense prompted by seriality and a reader being unable to access all chapters is significant. If a reader has read issues 1 through 6 of a 12 issue series, they have read the first half of the narrative; if a reader has issues 1, 5, 8, 9, and 12, they have read half the narrative but not the first or second half in particular. While it is difficult to reconstruct this reading, in which a reader might miss key elements of the narrative, consider an imaginary reader reading Chapter 9 without having read Chapter 2. In one of the most obvious examples of non-chronological storytelling in *Watchmen*, in Chapter 9 Laurie Juzspeczyk realizes that the deceased Edward Blake was her father (9.24.4). The issue ends with an interview with Laurie's mother Sally, in which she is asked about her (earlier) sexual assault by Edward Blake, alias the Comedian, and in which Sally claims a highly ambivalent feeling about this event.

Lorna Piatti-Farnell reads this storyline in collected order and points out the highly charged possibilities of how *Watchmen* treats this assault. As she points out, the Comedian begins his sexual assault of Sally by announcing his belief that she invited his sexual interest. Piatti-Farnell importantly notes that "one should not confuse the notion of fantasy—Sally's melancholic daydreaming about the Comedian, seen at different stages throughout the comic book—with the instigation of sex" (245). For the reader of the collected edition, the situation is as Piatti-Farnell describes: a negotiation between the sexual assault in chapter 2 and the character's later melancholy, most notably her ambivalence at the end of chapter 9. To provide just one example of how an incomplete reading of *Watchmen* could severely alter a reader's understanding of characters, Piatti-Farnell's analysis is based on access to all twelve chapters.

Without having read Chapter 2, in which the sexual assault in question is vividly shown to the reader and in which the Comedian's justification of his actions is portrayed as untrue, a reader might feel very differently about the nature of Sally and the Comedian's later, apparently consensual relationship. While we never see this relationship and it remains difficult and ambiguous, consider how this might read if we also never saw their violently nonconsensual encounter.

3. Finally, a reader might encounter all the issues of *Watchmen* out of their publication order. A non-publication-order encounter might render the entire series as confusing (or perhaps as rewarding) as the non-linear Chapter IV, which changes time and place rapidly. Ian Thompson has commented, following the lead of much fan reception, that "*Watchmen* was written to be reread" (4), but this reference is clearly to rereading the entire series as a whole, not to receiving the twelve chapters in random order. This way of reading, which could seriously alter a reader's understanding of the text, is a reading increasingly foreclosed by the actions of the publisher.

The possible ways of reading the twelve chapters out of order are beyond this dissertation's ability to theorize, because there are four hundred and seventy nine million, one thousand and six hundred different ways to arrange the twelve issues of *Watchmen*. One linear plot that would be altered would be Rorschach's investigation into the death of the Comedian. In Chapter 1, Rorschach meets with Ozymandias to warn the latter that, as a retired superhero, he may be the target of a murder plot. In Chapter 10, we become aware along with Rorschach that Ozymandias has orchestrated the murders with which this mystery plot is concerned. In Chapter 11, we find out that, rather than destroy the world, Ozymandias intends to achieve world peace and that he has already triggered the cumulative mass murder of this plan. In Chapter 12 we are shown that his success is ambiguous. While "rereading" all of *Watchmen* in 1-12 order would

cause us to revisit the first Ozymandias scene in light of the fact that we now know he is being warned about a plot that he himself is behind, the effect would be quite different if the reader had only read chapters 10, 11, or 12 before reading issue 1. The end of Chapter 10 leaves Ozymandias' motives ambiguous, as well as his guilt: at the beginning of chapter 11, the characters suspect that he is planning to destroy the world. The end of Chapter 11 leaves his guilt clear but the results of his plans ambiguous; all that we know is that he has already triggered his device. Taking these differences and rereading his conversation in Chapter 1 produce different possible understandings. Rorschach's accusation that Ozymandias has given up heroism may seem at first accurate, since we see him as a businessman with a desk littered with action figures of his previous self. However, the end of Chapter 11 explains that he still is idealistic, while not showing the end result of his actions. The end of Chapter 10 may suggest that Ozymandias' conversation in Chapter 1 means that he has simply become an uncomplicated supervillain. Reading *Watchmen* out of chronological order, a situation made extremely likely by the limited series format, produces understandings different from a linear reading but also different from each other.

Later editions bear the legal disclaimer that the material within was originally published in "magazine form" as *Watchmen* 1-12. The conception of *Watchmen* 1-12 as "magazine form" belongs to later forms from which it can be distinguished, and is a phrase that is present nowhere in the original publication. In the same way that a comic book only becomes a comic book when it is printed, a graphic novel in American culture becomes a graphic novel once it is collected, creating the retroactive bibliographical entry of the "original printing." In *Watchmen*'s case this happened extraordinarily quickly.

Late in 1987, a few months after the magazine form publishing of *Watchmen* had finished, the series was collected as a trade paperback (Harris-Fain 622). This trade paperback is the same height and width as the limited series, but 6/8th s of an inch thick (Figure 22). Dave Gibbons did not see this collection as an inevitable consequence when work began on the series: he notes,

In 1987, once a comic book series had run its course, that was pretty much the end of it. There might be sporadic foreign editions or reprints in the back of other titles, but even series conceived as self-contained stories, such as DC's *Camelot 3000*, were thereafter unavailable except in the back-issue bins. The notion of collecting just-published material and re-marketing it in book form was virtually unknown. The term "graphic novel" was shiny new and, frankly, considered a little pretentious by industry insiders. (Gibbons 2008, 237)

Alan Moore came to see the term as simply "a marketing term" (Moore 2000). The speed with which *Watchmen* was collected is noteworthy: published between 1982 and 1984, *Camelot 3000* was not collected as a paperback until 1988, four years after it was published.

As Gibbons' mention of pretension would suggest, collecting is a move of cultural prestige. As Andrew Hoberek recounts, *Watchmen* was made possible by structural changes in the comic book industry (the rise of the direct market and specialty shops), but it also contributed to a later shift (towards the graphic novel). Hoberek notes, "On the one hand the label... confers a new, more privileged aesthetic status on the narrative in question... at the same time the advent of the graphic novel also constitutes an economic transformation" (Hoberek 14). Appearing at the "moment of transformation" gives *Watchmen* a particular interest, as Hoberek says; but *Watchmen* and the existence of *Watchmen*-like works were also the pretext for this status and

economic change. Discussing this change, Robert Hutton points out several resonant anomalies, most notably observing that, although *Maus* is commonly credited with pioneering the “graphic novel” format, it was originally serialized (38). Most importantly, Hutton provides a way to understand the validity of Hoberek’s remarks, when he notes that Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “negotiations within the cultural field” (43) reconfigures how we understand whatever happened to comics in the late 1980s. Hutton points out that the DC and Marvel corporations played their own role in the rise of the comics auteur: “This shift could be described in Bourdieu’s terms as a change from a committed mode of production centred on characters and brands to an autonomous one centred on individual artistic expression” (40-41). Hoberek’s understanding of *Watchmen*’s collection is that it represents the series being taken up by a corporate trend.

The “graphic novel” as a bound collection has different reading protocols than the individual issues. Aside from the cultural prestige of being a book rather than twelve pamphlets, *Watchmen* encourages a reading of the series in serial order, as well as a complete reading of the series. The object that collects all 12 issues, and particularly its labelling as a graphic novel, encourages the reader to adopt novel-reading protocols and read all 12 chapters in order from 1 until 12. By making *Watchmen* a single book, DC Comics promotes some ways of reading and discourages others.

The trade paperback edition of *Watchmen* adds an epigraph after the body of *Watchmen*. The quotation “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?” appear in black on the white endpapers of the collected *Watchmen*, a quotation from the Roman poet Juvenal’s sixth *Satire*. The quotation, the original of the phrase “Who watches the watchmen?” which appears in fragments at several points, might seem obviously relevant, especially as it is divorced from context: in Juvenal’s poem it is a racy joke about a narrator who wants to prevent other men from seducing his wife.

However, in *Watchmen*'s collected edition, the quotation is also noted as the epigraph to the Tower Commission Report of 1987. An American government inquiry into the Iran Contra arms-for-hostages scandal, the Tower Commission released its report in February 1987, while *Watchmen* was still being published. The quotation's role in the Tower Commission Report is clearly an indictment of law enforcement, since the Report concluded that an American intelligence agency had been negligent in fulfilling its legal requirement to be overseen by lawmakers. The quotation's appearance in *Watchmen* and its connection to this real-life source is curious on the surface: because *Watchmen* takes place in an alternate universe, there is no Iran Contra scandal and no Tower Commission in the text. The role of this quotation to conclude *Watchmen* by gesturing at the reader's world. Paul Youngquist argues that like the Tower Commission Report, *Watchmen* also identifies "the source of national security under such circumstances with a band of vigilantes" (Youngquist). In this reading, *Watchmen* becomes "about" American sovereignty and national security, but this is a reading that is licensed only by the trade paperback and not by *Watchmen*'s original appearance, where there is no epigraph. In the trade paperback, the Juvenal quotation positions the real 1987 and the fictional 1986 as reflections of each other. At the same time, it suggests that the skeptical position of *Watchmen* also applies to the real world. This citation places *Watchmen* in conversation with the world around it in an unusually direct manner, part of the trade paperback's agenda of positioning *Watchmen* as a weighty graphic novel with something to say about "real life" using the debased genre of superheroes.

The value of different versions of *Watchmens* are no longer fixed to the original issues, but to the paperback. Every other edition of *Watchmen* comes with a modifier (Deluxe, Essential, Annotated, Absolute) designated by DC Comics.

In 1988, *Watchmen* was reprinted in translation in France, and physically translated into the European album format, by Éditions Zenda (Figure 23). France's *Les Gardiens* was released in six hardcover volumes. Issues 5 and 6, for example, which had become Chapters V and VI in the American paperback, became Tome 3, titled "Rorschach" on the spine and cover. Éditions Zenda focused each of the six albums on a specific character. To enhance this decision to break up and rearrange the text, Dave Gibbons drew new covers for each album, with that Tome's character at the centre. The original covers appear as interior pages, curiously with the original (now inaccurate) monthly indication on each cover.

Because the French album size is significantly larger than the American comic book, the images in *Les Gardiens* are noticeably larger than the original printings. The 76 page volumes (3/8ths of an inch thick) measure about 12 5/8ths inches wide and 9 inches wide, significantly larger than the American comics even in collection, and longer than any issue. It appears that Éditions Zenda was blowing up photographs of the published American edition, resulting in pages such as 5.27 where all the original art but none of the new lettering is out of focus. As is emphasized by literally being photographs of the original comic book, this text is a representation of an original, inaugurating a trend that would loom large in later printings.

The end of each Tome bears a mark of serialization that reminds the reader both of *Watchmen's* completeness and its in-progress nature: an advertising for all six Tomes. The current and prior volumes are summarized with the same material that appears on the back cover, but the "future" volumes have question marks instead of summaries. They do, however, feature the cover artwork for subsequent instalments, which necessarily indicates the "focus" characters of each Tome.

The translation by Jean-Patrick Manchette required replacing Dave Gibbons' original lettering with new lettering by an unknown hand. While all text is still in capitals and the size and shape of balloons appear to be the same, the French lettering is distinctly different. Alice Ray's article on French translations of *Watchmen* points out that the translation by Jean-Patrick Manchette translation was enormously esteemed (Ray 49), while a later translation (by a "traducteur fantôme" who remains anonymous) for 2007 editions published by Panini has not been as fulsomely praised. From Ray's examples, one notable visible difference is the 2007 translation making a distinction that the 1988 version does not: for the handwritten journal of the character Rorschach, the lettering is distinctly different than the main letters. This decision is closer to the American original than the 1988 translation, though the 2007 version uses a significantly more difficult font that imitates handwriting. My point here is not to catalogue the at-times startling differences between French editions, which Ray has done capably, but to point out that all three versions also look different. The decision to retain the original captions and bubbles while filling them with new French text also emphasizes the fact that the album is a translation. When *Watchmen* was translated into French, it was with the knowledge that the hypotext was an acclaimed American comic book, and the translation is an attempt to create the series again.

Watchmen was printed in hardcover in early 1988 by Graphitti Designs, a comics merchandise manufacturer located in Anaheim, California. This hardcover presents a completely black cover and black slipcase.⁷⁰ The slipcase is blank except for the title in gold on the spine, while the black hardcover has the title and credits on the spine and the uncoloured imprint of the smiley face with a splash of blood on the cover (Figure 24).

⁷⁰ My physical description of the Graphitti Designs edition are based on photographs for auction listings and by fans. Measurements remain unclear to me.

This edition includes a red bookmark sewn into the spine of the book. This object implies a different mode of reading than either the magazines or the trade paperback. Pausing during reading is possible with either, but, where the magazines and the trade paperback afford this reading practice, the red ribbon materially suggests it. The Graphitti Designs hardcover is more prestigious than any previous edition because it suggests an even slower and more considered reading, positioning the text as worthy of such a reading.

Graphitti Designs' second innovation in their hardcover is a collection of paratextual "bonus materials," including reproductions of script pages, sketches, advertisements, and notes by Moore and Gibbons. The Graphitti Designs edition focuses the reader's attention on the creation of the series. Bart Beaty locates the interest in "the truth behind the work" (112) in fanzine culture, and this publication of *Watchmen* is a publication for fans, presenting revelations about the text's foundations. A foreword by Alan Moore characterizes this paratext as "the first clumsy and faltering steps along the track" contrasted to "the steroid brute that eventually broke the ribbon on the finish line" (Absolute Edition, 423). These materials describe elements of the story that were discarded or altered. Moore's pitch is reformatted into columns and a later draft is interspersed with the first. Jamie Lee Kirtz points out that the appearance of these paratextual materials as a selling point speaks to fandom protocols of desiring an authentic understanding of authorship before the editing process (14). For the facsimile script pages, the surrounding text implies that what we're looking at is not just Moore's script but Dave Gibbons' personal copy of Moore's script, an artifact of the series' creation, messy with (implicitly Gibbons') highlighting. Photographs of Gibbons' actual copy, a significantly messier object, can be seen in his 2008 memoir/art book *Watching the Watchmen*. Graphitti Designs' revisions are a very early indication of a publisher's awareness that discerning readers would want access to this artifact as

authentically but also legibly as possible. The difference reveals that the purpose of the Graphitti Designs archive is to approximate archival materials.

The Graphitti Designs hardcover elevates *Watchmen* to an even more prestigious level, but it also transforms the text by attaching information about its creation. These two moves imply that learning about the creation of *Watchmen* is a part of appreciating and understanding the text. In much more detail than the trade paperback's back-cover biographies, Graphitti Design's material links *Watchmen* to the personalities and choices of the creators very strongly. By doing so, the publisher suggests meanings of *Watchmen*. For another possibility, the equivalent edition of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*⁷¹ includes memos between DC Comics' editorial staff and creators, implying that the publisher considers these appropriate paratexts to understand that text. While such an approach positions the significant facts about the creation of the series in the editorial realm, *Watchmen*'s edition emphasizes the author and artist as creators whose particular choices are important for understanding the text.

The added material of the Graphitti Designs edition marks the beginning of *Watchmen* historiography being made integral to the actual series. While the paperback bore the reminder that *Watchmen* had originally been published in magazine form, the 1988 hardcover associates prestige with the singular material objects reproduced and altered in the series. Associating these objects directly with a copy of *Watchmen* suggests that this information should be seen as a part of *Watchmen*, not as articles of history to be sought out but rather as integral to the most lavish edition. In a 2016 discussion of comic historiography's "museal" turn towards facsimile

⁷¹ Written by Mark Wolfman, illustrated by George Perez, and published by DC Comics between December 1984 and November 1985, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* was, like *Watchmen*, a 12-issue "maxi series" of the mid-1980s. Unlike *Watchmen*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* was in continuity with every other DC comic book, and "crossed over" with nearly all of them. Thus *Crisis* was significantly more complex in terms of editorial policy, since it involved co-ordinating an exponentially larger number of creative workers. *Crisis* was uncollected until the year 2000.

documents, Daniel Stein points out the continuity between such reprinting and earlier fan practices of collecting (285). The fact that a smaller specialty house, rather than DC Comics itself, produced this edition bundling *Watchmen* with items of museal interest in an expensive package, suggests that DC Comics itself did not anticipate the fans of *Watchmen*. The bonus materials of the Graphitti Designs edition are an early version of the trend Stein identifies, reproducing artifacts in mass quantities for devoted fans, implicitly vastly expanding the category of devoted fans.

In a period when most series went uncollected in single volumes, *Watchmen* had within years of its release become a mass market trade paperback and a prestigious hardcover. By 1988 there were multiple tiers of *Watchmen*, and implicitly multiple kinds of readers, differentiated by cultural prestige but also by their level of archival interest in the text.

1995 to 2005: DC increases the value of *Watchmen*

In 1995, DC Comics changed the cover of American printings of the trade paperback. The 11th printing (comics.org) and onward bears an extremely abstract image of an oval bisected by a vivid splash of red liquid (Figure 25). Taking a central image of the series, the new cover—the cover of the UK editions printed by Titan Books from 1987 onwards—“zooms in” on the splash of blood over the smiley face. If this is the central motif of the series, it seems more surprising that for almost ten years, it was not the cover of the American collection.

From 1987 to 1995, the American paperback cover showed a shattered window with shards of glass tainted with blood (Figure 22). While several shards of glass are visibly suspended in the air beyond the broken window, the blood-spattered smiley face can also be seen in the lower right-hand corner, facing the reader. Unlike every other cover in the series, the older cover is not an image that is easily sequenced immediately before ensuing images in the

storyline. Most closely resembling 1.3.7, a composition which reappears at 11.26.4, the older image apparently takes place a split second after this image from the series. DC's decision to use this cover means that in a key period in which *Watchmen*'s reputation began to assume its current shape, American readers did not encounter *Watchmen* with a strikingly abstract cover. While the ocular/visceral imagery recurs throughout the series, readers might instead encounter a version of *Watchmen* that wears a difference face.

The "window" cover is a symbolic representation, not a moment that literally occurs in the text. Here, key signs (the Chrysler Building = New York, but the geodesic dome and the zeppelin = another possibly future history, and the blood on the glass = violence and the bodily) contextualize the spattered smiley face in a way unlike any composition in the actual book. This symbolic image also contains the opposite thematic image to the Titan Books cover of 1987 onwards. While the Titan Books cover announces the intrusion of the visceral into the iconic abstraction of illustration, the original DC cover omits a beaten body entirely, leaving only traces of blood and a representation.

With our knowledge that nearly every subsequent edition of *Watchmen* will bear a variant of the 11th edition paperback cover, it's easy to say that DC Comics was adjusting packaging: *Watchmen*'s 11th edition cover is not the *Watchmen* logo, but it presents an image so iconic it already featured in merchandise such as pins. In some later editions, the title *Watchmen* would be removed from the cover entirely, leaving only the eye and the spatter. This removal completes the transformation from a cover that somewhat resembles the covers of other comic books, into an iconic, simple image distinct from ordinary comic book style. As David Barnes suggests, *Watchmen*'s migration from comic book series in a comic book store to book on the shelves at bookstores has involved *Watchmen* and Moore himself becoming "commoditized brands for the

hip, cool, cynical and armchair revolutionary” (54). The replacement of a more realistic, symbolic image with a simple abstract one for the very product that appears in bookstores was a key part of that commoditization.

In March 2000, DC Comics reprinted the first issue of *Watchmen*. In their “Millennium Edition” series of reprints, DC reprinted single issues of “the best and most vital examples of our art form” according to a note from Paul Levitz,⁷² Executive Vice President and Publisher at DC Comics, printed on the inside front cover (Levitz 2000).⁷³ The cover of *Watchmen* is altered for this edition, with the front bearing an embossed gold Millennium Edition seal, and the original cover framed by the DC logo and a brief editorial note (Figure 26). This note interestingly identifies this object as “THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE CLASSIC MAXISERIES BY ALAN MOORE AND DAVE GIBBONS,” despite the word maxiseries not being present in the original series. An essay on the inside front and back covers by author and DC Manager of Editorial Operations Robert Greenberger hails *Watchmen*’s achievements as an example of how “Comic Books Examine Themselves” (Greenberger, n.p.). The essay positions *Watchmen* as an unprecedented achievement that “helped signal to the mainstream media that comics were growing up” (Greenberger n.p.). The Millennium Edition paratext positions *Watchmen* #1 as an important milestone in the history of comic books, and also as an advertisement for DC’s trade paperback, which Greenberger mentions “remains in print today” (Greenberger n.p.).

On the back cover of the Millennium Edition is an advertisement for PlayStation video game *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, the first advertisement to appear in any version of *Watchmen* (Figure 27). The discordance of this image is easy to overstate, but a largely CGI image not in

⁷² Levitz, a former fan writer and then professional, had been an executive Vice President when *Watchmen* was originally published.

⁷³ Six issues in the Millennium Edition series indicate on their covers that, unlike *Watchmen* #1, they were reprinted after being voted on by fans.

Watchmen style is wildly out of tone with *Watchmen* #1. The “timeless” positioning of the Millennium Edition is undercut by this overtly commercial intrusion. This contrast should draw our attention to the way that the Millennium Edition is proclaiming itself to be timeless, classic, and important.

DC Comics’ Millennium Edition series consists of 62 comic books. The oldest—*Detective Comics* #1, March 1937, the ultimate source of the company’s name—and the newest—*JLA* #1, January 1997—are thus made the first and last “best and most vital” comics in the history of DC. The Millennium Editions are a celebration, a chain of triumphs and milestones—and they focus on beginnings, whether the first appearance of characters, and the beginning of different series.⁷⁴ In the narrative of DC’s larger history created by the Millennium Editions, *Watchmen* #1 is important not because it began *Watchmen* or because it was significant in Moore and Gibbons’ career, but because *Watchmen* began a significant moment of comic book history and *Watchmen* begins with *Watchmen* #1. The Millennium Edition positions *Watchmen* as an important DC Comics property. While the Millennium Edition and all the collected editions participate in the sense of *Watchmen* as an important, prestigious comic book, the Millennium Edition is unusually overt in telling the story of *Watchmen* in relation to the publisher.

In 2005 the Absolute Edition was produced by DC Comics (Figure 28). The slipcase of the Absolute Edition is 8 1/2 inches wide and 12 and 3/4 inches high, roughly the height of the European album but about half an inch narrower—and 1 and 3/4 inches thick. The hardcover inside the slipcase is 12 1/2 inches high and 8 and 3/8 inches wide, while it’s 1 and 1/2 inches

⁷⁴ Of the 62 Millennium Editions, 32 reprint #1 issues of a series. The remaining 30, according to their cover captions, present a series of debuts, “new looks,” “new directions,” and reappearances. The only exception is *Superman* #75, described on its cover as “The Comics Story that Shocked the World.”

thick, significantly larger than the original issues. The hardcover reproduces many of the Graphitti Designs edition's claims to greatness and value as literature and as an object (for example, the red bookmark, and the paratextual bonus materials), but at a more affordable price. The Absolute Edition is also the first printing to receive pagination that continues throughout the entire text, making the text a more seamless book.

DC imprint WildStorm's Group Editor Scott Dunbier developed the idea of the Absolute Edition format, inspired by European comics (Hedges 201). Candida Rifkind has suggested the material awkwardness of similarly oversized books indicates in each case that "it is not a book designed for casual and impromptu reading" (229). As a line of re-printings, the Absolute Editions partake of the same reading protocols and inevitably suggest an elevation. The fact that they are all the same size makes the line primarily an incarnation of the idea of importance. Furthermore, because the material for the Absolute Editions are drawn from a larger mass of works, their exclusivity suggests a higher valuation of that material, a canon of comic books not meant to be read casually.

The 2002 release of *The Authority Volume One* established the trend of presenting works with a single author, in this case the also-acclaimed Warren Ellis. 2003 saw J. Scott Campbell's *Danger Girl*, Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Volume One*, and *Volume Two* of *The Authority*. After apparently going unreleased for a year, the Absolute Edition became a standard format in 2005 with seven releases including *Watchmen*. While the list of titles—*Planetary*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Volume Two*, *Batman: Hush*, and *Luthor/Joker*—are generally not as acclaimed as *Watchmen*, they do represent a series of "prestige" series with relatively untangled author and artist identification.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ *Planetary*, written by Warren Ellis and pencilled by John Cassaday, ran between 1999 and 2009. *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Volume Two* was published from 2002 to 2003, and was written by

Generally Absolute Editions appear as the culmination of those series' publication histories. For example, *DC: The New Frontier*, written and drawn by Darwyn Cooke and released as a miniseries in 2004, was collected as a trade paperback in 2004 and 2005, and then as an Absolute Edition in 2006. Absolute Editions are not for collecting previously uncollected series. Their purpose is not to make accessible what has previously been prohibitively expensive. The purpose of Absolute Editions appears to be to create an expensive object and to incarnate the most prestigious edition available to a general audience. While their choice of titles ranges enormously in terms of the degree of critical acclaim, the Absolute printing confers an importance on the material reprinted. The explosion of the Absolute Editions indicates that DC's marketing division perceives that an audience for them exists, an audience for whom copies of Geoff Johns' *Green Lantern: Rebirth*, for instance, are worth \$100. In the introduction to *Absolute Green Lantern: Rebirth*, writer Brad Meltzer proclaims that the worth of the series is partially its relationship to fandom: "Written by a fan. Written for the fans. For us. I love it for that... Instead of trying to be cool or meta or the oh-so-popular self aware..." (Johns, n.p.). The Absolute Edition is the physical manifestation of popularity amongst fans, notably the kinds of fans who would spend a hundred dollars on an oversized edition of a comic book with a foreword such as this that proclaims the comic book to be unpretentious.

The 2005 Absolute Edition of *Watchmen* is significantly different from the series that was printed in the 1980s. For the Absolute Edition, colorist John Higgins reworked his colouring of *Watchmen* and created what is now the standard appearance of *Watchmen*. The indicia calls this the "(NEW EDITION)" after the title, an acknowledgement that all paperback and hardcover

Alan Moore and drawn by Kevin O'Neill. *Batman: Hush*, a storyline running in *Batman* issues 608 to 619, was written by Jeph Loeb, pencilled by Jim Lee, and published in 2003. *Luthor/Joker* collects both the limited series *Luthor: Man of Steel*, originally published in 2005; and the 2008 graphic novel *Joker*, both written by Brian Azzarello and illustrated by Lee Bermejo.

editions of *Watchmen* since 2005 are reprinting the 2005 work of Higgins. The most radical change in colouring for the 2005 and subsequent editions was Higgins' decision to use the new digital technology to, as Sara J. Van Ness puts it, simulate an older print culture. *Watchmen's* comic-book-within-a-comic-book, the pirate story *Tales of the Black Freighter*, appears in pre-2005 editions as roughly contiguous with the storyworld of *Watchmen*. As Sara J. Van Ness indicates, in the Absolute Edition, every panel from *Tales of the Black Freighter* is redesigned to look like a specific kind of comic book, namely a more cheaply-printed comic book than *Watchmen*: "originally, these panels were coloured in much the same way as their 'real world' counterparts...the panels featuring scenes from *Tales* now include a classic comic-book texture; each of the colours in these panels consists of a visible dot-like pattern" (41). As van Ness says, "the style mimics less-advanced printing technology" (41). This technique means that later versions of *Watchmen* include a starker contrast to *Tales of the Black Freighter*. By adding a false "comic-booky" comic book within *Watchmen*, the Absolute Edition emphasizes that *Watchmen* is unlike those comics.

A later development within the Absolute Editions suggests another approach. *Absolute Batman Year One*, published in 2016, collects a four-issue storyline from Batman comics of 1986 and 1987. The Absolute Edition consists of two hardcovers in one slipcase, with the first reprinting remastered and recoloured art from previous collections of the storyline. The second hardcover reprints the original publication, with ads (but not letters pages) removed, and printed on paper stock that closely replicates the original interiors and covers. Scanned from the published comic books as opposed to the original art, this second hardcover presents a strikingly different relation to comic nostalgia. *Year One* shows that even within the context of the oversized deluxe reprints of the Absolute Edition, the aim can be a recreation of the original

physical object. This possibility should indicate that the aim of the *Absolute Watchmen* is very much to create a new, definitive edition of *Watchmen*. That such an edition was needed suggests the extent to which *Watchmen* plays a different role for DC than *Year One*: there has to be a best *Watchmen*.

Roy Cook and Aaron Meskin point out that as with art prints, comics are typically seen as “multiple artworks”—“that is, that they have multiple instances, where interaction with any appropriate instance is sufficient to count as a genuine interaction with the work itself” (57). Their conclusion for comics is that, “although the ordinary reprinting of comics does not produce new works of art, comics, at least under certain non-extraordinary circumstances, allow for distinct editions that are themselves distinct artworks. Nevertheless, editions of comics are not standardly works of art in their own right, and these insights are as a result somewhat limited” (58). Thanks to the recoloring and particularly Higgins’ insistence on the superiority of his 2005 work, Cook and Meskin suggest the Absolute Edition of *Watchmen* as a prominent candidate to be considered a distinct artwork, marking a key moment in the transition of the book *Watchmen* from comic book to graphic narrative and “art” book. At one point Cook and Meskin consider the major criteria for an “art-instance” (an instance of an artwork that is itself a distinct artwork), concluding that “If multiple works that allow for art-instances must involve interpretation...then this would again throw at least some doubt on the claim that comics or prints could have art-instances, since in neither case do we naturally think of the production of instances as interpretive” (60). I would suggest that this reasoning is expanded upon by Chartier’s invocation of the printer/publisher. Placing the Absolute Edition alongside other editions (which Cook and Meskin correctly identify as distinct for the purposes of collecting

[62]) emphasizes that, though comics are not standardly thought of as involving interpretation in editions (63), most editions of *Watchmen* have involved interpretation by DC Comics.

The paratext is where most variation has taken place. Higgins' recoloring and Gibbons' minor corrections are the only changes ever made to the main text of *Watchmen*. Setting aside translations and extratextual materials by other authors, *Watchmen* has remained an extremely stable text. The 2005 changes confirm, however, that the purpose of reprinting *Watchmen* is not to replicate the famous text from 1986-7 but the one that readers believe should have existed at the time. The small scale of these changes over time reinforces the notion, key to DC's construction of the graphic novel, of *Watchmen* as having begun as an essentially perfect text.

In a 2009 piece for *Booklist*, a magazine for public librarians, Gordon Flagg points out the existence of "an oversized, slip-cased hardcover" (the Absolute Edition), but recommends the trade paperback as the one to stock to meet customer demand (34). In a 2006 review, *Library Journal* posits the Absolute Edition as "the finest version available" (90). The materiality of the Absolute Edition, as well as the work done by Higgins and Gibbons on the text, combine to suggest two unavoidable facts about the Absolute Edition: it is attempting to be the finest copy of the text, both for consumers and in terms of representing what the authors intended; and this edition is not the one that should circulate most easily. By making the future cheaper editions contain the emendations of the Absolute Edition, DC uses that edition as an exemplar. However, the existence of a separate Absolute Edition reveals a publishing strategy including very expensive versions of existing comic books. The notion of a market of fans for prestige editions would continue to dominate later *Watchmen* history.

2008 to 2017: *Watchmen* becomes "essential" to DC's convergence regime

In 2008, about three months before the release date of the *Watchmen* film, DC reprinted *Watchmen* #1. This edition of #1 presents *Watchmen* as “THE GROUNDBREAKING SERIES” on the cover. The cover is an image of Rorschach leaving an alleyway, having just beaten a graffiti artist who has sprayed the phrase “WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN?” on a wall. The cover image closely resembles 6.15.6, but is a 1986 advertisement drawn by Dave Gibbons (Gibbons 1988, n.p.). The black and white original has been coloured in black and yellow, and a brief epigraph from Rorschach has been removed. The original ad mimicked the cover design of the series, so this printing simply replaces the advertising words “A 12 ISSUE DELUXE SERIES BY ALAN MOORE AND DAVE GIBBONS” with the quotation above (Figure 29). As this pedigree suggests, this image is symbolic of the character and the tone of the series, a vignette that does not exactly take place in the series. By literally placing an advertisement on the cover, this edition of #1 presents itself as a less subtle advertisement. The timing suggests that the 2009 Warner Bros. film adaptation is the product being advertised.

The International Edition of the trade paperback, “also available in the U.S. and Canada” (dccomics.com), was released on September 10 2008. The contents appear to be the same as the (apparently American) paperback, but with a new cover drawn by Dave Gibbons. This image presents the main cast of the series in superhero garb, standing in front of a large yellow clock. The cover is based on an illustration originally published in DC’s character guide *Who’s Who Update ’87* #5, published in late 1987, though it has been recoloured. The International Edition is a cover which which strongly resembles promotional art in that it assembles the characters in a symbolic scene where they are formally posed (Figure 30).

The cover strongly resembles the cover of the hardcover edition, first released on November 5 2008. This hardcover contains the Graphitti Designs bonus material and the

Absolute recolouring, making it a standard-size reprinting of the Absolute Edition. The cover of this hardcover edition is based on advertising art drawn by Gibbons for *DC Spotlight #1*, a 1985 free publication advertising upcoming DC titles. As with the International Edition, the cover presents the cast in front of a yellow clock. The paratextual differences between these editions are difficult to determine.

This sudden proliferation of minute variants is related to the production of the Warner Bros. film, released in America in March 2009; such, at any rate, is suggested by the fact that the inside front dust jacket of the hardcover edition mentions the upcoming movie. This strategy worked: a *Publisher's Weekly* report from March 16, 2009 notes that while *Watchmen* has “quietly sold well” for years, the release of the movie has propelled it to the top of the paperback bestsellers list (Donahue 19). While the hardcover edition is presumably not a direct part of this chart, this immediately pre-film activity testifies to DC and Warner Bros.’ use of media convergence and cross-promotion.

Published serially on iTunes, the twelve parts of *Watchmen: The Complete Motion Comic* (Figure 31) were released one episode every two weeks between October 2008 and March 2009, except that the first episode was released in July 2008. *Watchmen: The Motion Comic* is the only serial publication of *Watchmen* after 1987. Directed by Jake S. Hughes, the process of creating this digital comic involved photographing the original Gibbons art (Smith 362), and even enlisting Gibbons to draw so that full images which never appeared in their entirety in the original series could be panned across by the camera. Considering *The Motion Comic* as a version as well as an adaptation forces us to consider how many elements can be altered from the hypotext. As Craig Smith points out (365), the presence of Dave Gibbons complicates matters.

The format of the Motion Comic has been described separately by Smith and Drew Morton. The process involves replacing the distinctive form of the comics gutter with “in-between art” (Smith 364) to make each panel an animated scene. Some motion comics make use of a multi-panel frame and thus approach the page grid of print comics (Smith 367). The *Watchmen* motion comic does not, so the viewer never sees more than one image at a time. Brandy Ball Blake has pointed out that perceiving multiple images simultaneously has particular thematic resonance for *Watchmen*’s print edition, which makes use of the fact that the reader can see “past” and “future” panels (Blake 7). Blake’s reading of *Watchmen* hinges on a readerly perception that is not possible with the motion comic because, in Morton’s words, the form of the motion comic replaces spatial sequence with temporal sequence (134).

While dialogue appears onscreen in the form of Gibbons’ original captions, actor Tom Stechschulte performs as every speaking character. Stetschulte acts as these characters by assuming different voices, but it is quite obvious that every piece of dialogue is being spoken by the same person, unavoidably suggesting that this version of *Watchmen* is being read to us. As Morton points out, the story moving at a “cinematic” pace means that dialogue and narration is being read over different images (373), changing the “under-language” (following Moore) of the text, the juxtaposition between words and images. *The Motion Comic* also removes the appendices to each chapter, subtracting significant information.

The physical release of the *Watchmen* film also engages with the material history of the comic book. The 5-disc Ultimate Cut release of the film contains, in addition to the lengthiest cut of the film and a digital copy, the complete *Motion Comic*, which itself contains within its case an ad for the paperback, Absolute, and hardcover editions of the comic book, as well as the video game. These editions should be understood in the context of media convergence. As Henry

Jenkins (2004) points out, one side of convergence involves corporations participating increasingly efficiently across media, making the official appearance of *Watchmen* in different media also a symptom of DC Comics' role in a larger media conglomerate. The books, movie, DVDs, iTunes releases, and video games of 2008-9 all appear to have advertised for each other. Christina Meyer's discussion of the cross-platform success of the Yellow Kid in the 1890s referred to his success as a "serial unfolding": serial appearances within and across media. The connection Meyer points out between success and other media platforms is still relevant.

Published on May 29 2013, the Deluxe Edition is a hardcover slightly larger than the International and Hardcover editions of 2008 (Figure 32). The Deluxe Edition publishes *Watchmen* in a physical format developed by DC Comics previously for other series. The bonus materials focus on Dave Gibbons' role in the series, presenting "Conceptual Sketches, Process, and Development" (N.p.), and a foreword by Gibbons is touted as new material added to this edition according to DC's online catalogue. No material from the Absolute Edition is reproduced. Gibbons's introduction centres on the idea of the "glimpse," an imperfect and partial sight to explain both *Watchmen*'s development as well as the series' artistic success: rather than the aggregate of all human experience, "it is for the storyteller to offer the tantalizing glimpse and for the audience to supply the closure which it suggests" (n.p.). Gibbons also proclaims that *Watchmen* "is finite, as closed and complete as a varnished oil painting or, perhaps, a delicate clock mechanism" (n.p.), implying that the "bonus material" in this edition is a viable addition to the series while expansions are not. Gibbons' sanctioning role as a creator is important enough that his implicit limiting of the meaning of *Watchmen* must be allowed by DC because it also authorizes such innovations as the Deluxe Edition.

The Deluxe Editions provide a physically larger product than the original publication, in terms of size of paper as well as including bonus materials such as sketches and commentary. David Pearson coincidentally uses the term “de luxe” to refer to the early modern practice of printing editions of the same text on larger paper: “The result was the same book, textually and typographically, but more generously spaced out with wider margins. This appealed to discerning and affluent book buyers and was a common habit particularly towards the end of the hand press period, in the eighteenth century” (89). The printing practice produced a book that contained the same text but was rarer and more expensive, and encouraged annotation of distinct hand copies. The contrast suggested by this use of “de luxe” highlights DC’s positioning of an expensive edition for discerning readers not as one that belongs more to the reader but as one that provides more information about the creation of the series. Deluxe Editions typically focus on the artist (*Batman Unwrapped by Andy Kubert Deluxe Edition*), or focus on the writer (*The DC Universe by Neil Gaiman Deluxe Edition*), or a team. Some engage in multiple categories. *Batman Noir: Eduardo Riso* collects several stories for the purposes of organizing them by artist, but also turns the stories into black and white versions. Notably, Deluxe Editions are not specifically for expansions of existing material: they can also be for material that has never been collected before. They are always originally hardcovers, but there are softcover versions of Deluxe Editions. While Deluxe Editions are slightly larger (by about one inch of height and half an inch of width) than the “regular” hardcovers, they also collect artistic and writing materials related to the series, much like the Absolute Editions. The general purpose of the Deluxe Edition is to produce an edition of distinction, and the use of bonus material and larger paper is part of the same strategy. Though these Deluxe Editions imitate the luxurious Graphitti Designs edition,

they appear instead as part of a line that emphasizes prestige and access to materials such as sketches, colour guides, and proposals.

On December 4 2013, DC published *Watchmen* #1 as part of their “Essentials” line in which single issues were reprinted and priced at \$1 US (Figure 33). At the same time as the Deluxe Edition appeared, DC was also releasing the cheapest version of *Watchmen* ever produced, and positioned the series not with the word “deluxe” but rather the word “essential,” which requires some contextualizing. That is, none of the twenty-two issues printed as DC Essentials in 2013 tell a complete story, and therefore their low price seems like an obvious plan to sell copies of the rest of the narrative. The “Essential” phrase is reminiscent of both Marvel’s line of (cheaper reprint) Essential collections, and of DC’s own Essential Vertigo reprints of the 1990s,⁷⁶ but the font and timing suggests that the 2013 printings are connected instead to their ongoing marketing of certain series as Essential in DC’s annual free physical catalogues.

On the cover of *DC Essential Graphic Novels 2016*, Batman and Superman are seen atop a pile of defeated super villains, reading *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns* respectively. On the cover of *DC Essential Graphic Novels 2018*, the Justice League appears, with Batman again reading *Watchmen*. A brief comic sequence in *2016* shows Batman explaining to his sidekick Robin that this catalogue is designed “TO HELP GUIDE NEW READERS TO DC’S READING COLLECTION, STARTING WITH THE ESSENTIAL 25 MOST CULTURALLY RELEVANT GRAPHIC NOVELS.” Batman mentions that this catalogue is also useful for existing readers. Robin asks if *Watchmen* is covered; it is listed first. 2016’s canon of the twenty-five most culturally relevant graphic novels unsurprisingly begins with *Watchmen*, since it is

⁷⁶ Marvel’s Essentials line of trade paperbacks ran from 1996 until 2013 and featured black or white reprints of material from the 1960s to 1980s. DC’s Essential Vertigo line of black and white single issue reprints from 1996 to 1999 reprinted Alan Moore’s 1984 to 1985 run on *Swamp Thing*, and 32 issues of Neil Gaiman’s *Sandman*.

identified as “THE GREATEST GRAPHIC NOVEL OF ALL TIME” and as such could hardly be anywhere else. The claim and the positioning reinforce each other, as does consistency: *Watchmen* appears in the same place with the same claim in the catalogues for 2014, 2015, and 2017. In a revealing mixed metaphor, the ad copy posits that the “seminal story is the benchmark against which all other graphic novels and comic books are judged” (6). While the catalogues advertise DC products and suggest reading orders for bibliographically bewildering superhero collections, their clearest function is indicated by the use of the term essential in the title: their purpose is creating a canon from the company’s products.

The catalogues use varied approaches to what we might think of as “essentiality.” In the 2015 catalogue’s section devoted to the work of writer Neil Gaiman, we are informed that his 1989-1996 *The Sandman* is “one of the most popular and critically acclaimed graphic novel series of all time” (102), recognizably the same criteria being applied to *Watchmen*. Another section gathers graphic novels that connect to movies and TV shows. *Superman Chronicles* Volume One contains “the first adventures of the Man of Steel” (46), while other historical claims involve creative teams working together for the first time or a bold new direction for a character or concept. We are told that Fabio Moon and Gabriel Ba’s *Daytripper* is “one of the most unique and compelling graphic novels of the past decade” (21), with the *Essential Graphic Novels* making an appeal to the reader’s response and the work’s specificity rather than, as with *Sandman*, a mention of its critical reception. The rest of the catalogue is consistent with the idea that *Watchmen*’s role in this catalogue is to be the benchmark.

The Essential Edition of *Watchmen* #1 is a cheap way to purchase the first chapter of the Essential collection of *Watchmen*. Given the belief that comic books’ move towards the graphic novel has brought them success and acclaim, reviving the comic book to sell the graphic novel

seems to be a curious strategy, but it can be explained by the continued existence of specialty stores and audiences. By pricing the Essential issues at \$1, DC nominates their canon as a starting point, implying that the reader should start with these cheap reprints before purchasing the significantly more expensive collections. Essentiality is clearly marketing rhetoric.

Watchmen and *The Dark Knight Returns*, both from the mid-1980s, are the oldest works in the Essential issues. In order of original publication, the Essential reprints consist of:⁷⁷

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, originally published in 1986.

Watchmen, originally published in 1986.

Batman: Year One, reprinting *Batman* #404 by Frank Miller and David Mazzuchelli, originally published in 1987.

Kingdom Come, reprinting the first issue of the miniseries by Mark Waid and Alex Ross, originally published in 1996.

The Long Halloween, reprinting the first issue of the 13 issue series by Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale, originally published in 1996.

JLA, reprinting the first issue of Grant Morrison's tenure on the series, originally published in 1996.

Batman: Hush, reprinting *Batman* #608, written by Jeph Loeb, penciled by Jim Lee, and originally published in 2003.

DC: The New Frontier, written and illustrated by Darwin Cooke and originally published in 2004.

⁷⁷ DC has released three variations on the Essential line. Vertigo Essentials reprints the first issues of nine titles from DC's mature readers imprint Vertigo. In 2014, the Batman Essentials concept was attached in catalogues to four new printings of DC Essentials—*Batman: Year One*; *Batman and Son*; *Batman: The Black Mirror*; and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. In September 2017, six titles were reprinted under the Justice League Essentials banner to tie into the WB film *Justice League*, released in November of that year. The "essential" tag also appears on a series of action figures sold by DC.

Green Lantern: Rebirth, reprinting the first issue of a 6 issue miniseries written by Geoff Johns, and penciled by Ethan Van Sciver, originally published in 2004.

Identity Crisis, reprinting the first issue of the miniseries written by Brad Meltzer and illustrated by various artists, originally published in 2004.

Batman and Son, reprinting *Batman* #655, written by Grant Morrison and illustrated by Andy Kubert, originally published in 2006.

All-Star Superman, reprinting *All-Star Superman* #1, written by Grant Morrison and penciled by Frank Quitely, originally published in 2006.

Final Crisis, reprinting the first issue of the miniseries written by Grant Morrison and illustrated by various artists, originally printed in 2008.

Joker, excerpting the first chapter of the Brian Azzarello / Lee Bermejo graphic novel originally published in 2008.

Batman: The Black Mirror, reprinting *Detective Comics* #871, written by Scott Snyder and illustrated by Francesco Francavilla, originally published in 2010.

Superman: Earth One, excerpting the first chapter of the graphic novel written by J. Michael Straczynski, illustrated by Shane Davis, and originally printed in 2010.

Justice League, reprinting *Justice League* #1, written by Geoff Johns and penciled by Jim Lee, originally published in 2011.

Batman and Robin, reprinting *Batman and Robin* #1, written by Peter Tomasi and penciled by Patrick Gleason, originally published in 2011.

Batman, reprinting *Batman* #1, written by Scott Snyder and illustrated by Greg Capullo, originally published in 2011.

Wonder Woman, reprinting *Wonder Woman* #1, written by Brian Azzarello and illustrated by Cliff Chiang, originally published in 2011.

Action Comics, reprinting *Action Comics* #1, written by Grant Morrison and penciled by Rags Morales, originally published in 2011.

Green Lantern, reprinting *Green Lantern* #1, written by Geoff Johns and penciled by Doug Mahnke, originally published in 2011.

Superman Unchained, reprinting *Superman Unchained* #1, written by Scott Snyder and illustrated by various artists, originally published in 2013.

Batman: Death of the Family, reprinting *Batman* #14, written by Scott Snyder and illustrated by Greg Capullo, originally published in 2013.

Only 6 of 24 Essential reprints are from the twentieth century. While it is unlikely that DC meant to suggest that nothing they printed for decades aside from these five titles are really worthwhile, the significance of this chronology is that the more recent series are likely to still be ongoing or have direct descendants. While canon formation often skews in the other direction, the Essentials are tilted towards the present for commercial reasons.

After the 2009 film, DC reprinted a series of non-*Watchmen* issues given away for free with the framing “After Watchmen... What’s Next?” characterizing an audience that did not read comic books before seeing the film (or before reading *Watchmen*). The series of reprints eventually dropped the *Watchmen* connection and simply became “What’s Next?” but the structure lived on in marketing such as was used for these Essentials, as the unifying concept shifted from *Watchmen* to DC. The other meaning of “essential”—an essence—points unmistakably to the publisher as the organizer of meaning. DC’s use of the word “essential”

beginning around 2013 and their use of *Watchmen* to define and be defined by the marketing concept reveals the extent of the relationship between the publisher and the series.

Later editions of the standard trade paperback exhibited changes. DC Comics changed their logo to retain consistency with corporate redesigns. The paperback edition came to lose the distinctive *Watchmen* title on the front cover, producing an object closer to Gibbons' original 1987 book design, with an even more abstract cover (Figures 34 and 35). The changing *back* covers of the trade paperback are more striking.

The back cover biographies of Moore and Gibbons have changed, and blurbs have appeared above those biographies. In the 2014 edition, we are informed that this object is “ONE OF *TIME* MAGAZINE’S 100 BEST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NOVELS SINCE 1923” with “OVER 2 MILLION COPIES IN PRINT,” an “EISNER AWARD WINNER” and a “HUGO AWARD WINNER” (Cover copy, *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2014). *Time* pronounces it “A WORK OF RUTHLESS PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM, IT’S A LANDMARK IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL MEDIUM” (Grossman 2014), while *The New York Times Book Review* proclaims it “REMARKABLE... THE WOULD-BE HEROES OF WATCHMEN HAVE STAGGERINGLY COMPLEX PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILES” (Iztkoff, cover copy). Both quotations interpret this aspect of the text in addition to drawing the reader’s attention to this feature of *Watchmen*. *Entertainment Weekly* says that *Watchmen* is “A MASTERWORK REPRESENTING THE APEX OF ARTISTRY,” while screenwriter Damon Lindelof is quoted: “THE GREATEST PIECE OF POPULAR FICTION EVER PRODUCED” (Jensen, cover copy). Both of these two quotations come from an oral history by Jeff Jensen for *Entertainment Weekly* in 2005; the first is Jensen’s judgement of the text (Jensen). *Time* magazine’s ranked list, also from 2005, is also the source of the *Time* magazine quote (Grossman

and Lacayo). The *New York Times Book Review* quotation is from a 2005 Dave Izkoff review of the *Absolute Edition* (Izkoff). These quotations reveal that their function is precisely to justify attention being given to a graphic novel, which is not the typical subject of a *New York Times Book Review*, an oral history in *Entertainment Weekly*, or a list of novels. Lindelof's quotation still stands out as hyperbolic: claims of "landmark" and "remarkable" alongside "masterwork" (the omitted qualifier "in its respective medium" changes the idea of "apex of artistry" in representing Jensen's quote) seem debatable alongside the colossal claim that *Watchmen* is better than every other piece of popular fiction ever produced (Jensen). These quotes proclaim that *Watchmen* is popular, and very good, and point towards the work's psychological realism. Perhaps most interesting is that only two of these four blurbs explicitly reference the idea of a graphic novel at all.

Claims about the 2014 paperback edition appear in a paragraph between the blurbs and the biographies:

This edition of WATCHMEN, the groundbreaking series from Alan Moore, the award-winning writer of V FOR VENDETTA and BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE, and Dave Gibbons, the artist of GREEN LANTERN, features the high-quality, recolored pages found in WATCHMEN: THE ABSOLUTE EDITION with sketches, never-before-seen extra bonus material and a new introduction by Dave Gibbons. (Cover copy, *Watchmen* by Dave Gibbons and Alan Moore, DC Comics 2014)

The 2014 printing is a normal-sized reprint of the 2013 Deluxe Edition. The shift of features from larger, higher-priced "deluxe" editions to the standard paperback indicates their apparent importance. Because of the same impulse that leads to overstated claims of *Watchmen's*

importance, even the standard *Watchmen* now includes behind-the-scenes material. *Watchmen* itself is now Deluxe.

2014 to 2017: Placing the foundations of *Watchmen* in museums

The Artifact Edition of *Watchmen*, published in April 2014 by IDW Publishing, is twelve and just over one quarter inches wide, seventeen and a half inches high, and seven eighths of an inch deep—by far the largest printing of *Watchmen* yet, and intended by IDW to simulate the original art: “Each page is printed the same size as drawn, and the paper selected is as close as possible to the original art board” (“Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen* Artifact Edition HC”). It arrives inside a cardboard wrapper (not for shipping purposes, as it carries the bar code and pricing information). On the front cover, a scan of Gibbons’ art portraying a photograph laying in the desert sands is a replica of the original artwork for the cover of Issue 4, but also alludes to the concept of the artifact (Figure 36). The photograph of pre-accident Jon Osterman and his ex-girlfriend Janey Slater was intended to memorialize the deceased Osterman after his terrible accident and becomes the subject of Issue 4’s lengthy nostalgic reverie. The photograph’s partial burying in the sand, along with the partial footprints visible, may allude to Percy Shelley’s sonnet “Ozymandias,” a frequent *Watchmen* allusion in which “two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert” and “the lone and level sands stretch far away,” but in context the photograph is connected more strongly to nostalgia than to hubris. On the back cover is a replica of Dave Gibbons’ signature, in glossy embossing over the cover’s matte finish. As Gibbons explains in a 1987 letter, he would sign his original artwork to verify its authenticity for sales purposes (151). The signature’s appearance on the back of the Artifact Edition itself seems to be performing the same function of certifying that this is all real. But, while the interior pages are

photographs of Gibbons' signed work, the signature on the back cover is actually a replica of a replica of this authenticating mark.

The Artifact Editions are a line of publications. In an interview with IDW Editor-in-Chief and Chief Creative Officer Chris Ryall, scholar Jeffery Klaehn inquired about IDW's *Artist* (not *Artifact*) *Edition* line. According to Ryall, the line is successful because "those books are the closest most people can ever come to owning a page of original art from the stories included in the books. Seeing these amazing artists' process at the exact size as it was drawn, with all the pencil marks, white-out, scribbles, notes and other such things that make original art so appealing, is something comic fans really enjoy" (92). As Klaehn notes, and Ryall agrees, this project is resonant with the goals of the San Diego Comic Art Gallery, opened by IDW in 2015. The fact that art gallery goals are seen by publishers as connected to the aims of archival and reprint lines suggests a convergence of publishing practices and the museal turn in comic book collecting. According to Klaehn the Artist's Editions "were pioneered and are superbly run by Special Projects Editor Scott Dunbier" (92). Dunbier, who had created the Absolute Edition series at DC, had also been the Art Dealer at WildStorm⁷⁸ (Hedges 198), and his appreciation for the value of original artwork has clearly influenced his editorial work at IDW. The Artifact Edition is an approximation of original comic artwork, and similar ideas of canonicity and prestige are at work in the Absolute and Artifact Editions.

Ryall's positioning of the Artist's Editions as a substitute for the reader who cannot afford original comic book art is a useful way to understand the Artifact Edition of *Watchmen*. *Watchmen* could not be an Artist edition because the term is reserved for series where the complete original art can be published. If the Artist's Edition is a way to approach the original

⁷⁸ A studio and imprint of publisher Image Comics established by writer/artist Jim Lee in 1992, WildStorm was purchased by DC in 1999.

artwork, the Artifact Edition is another step further removed, an approximation of an approximation, bringing us closer to the impossible Artist's Edition. While a reproduction of all the original art is called the Artist's Edition because it focuses on the role of the artist in particular (recreating, in fact, what the art looked like when the artist sent it away to the colourist), the "Artifact" title focuses attention on the physical, historical object. The "artifact" edition seems to simulate not the packages Dave Gibbons sent to John Higgins in 1986-7, but the set of physical objects that repose in collections across the world.

The role of original art in comic books has been largely determined by the collector's market. As a mass medium, the "original" art does not represent the first circulation of the material in comic books, but rather represents an object exponentially rarer than original printings. In an article on alternative comics, Emma Tinker diagnoses a nostalgia in mass-produced media: "Although alternative comics writers know that their work is for mass production, they are nevertheless curiously nostalgic for the personal, the handmade, the manuscript" (1177). While Tinker's point is about the artistic decisions made by creators of alternative comics, the idea that the manuscript is the subject of nostalgia and awe in a mass-produced arena holds true for mainstream comic books.

Tinker provides further illumination on the matter by alluding to the way that original comics artwork bears traces erased by reproduction. As she points out, "it is perfectly acceptable for artists to use Tipp-ex, or white-out, on comics originals, and to leave outlines in pale blue pencil which are not picked up in reproduction" (1179). Part of the haptic pleasure of seeing original comic book art is in the materially ramshackle nature of those objects. For example, in a 2017 show at Paris' Art Ludique-Le Musée focusing on DC Comics, observers could see, the strokes left by the application of paste to the back of the *Action Comics* logo for the February

1939 issue, and many such traces deliberately rendered invisible by reproduction. The Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art in New York held a 2009 exhibition of *Watchmen* artwork, at which R.J. Gregov noted the presence of original art, color guides, and sketches, the same material as that provided in the supplemental materials of prestige *Watchmen* editions since 1987. The fact that the purpose of the Artifact Edition is to simulate the singular museum experience by means of mass reproduction suggests a flowering of the museal logic of *Watchmen*'s prestige. Daniel Stein's citation of the Huysseennian view of "museummania"— "a resistance to the planned obsolescence of consumer society" (Stein 290) is an apt way to understand the Artifact Edition. The Edition exists because of the perception that some comics works transcend their mass production, but perversely turn the Edition turns that perception into another mass-produced object.

If the layout of a museum exhibit is significant, then the structure of this volume, which divides the series' interior artwork from all covers, colouring material, and promotional artwork, is worth considering. After Gibbons' foreword, we see a table of contents for "Watchmen interiors" and the next 105 pages. After these pages, a second table of contents explains the "Additional Materials": the covers, including the paperback covers, advertisements and the French folio, art from the Mayfair Games roleplaying game, color guides by Higgins, and early concept art. Included under the rubric of "Early Watchmen concept art" are four pages from the ledger of Gibbons' art dealer Paul Hudson, showing sales of the art earlier in the Edition. Also appearing are a 1987 letter from Gibbons certifying the art, an advertisement taken out by Hudson to sell the art also appear, and a later sketch from Gibbons to Hudson in which the character Rorschach whispers an offer of artwork for sale. The insistence on the material history

of the artwork reproduced makes this volume a museum not of *Watchmen* but of *Watchmen's* art, concluding with a focus on epitextual events taking place parallel to the publication of the series.

By presenting this information as an Edition of *Watchmen*, the Artifact Edition carries out the goal of circulating this artwork, but also makes a strong claim that the materiality of *Watchmen* is an important feature of the series. Though not discussed by Cook and Meskin in their efforts to determine whether an edition of a comic book can be an “art-instance,” it’s difficult to argue that not only is the Artifact a specific art-instance, it is also *not* the same instance as the actual original art, and further that the content of this art instance is undeniably museal. As comic books continue to position themselves as worthy of museal treatment, the use of this museummania to create further physical commodities should not be overlooked. Publishers and owners of intellectual property have an interest in physical, museal permutations of comic books as they themselves are products but also promote other products. While museal logic leads to the Artifact Edition, the Artifact Edition’s existence promotes the cultural value of the cheapest paperback edition of *Watchmen*.

2016 saw the release of two distinct editions of *Watchmen*. The first, the *Watchmen Collector's Edition*, re-represents the story in twelve hardcovers sold inside a slipcase; the second, *Watchmen Noir*, re-represents the story without colouring. The slipcase of the *Watchmen Collector's Edition* (Figure 37) hearkens back to the Absolute Edition and the Graphitti Designs edition, but the individual “chapters” becoming independent objects is one of the few times that an edition of *Watchmen* has referred back to the original publication. It is the only time other than 1987 when all twelve issues were printed as twelve physical objects. Each hardcover says NOT FOR RESALE on the back cover, suggesting that this expensive (MSRP: 125\$ American) object is presenting a deluxe, collected version of the original *Watchmen* experience. The

Collector's Set is also a unique treatment of *Watchmen*, the only title so far to receive this treatment from DC. The Collector's set presents little different than the now-standard paperback in terms of content, though the paratext has been changed significantly. Pull quotes are confined to a small piece of paper attached with glue onto the hardcover spines, suggesting its superfluity even though this piece of paper is the Collector's Set's only description of its own purpose.

Aside from the usual collection of blurbs, the small piece of paper's only descriptive sentence is the claim that "From ALAN MOORE, the award-winning writer of *V FOR VENDETTA* and *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE*, and DAVE GIBBONS, the artist of *GREEN LANTERN*, the *WATCHMEN COLLECTOR'S EDITION* is DC Comics' first-ever slipcase collection featuring the entire 12-issue series reproduced as oversized, single-issue hardcovers, utilizing the recolored pages found in *WATCHMEN: THE ABSOLUTE EDITION*." The phrase "single-issue hardcovers" blends terms that usually don't go together. Even in French hardcover albums, it was necessary to pair issues to create a book-length document. Positioning *Watchmen* as continuing to pioneer new comics forms thirty years after initial publication, the paratext of the Collector's Edition mainly participates in another reconfiguration of the series' iconography and the affirming of its status as an important and valuable item.

The slipcase forgoes the most common icon of the bloody smiley face in favour of other images drawn from earlier publications. The bottom of the slipcase is a Rorschach blot on a white background, while the top is red, awash in abstract blood that can be seen "dripping down" the spines of the individual hardcovers. The spines of the hardcovers form the image of two human skeletons embracing while being annihilated. The image originally appears in Chapter VII, at 16.2 and then 17.6. Around the slipcase are the images of the characters from the covers of the French editions, the first time that these images have been the covers of the North

American *Watchmen*. This edition is a pastiche, combining physical elements of the 1986 Graphitti Designs edition (the slipcase), the 2005 Absolute Edition (the colouring), the original magazines (the disarticulation of “chapters” into “issues”) and the French albums (the painted images on the slipcase).

Material changes have consequences for the text. In Aaron Kashtan’s essay on material forms of Alison Bechdel’s graphic novel *Fun Home*, he points out that the digital edition of the text changes pages 100 and 101 into consecutive rather than adjacent images, eliding the fact that in physical editions they are the centre of the book (2013 113). Kashtan points out that in Julia Watson’s analysis of *Fun Home*, the physical double-page spread is thematically important, creating a conceptual space at the centre of the text and literally showing the emotional gap between two characters who appear on pages 100 and 101; this is rendered meaningless in the e-book edition (2013 113). In *Watchmen*, the spread at the centre of Chapter 5, in which the panel layouts are symmetrical throughout the chapter, undergoes changes in editions. In the original Issue 5, the spread is at the staples holding the issue together, making it extremely easy to open the object to show these two pages. In the Collector’s Edition, the stiffness of the hardcovers combined with their small size renders this spread almost impossible to perceive, since it is very difficult to flatten the issue. The physical construction of the Collector’s Edition means that the spine would have to be broken to view the entirety of more than one page at a time, encouraging readers to hold each hardcover partially open in the manner of old, rare books. Because each hardcover consists of two signatures, Chapter 5’s centre is now only the centre of the issue in terms of page count. Though not an e-book, the Collector’s Edition reproduces some of the same changes that Kashtan identifies and brings the reader further away from the original experience.

In the case of *Watchmen*'s Collector's Edition, the comic becomes something glimpsed imperfectly, leaving us to focus primarily on the elaborate housing.

Reluctance to create new iconography of *Watchmen* features prominently in the other 2016 release, *Watchmen Noir* (Figure 38). According to the indicia, *Watchmen Noir* was first printed on October 21, 2016, roughly a month after the Collector's Edition (printed September 2 2016). Where the Collector's Edition uses recolouring as a selling point, the Noir edition, like the Artifact Edition, removes John Higgins' work. Reproducing the series stripped of colour requires awkward artistic compromises to produce an aesthetically coherent object. An approximation of the work immediately after Dave Gibbons inked it, *Watchmen Noir* presents a counterfactual version of *Watchmen* as though Higgins had never worked on it at all. In this way, the *Noir* edition contributes to the creation of multiple tiers of *Watchmen* the physical product. By 2018, it is possible for a bookstore to stock a great many versions of *Watchmen* in a variety of price ranges from the cheapest paperback (MSRP 25.99 Canadian), to a hardcover version of that same paperback (MSRP \$53.99), to an annotated hardcover (MSRP \$65.99), to an oversized hardcover (MSRP \$112.00), to a box set of individual hardcovers (MSRP \$163.00), to an enormous volume of reproduced sketches and original artwork (MSRP \$125 American)—and the spectrum can be extended even further to include the Motion Comic, companion volumes, and supplemental material. This is the Watchmen Industry.

Finally, *Watchmen Annotated*, which refers to itself as *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition* within, was released in December 2017 (Figure 39). A square volume of 12 inches by 12 inches, *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition* presents the original series in black and white. Beside the artwork, space has been added for writer Leslie Klinger's annotations. The style follows William S. Baring-Gould's 1967 *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, which presented Arthur Conan Doyle's

original texts alongside notes about historical context, allusions, internal logic, and chronology.⁷⁹ Klinger's *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* followed the same exegetical style in 2004-2005. From 2012 to 2015 DC Comics published Klinger's annotations of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series. *The Annotated Sandman* was an immediate predecessor of *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition*, in terms of presentation and publishing format, as well as prestige. The dust jacket of *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition* proclaims that *The Annotated Sandman* is "One of the most impressive editions of a comic book ever published" according to website PopMatters (Carpenter).

While the text reproduces *Watchmen*, it also presents Klinger's interpretation of *Watchmen*, and DC Comics' interpretation of Klinger's *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition*. Interpretation is the precise issue around which Klinger explains his authorship: "The aim of this volume is not to criticize or analyze or dissect *Watchmen*. Like all great works of art, it speaks in its own voice, and each reader will walk away with his or her own interpretation of the story. Rather, this volume aims to enrich the experience of the reader" (Klinger 8). On the back cover, DC Comics, by contrast, emphasizes the revelatory nature of the annotations and situates this quality in Klinger: DC Comics is "proud to present an all-new retrospective edition of this legendary work," which "reveals the hidden foundations of this milestone in modern storytelling" because "Klinger provides the reader with a unique and comprehensive view of *Watchmen* as both a singular artistic achievement and a transformative event in the history of comics as a medium" (Cover copy, *The Annotated Watchmen* by Leslie Klinger, DC Comics 2017). While part of Klinger's foreword seems to be reassuring the reader that his purpose is not

⁷⁹ Baring-Gould situates his own work in a tradition of "a highly specialized form of literary criticism" (23), that of chronologies and biographical "investigations" of fictional characters. For one instance, pages 58-63 are concerned with what university Sherlock Holmes attended, and when, a subject never explicitly addressed in the narratives.

malign (not to “criticize” or “dissect” the book), it’s difficult to see a way in which “hidden foundations” could be revealed without analyzing the original.

Metaphors of autopsy and excavation give little indication of Klinger’s focus. One of Klinger’s activities, reminiscent of Baring-Gould’s efforts to “date” the Sherlock Holmes stories is chronology.⁸⁰ For example, Klinger notes of panel 7.18.2 of *Watchmen*, which shows the Moon, that “the moon was indeed waxing gibbous on Friday, October 25, 1985, when these events occur” (Klinger 232). The chronology of *Watchmen* is already thematically present in the text. However, by virtue of being another voice, one that is paratextual to *Watchmen*, Klinger’s recurring commentary on the chronology of *Watchmen* presents the interpretation that the chronology of *Watchmen* is particularly significant. Different annotators have written different things. For example, Scott Brand’s 2014 article on references to the Classical world in *Watchmen* is functionally a set of annotations, suggesting that these elements are important beyond the text’s treatment of them. Annotation is unavoidably a form of providing meaning. In 1995, fan Doug Atkinson also annotated *Watchmen* in a text file that (perversely given the lack of images) consistently focuses on Moore’s “under-language” juxtaposing of words and images. Atkinson and Brand’s work highlights the extent to which Klinger focuses on explaining historical references and allusions. In panel 7.12.9, a television news anchor reports that “AT ENGLAND’S GREENHAM COMMON BASE, WOMEN PEACE DEMONSTRATORS WERE ARRESTED DURING SCUFFLES WITH POLICE...”. Klinger’s note for the panel explains the plausibility of this background event:

⁸⁰ Klinger argues, for example, that Doyle’s “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,” published in 1892, takes place on Tuesday, December 27 because the story takes place five days after a December 22 which was not a Sunday (because a plumber was working that day, 456), on a day which was also not a Sunday (because Holmes had read the morning newspapers, 451), and when the next day was not a Sunday either (because the banks will be open, 460).

Opened in 1942, Greenham Common was an air base in Berkshire in the southeast of England that was used by both the Royal Air Force and the U.S. Air Force until its closure in 1993. It was converted into parkland in 1997. From 1981 through 2000 it was also the site of the Greenham Common Peace Camp, a women's protest encampment established to oppose the stationing of nuclear weapons on the base. (Klinger 226)

Klinger's focus on *Watchmen*'s verisimilitude, and particularly its historical references, raises the question of why this particular marginalia would be officially sanctioned. By attaching historical information to *Watchmen*, which only contained ostentatiously fictional treatments of history, *The Annotated Watchmen* suggests that history is a necessary part of the text. As the headline of one news article about *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition* forecast, "Watchmen Will Be Annotated - And Remind You About Vietnam" (Johnston). *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition*, which is not intended to become a standard version of the text, is a manifestation of an understanding of the value of *Watchmen*. *Watchmen* can be annotated with information about its historical allusions, adding value to the text. Anderson and Katz suggest that the similarly annotated *Maus* CD-ROM highlights *Maus*'s relationship to the events it portrays. Though *Watchmen* is unlike *Maus* in its relationship to history, the act of historical annotation performs the same work of emphasizing that element of the text. The decision to focus on one level or another, on some details and not others, on one set of references and not another, is an interpretation, making it particularly important that *Watchmen: The Annotated Edition*'s focus on creation, chronology, and history is DC Comics' most sustained sanctioned interpretation.

Watchmen: The Annotated Edition follows in the vein of the supplemental materials of the Graphitti Arts edition and the Artifact Edition, as well as materials like fan annotations and Dave Gibbons' art book/memoir *Watching the Watchmen*, in constructing *Watchmen* as being

valuable because it can be studied in detail. Other comics have been annotated; other comics have their original art circulating in facsimile. But the specific pattern of how DC Comics has treated *Watchmen* is unique to *Watchmen*. For example, while *The Sandman* has received a near-identical annotated treatment, Klinger's 2011-2014 *Annotated Sandman* did not arrive as part of a decades-long trend of having prestige established in terms of realism. DC Comics' ability to manifest physical objects should not distract us from the consequences of their re-presentations of the text. For thirty years *Watchmen* has occupied a unique place in comic books, as a critically acclaimed comic book portraying a detailed version of the real world, which nonetheless belongs to the genre of superhero comic books. *Watchmen* is a text interpreted by its publisher, and presented in the form of a physical object, as a graphic novel that signifies quality because it is more detailed and more structurally complex than most superhero narratives.

In 2019, *Watchmen* is available digitally as a motion comic, as twelve digital issues, as a digital collection, as a digital version of the Deluxe Edition, as a digital version of the Noir edition, and as a digital version of the Annotated Edition. Amazon's Comixology site/app classifies the Deluxe and Annotated Editions as "collected" editions, but the noir and "standard" editions as Graphic Novels, and groups all of these versions as iterations of the same "series," *Watchmen*. A straightforward division between material and digital is simply inaccurate (Wurth 133), and the same discourses of prestige in the Watchmen Industry take place in physical and digital versions.

On the other hand, the digital editions open the possibility of a different kind of reading. Since it can be read using Comixology's "guided view" option, whereby individual panels can be displayed in sequence, the digital *Watchmen* can be read in a fashion that would be almost impossible in any existing physical form. In 2005, novelist and fan Walter Mosley conceived of

the Maximum Edition of *Fantastic Four* #1.⁸¹ To recapture his youthful reading experience, where “as a young person [he] could completely concentrate on each frame of the comic book” as opposed to his current practice where “[he] look[s] at the whole page, read[s] far too quickly, and move[s] on,” Mosley scanned the comic and created a system where each panel was a single image blown up to many times its original size, “as large as possible” on his computer screen (Mosley 82). The physical printing of *Maximum FF* is a curiosity, a physical version of a process that can now be approximated by anyone with an internet-connected screen. But the reading Mosley describes is a major component of digital comics, particularly when viewed on screens significantly smaller than the original size of the comic book. This panel-by-panel viewing without glimpsing an entire page or being aware of page breaks strongly resembles the style of motion comics. While it might be tempting to figure this kind of reading mainly in terms of refamiliarization, as is the case for Mosley, the digital *Watchmen* also raises the possibility of readers whose first interaction with *Watchmen* is seeing it panel by panel, with some enlarged or shrunk. In this reading, the unit of the page, as designed by the original creators, is irrelevant, as is the use of a page structure to convey meaning—significant in the case of *Watchmen*’s distinctive recurring page layout of nine panels and the equally-significant variations from the same. Lukas R. A. Wilde notes that even the phrase “digital comics” seems to betray the same kind of anxiety as “graphic novel” in cultural positioning through its identification as a variation of a familiar form (8). Roberts argues that, “though experiencing an upturn in popularity and profit due to the enormous success of blockbuster movies based on their content, standard format comic books have become the old legends to which contemporary media pay tribute” (210). In a 2012 survey conducted by Stevens and Bell, nearly three quarters of fans surveyed did not

⁸¹ Written by Stan Lee, drawn by Jack Kirby, and originally published by Marvel Comics in 1961.

consider digital comics to constitute collections (752). The association of comics with materiality continues to be defined by the existence of digital comics.

A revising of comics' material history has also been provoked by the rise in prestige of American comics. In the retrospective book *75 Years of DC Comics*, alongside former DC President Paul Levitz' text, a panel from *Watchmen* is reproduced. The panel (3.1.4) is the first scene of a young boy, Bernie, who throughout the series sits on the street beside a newsstand and slowly reads a single issue of a comic book. The Bernie panel is displayed in Levitz's book because it exemplifies the "heavy details" of Gibbons' art and features "two of the many everyman characters who illustrate the narrative's effect on common humanity" (598). These two characters appear throughout *Watchmen*, respectively commenting on current political events and attempting to understand the comic-book-within-a-comic-book that is included in the text. Levitz' text celebrates these characters as counterpoints to the more elaborate main plot of *Watchmen* and to represent the splash of "gritty realism" across the series. The changing context in which Bernie's material encounter with comics is found ensures experiences less and less like Bernie's. *75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Mythmaking* is a typical book from German publisher Taschen, purveyors of fine oversized coffee table art books. It presents a lavishly-illustrated history of the American comics publisher in the form of an immense book (roughly the size of an Absolute Edition) with a retail price in 2017 of 200 USD.

Since 1987, however, DC has made *Watchmen* less and less like the comic book being read in *Watchmen*, and made Bernie more and more into an artifact of the 1980s. *Watchmen* has come to exemplify a certain kind of prestige comic book, one that transcends its genre subject matter and context through the use of realism and became timeless rather than dated. Bernie, as a reader of a cheap, physical newsstand comic book, is what DC's *Watchmen* has left behind even

as it reproduces the panels of Bernie reading. Just as the coming of the digital made visible the peculiar body of print comics, the “graphic novel” body and name that *Watchmen* assumed constructed the newsstand as a past market. To draw a metaphor from *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, a series that in 1986 very closely resembled *Watchmen* materially, *Watchmen* was a harbinger not just of a changed future but a changed past. Reading one of the epitomal “1986” graphic novels in terms of book history emphasizes the techniques and strategies, from physically larger editions to emphasis of historical referents, that *Watchmen*’s corporate owners DC Comics have used to create and shape the prestige of the series, and reveals the significant role of DC Comics in writing the graphic novel chapter of book history.

Chapter 5.

Trash Culture: Towards a Theory of Premium Comics

“It is the ambition of every newspaper cartoonist to get published in something that won’t be used to wrap fish in the next morning, and so, the other day, I was writing a book.”

— Al Capp, quoted in White and Abel 263

Dubble Bubble Funnies are a series of comics published on 2 by 2 1/2 inch pieces of waxed paper attached to the inside of the wrapping of individual pieces of Dubble Bubble Gum, priced in 2018 at 10¢ each and manufactured by Concord Confections. Since 1950, *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, formerly *Fleer Funnies*, have centred around Pud, a boy in a striped shirt. Pud’s narratives circulate in an unusual material form that strongly encourages the reader to consider them to be garbage: that is, the comic serves as wrapper for the gum and the reader will likely throw it away once they get the gum. Some comments about gum even indicate that the wrapper is to be used to wrap the gum after chewing, as shown by journalist Beatrice Trum Hunter’s remark that “Disposal of chewing gum can be done easily in the original wrapper” (Hunter 22). The circulation of the comic as wrapper changes the meaning of the text. Furthermore, just as candy is a product that troubles the boundary between food and junk, comics’ historical association with trash prompts an acknowledgement of the way trash, candy, and comics have been culturally bound together as categories of junk. The packaging of comics with candy makes obvious the shared liminal status of these materials in consumer culture, and this association also demands a serious consideration of the conceptual category of “premium comics”: comics which are circulated as food marketing.

In other chapters of this thesis, I discuss comic books in terms of what Harry Morgan calls the “codexité” or “bookness” of comics (quoted in Miller 158). For Carl Barks’ Uncle Scrooge stories, the physical changes from pamphlet to hardcover form signify a shift in the cultural capital of Barks’ work; similarly, the publisher’s construction of the value of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen* involves decades-long movements within the “bookness” of *Watchmen*’s materiality. Comics have also circulated in forms other than the comic book, forms where the absence of “codexité” is the defining feature. Comics offered as “premiums”—inducements to consumers to purchase food items—are an undertheorized material form of comics, where the cultural values associated with the materiality of “the book” or “the magazine” are replaced by the visibility of consumer culture in such marketing schemes, and by the related concept of trash. In the only academic discussion of bubblegum comics, Ian Hague’s analysis of the way that the comics are experienced by the senses acknowledges that some comics are associated with a particular food and taste, noting Topps Gum’s character Bazooka Joe (141)⁸² and that the comic’s identity includes the taste of the bubblegum. His remark that “the comic’s edible content can be consumed fully without the entirety of the comic being destroyed” (138), to distinguish bubblegum comics from comics that can actually be physically consumed, suggests that one way to look at bubblegum comics is as a text and a food that are independent of each other and come to be associated through packaging, one of several ways that “comics come to be associated with particular food products” (143). Beyond observing that eating and reading of these two objects are associated with each other by the Topps Gum company, Hague does not offer a reading of Bazooka Joe comics. Taking analysis of a similar

⁸² Created in 1953 by cartoonist Wesley Morse, Bazooka Joe appeared in comics wrapped around pieces of Bazooka bubble gum from the Topps Company, becoming Pud’s longest-lived rival until his comics were discontinued in 2012 (Topps Company 2013 *passim*).

object in another direction, in this chapter I argue that the specific *way* that the gum (as an edible product) and comics (as wrapping for that product) are bound together creates a theoretical space that lets us read certain bubblegum comics themselves as ambivalent about consumer culture.

Because bubblegum comics are related to the way that candy, comics, and garbage function in consumer culture, it is necessary to first understand how these ambiguous, liminal categories work in such a culture. Therefore this chapter investigates the cultural history of candy, particularly gum, comics' use in marketing, and garbage, as well as the role of fictional narratives at the confluence of all three of these cultural phenomena. The background argument of this chapter is that the categorization of comics as “junk”—whether food or culture or in the form of actual garbage—is not a tragic or undesirable flaw in the history of comics, but rather an important part of comics materiality.

In this chapter, I focus on the example of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* to understand non-book ways of understanding comics. Because *Dubble Bubble Funnies* circulate as part of the wrapping of bubblegum, their use of humour to portray the life of the main character Pud becomes a negotiation of the tension between a moralistic idea of gluttony, and the need for artifacts of consumer culture to sanction mass consumption. To show this, I examine a corpus of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, namely a 1 kilogram bucket containing 175 pieces of 10¢ Dubble Bubble gum, purchased at a wholesale retailer⁸³ in mid-2017. By considering the recurring patterns of humour as well as the comic's use of form, I reach conclusions applicable to the larger category of “premium” comics.

It should be noted that the unusual physical form of bubblegum comics makes it enormously difficult to treat artifacts such as *Dubble Bubble Funnies* as texts. Rather than being

⁸³ The North Edmonton Costco Warehouse in Edmonton, Alberta.

“serialized” in the sense that episodes are periodically distributed through retailers, the comics that make up *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are published in random proportions wrapped around bubblegum, which can be purchased in wholesale quantities or individually. My method in this chapter did not involve assembling a collection of *Funnies* in a manner resembling most consumers’ encounters with the *Funnies*, but rather an attempt to understand what the *Funnies* looked like before an individual sheet was cut up and wrapped around gum—in other words, my ability to see all of the current round of *Funnies* is an attempt to “read” a text that, barring exceptional effort, is highly unlikely to be encountered by most readers. My access to all the current *Funnies* is courtesy of the personal blog of University of Regina film professor Gerald Saul who—“frustrated by having purchased over 1000 pieces of Dubble Bubble gum without having found all 60 comics”—wrote to the then-owners of Dubble Bubble and in August 2017 received a printed sheet of all current comics (Saul). I am tremendously indebted to Professor Saul for his digitizing of the complete *Funnies* c. 2017, and for the relevant facts he notes about his sheet:

The surprising thing is that the wrapper is printed on the same sheet as the comics. The other surprising thing, which helps explain a few oddities, is that the comics are laid out in a nine by nine grid which means they print 81 comics, not 60. There are still only 60 different ones, but 21 of them, chosen with no clear agenda, are printed twice on the base sheet, making them more common. (Saul)

Saul’s reading of the sheet of *Funnies* clarifies that it is not a matter of pure random chance whether a consumer encounters all 60 *Funnies*, and further indicates the extent to which consumers are not really “supposed” to read all 60 *Funnies* with equal ease. My claims about the *Funnies* and Pud come with the qualification that I am sometimes speaking about the comics

present in one particular bucket, but sometimes where relevant, about comics that I did not actually find in my purchase. As a further disclaimer, the *Funnies* are updated every so often: the 2017 bucket does not contain *Funnies* that circulated in the 1950s. While a complete archive of *Funnies* would shed much light on the history of Pud and his publication, the lack of such an organized archive reveals much about the low cultural status of Pud. This difficulty is less an inconvenience and more an important aspect of Pud's circulation.

Even so, the history of Pud, the Dubble Bubble gum of which he is the mascot, and the Fler Corporation which created and originally produced both, can be established from outside the text. The practice of chewing plant products such as bark and resin can be found in many cultures since before recorded history (Mathews 36), but the industrial product of chewing gum is specifically based on indigenous Mesoamerican practices related to the natural latex exuded by the *chicozapote* or sapodilla tree of what is now Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula (Mathews 5). Little information is available concerning the history of local Mayan culture's use of *itz*, the natural product, to create *cha*, a chewed substance (Mathews 6). More information is available about the cultural place of *tzictli* (and a natural bitumen-adulterated variety, *chapapote*) in Aztec culture, because early Spanish chroniclers discuss the subject, albeit from a recognizably European and moralistic perspective: one explains that "the chewing of chicle [is] the preference, the privilege of little girls, the small girls, the young women" who "chew chicle in order not to be detested" because it scents the mouth, and also notes "the addicts termed 'Effeminates' ... and the men who publicly chew chicle achieve the status of sodomites; they equal the effeminates" (quoted in Mathews 8). The cultural place of gum is linked to Aztec religious practice: Mathews notes that in visual portrayals of the feminine goddess Tlazolteotl in her aspect as a purifier, she is "frequently portrayed with bitumen on her face and around her mouth, further emphasizing gum

in general as a feminine symbol” (Mathews 10). One epithet of this entity, Tlalquanai, refers to her as eating filth to cleanse a person, just as the name “Tlazolteotl” literally means something like “filth goddess” (DiCesare 118). Historical anthropologist Catherine R. DiCesare complicates the judgement of Spanish colonial authorities, pointing out that “the identity of the powerful Tlazolteotl was radically transformed in the hands of the Spanish mendicant friars, her identity inevitably fragmented as they tried to find suitable categories to define and represent her” (110). In Aztec cosmology, DiCesare argues, the same “numinous, ambivalent” force stood for filth, sex, sin, witchcraft, purity, divination, cleansing, and the eating of gum. From an anthropological perspective, the physical fact that chicle (and its later synthetic imitators) is a substance “used up” in chewing links it to liminal ideas of food and waste. In Aztec culture this purifying waste was mediated by Tlazolteotl/Tlalquanai and her earthly followers, who included prostitutes. Because the American practice of chewing gum (and later bubble gum) is directly descended from the Mexican practice, it is worth noting that the link between gum and cycles of “filth” and “cleaning” predates the industrial production of gum in the United States. The later American adoption of this substance replaces Tlazolteotl/Tlalquanai with the also ambivalent force of consumerism to negotiate the treatment of this physical substance.

Despite originating in Central America, chewing gum in the twentieth century became inextricably associated with the United States. In Donna Gabaccia’s history of turn-of-the-century struggles over what foods “became” American, she points out the curious fact that “What makes foods American—at least to outsiders—is how they are produced, packaged, and served, not who manufactures or eats them or how they taste” (175). Gabaccia’s research points to xenophobia as an underrated determinant in what foods became quintessentially American, but she locates this xenophobia on the personal level; that is, it is directed at the actual industrial

owners of food production. Despite the fact that the practice of *chicle* chewing is Mexican—and moreover, apparently introduced to Americans by General Santa Anna, a significant and infamous figure of Mexico to Americans (Redclift 25)—and that almost all *chicle* was obtained from Mexico until the 1950s, gum managed to instead be associated with American culture. The case could be made that because gum was popular *in* America, it was associated with Americans. This would shed light on incidents such as the inclusion of gum in Second World War Army rations (the “Assault Lunch” described by Redclift, 133), presumably motivated by gum’s popularity in the United States but also becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy by putting gum into the hands of Americans sent overseas to represent America (Redclift 146). According to candy historian David Carr, during the Second World War, the National Confectioners Association of America “poured \$1 million into a 1944 campaign to promote the link between candy and those brave American GIs” (67). Chewing gum as a specific kind of food has a particular cultural association with American identity.

The product with which *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is associated, bubble gum, has a further cultural specificity as a subset of gum. The first commercial bubble gum, Fleer’s 1906 “Blibber-Blubber,” was an early example of efforts to produce a safe bubble gum, though it failed because “Blibber-Blubber stuck to the face, and it had to be removed using turpentine, not a process welcome in most households” (Redclift 122). Strangely, the concept of bubble gum seems to have preceded its technological attainment, possibly tracing back to the concept of pre-including the “wet” quality of chewed chewing gum (Stewart 113). Bubble gum was successfully discovered in 1928 by Walter Diemer, an accountant for the Fleer Chewing Gum Company of Philadelphia. Diemer’s gum was softer and stretchier than regular gum, and, as intended, made it possible to blow bubbles. Sold under the name Dubble Bubble and manufactured in Fleer’s

Philadelphia plant from 1930 until 1995 (“Fleer Closes Philadelphia Plant”), the gum (and just as importantly, Diemer’s failure to patent his formula) inspired the entire “bubble gum” category of candy (Jamieson 50). Gum in general is widely seen as exemplary of 19th century American culture’s fixations on regularity and gratification. As Michael Redclift puts it, “Chewing gum celebrates a bodily function in an immediately pleasing way, unlike many other forms of consumption that are more indirect but are no less necessary” (34). Marketing is extremely important in the history of bubble gum: “There were so few intrinsic qualities to gum that developing extrinsic ones became a competitive industry: in fact, chewing gum demonstrated anything the consumer wanted it to demonstrate” (Redclift 124). While chewing bubble gum, the consumer can blow bubbles, which does not change the taste but produces a frivolous experience. Bubble gum, in contrast to most food products and even chewing gum, affords the possibility of unproductive play. The product around which *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are wrapped is understood to be an unusually frivolous and childish subset of a particularly American product.

Being a particular kind of gum, bubble gum is also a particular kind of candy, a category which occupies its own ambivalent cultural place. Samira Kawash argues that candy in general must be understood as a kind of food. In the later nineteenth century, mechanized production caused a fall in the price of sugar, and an ensuing rise in cheap candy—with an accompanying reassociation of the now-cheap products first with women and then with children (Wilson qtd in Kawash 17). Driven by novelty, increasingly complex candy-making machines, and hygienic pushes for individual wrappings, candy in the early twentieth century became the site of moral panics, particularly over children as consumers. The paradigmatic case of Necco wafers reveals their interaction. Packaged together in newly-possible paper wrappers to ensure customers that

shopkeepers were unable to contaminate the wafers before you purchased them, the brand name of the New England Confectionary Company became “part of the reassurance... wrapping, branding, and advertising were what transformed the generic 1850s catalog of candy sticks and gumdrops into the twentieth-century candy lexicon of Necco Wafers and Hershey bars” (154). Sold cheaply to children in public spaces, candy became associated with a particular form of consumerism, and the concept of “junk food” came to occupy a similar role in food culture to the role of “waste” in civic culture. Paraphrasing Tim Richardson, Samira Kawash notes that candy exists in a “culinary limbo”: “Candy isn’t a staple or a necessity, it isn’t part of ordinary meals or food rituals, and most of the time it isn’t even considered food. When it’s eaten with a meal, it’s given its own separate category (dessert) and when eaten at other times of day, it becomes a snack, as if calling it something else means it doesn’t really count” (16). I would suggest that the concept of the “snack” and “dessert” function as a brand of order and rationality to make candy a kind of food—a function that is similar to the way that the category of “trash” functions.

In the case of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the similarity of “junk food” like candy and “trash” as a category is particularly important because the *Funnies* are a kind of trash—specifically, they are disposable marketing, an inducement for consumers. The marketing of bubble gum has involved items like the *Funnies* for a very long time. From the 1930s onwards, Dubble Bubble came packaged in wrappers printed with *Fleer Funnies*, a color comic strip. Originally featuring Dub and Bub the Dubble Bubble Twins and then a community of stick figures (Carr 41), the gum was discontinued due to wartime shortages, when American civilian gum production was severely restricted in favour of the armed forces’ gum rations (Mathews 60). In this period, it appears that Dub and Bub are gone, but also that Dubble Bubble was being printed on actual wrappers themselves (Figure 40).

Despite the proto-Pud appearance of the boy leaping into the water, the character would not be identified as Pud for years. In 1947, the rival Topps Chewing Gum Company of New York began to sell bubblegum wrapped in comics featuring Bazooka the Atom Boy, a dual reference to weapons of the recently-ended war. Bazooka was, distinctly, a superhero, who used magic gum to resolve dangerous situations (Figure 41).

In 1949, Bazooka was redesigned as Bazooka Joe, a more distinctive character thanks partially to his eyepatch, in imitation of contemporary advertising icon “the man in the Hathaway shirt” (Topps 55). In 1950, Fler introduced Pud, a rotund boy in a striped shirt (Figure 42).

Interestingly, this last advertisement implies that the shift to the square packaging of gum occurred simultaneously with Pud’s debut, emphasizing Pud’s significance as part of marketing along with packaging. The actual character Pud first resembled the comic strip, cartoon, and comic book character Tubby. Created by cartoonist Marjorie “Marge” Buell in her *Saturday Evening Post* comic strip *Little Lulu*, Tubby was popular enough to receive his own comic book series by John Stanley from 1952 to 1962 (Horn 485-486). Unlike Tubby, Pud became slimmer in the 1960s. Bubblegum companies associated themselves with numerous characters—at various points Topps licensed Carl Anderson’s silent newspaper strip *Henry* as well as Al Capp’s *Lil’ Abner*, and Topps imprint Blony gum would reprint *Archie* strips—but, having originated in premiums, Bazooka Joe and Pud are by far the most distinctive characters to emerge from comic strips attached to gum.

Pud and Bazooka Joe are members of the category of comic strip characters tied to a particular product. They are mascots, a category of fictional character taking root at the beginning of consumer culture. The majority of mascots originate from outside the product created, and function by creating an intertextual association between the product and the text

being referenced. The issue of narratives and licensing seems to be a straightforward one when discussing examples of “endorsement” where the product can be positioned in terms of an existing narrative. An Amos ‘n’ Andy candy bar, for example, develops a brand from being associated with the ongoing radio and television shows, but the candy bar doesn’t have an obvious relationship to any specific narrative in either show. Instead, the bar seems like the kind of thing Amos and Andy would enjoy, suggested by the wrapper slogan which replicates the show’s minstrel version of African-American English to indicate that the blackface characters are the ones speaking on the packaging. There are also examples of products aggressively woven into the fabric of the narrative, such as the example of Ovaltine and the *Little Orphan Annie* radio show, made infamous by Jean Shepherd’s memoirs and the film *A Christmas Story* based on them.⁸⁴ Ian Gordon traces this kind of fictional spokesperson and endorsement to comic strip character Buster Brown⁸⁵ and the constellation of products that surrounded him, arguing that Brown cannot even be understood as a comic strip separate from his products: “All of his incarnations contributed to the makeup of his character, and each reinforced or advertised the others” (Gordon 1998 51). Gordon distinguishes the licensing of Buster Brown from earlier “mascots” such as Sunny Jim, the mascot of Force cereal created in 1902, in that Brown *did* exist as a narrative rather than just an image. These distinctions point the way to understanding the different kinds of mascots who exist within consumer culture.

As Gordon argues, in American media in the 1920s and 30s, the extension of commodity status to intellectual property “helped to create a national culture of consumption fixated on

⁸⁴ In the 1983 film directed by Bob Clark, protagonist Ralphie (played by Peter Billingsley) drinks Ovaltine to receive a promotional decoder ring in order to decipher a secret message offered at the end of every radio episode of *Little Orphan Annie*, which turns out to be “Be Sure to Drink Your Ovaltine.” Ralphie refers to this as “a crummy commercial.”

⁸⁵ *Buster Brown* was created by American cartoonist R. F. Outcalt in 1902, and eventually split into two rival strips which continued until 1910 by other artists and 1920 by Outcalt (Horn 168-169).

images” (Gordon 1998 51). Comic strips that advertised products, and advertisements in the form of comic strips, existed in a media landscape where print media, movies, and radio were linked into a network of image consumption. The distinction between Little Orphan Annie and a character like Captain Midnight, who was created by an advertising company to feature in a radio show for the purposes of advertising Ovaltine, is negligible in terms of how they existed in the culture of the time. For some fictional characters, particularly those who only appear in advertisements, the relationship between narrative and product is even more direct than with these two radio shows. For example, the phantasmatic super villain Mr. Coffee Nerves, who can only be defeated by coffee substitute Postum, is essentially a typical comic character except for the branded specificity of his weakness. His mirror image is Volto, the hero from Mars who can only be recharged by eating Grape Nuts Flakes. Their narratives are always constructed entirely around the product involved, despite the form being identical with one-page comic strips. At a certain point, advertising mascots and fictional characters are not distinguishable based on what their narratives look like, but based on the diegetic role of brands.

A key example for understanding the boundary is Captain Tootsie, a superhero created in the 1940s to advertise Tootsie Roll candies. He resembles contemporary superhero Captain Marvel, both in terms of design and style, partially because both characters were created and drawn by cartoonist C.C. Beck⁸⁶ at the same time. Tootsie has similar adventures to Marvel, albeit considerably shorter in duration. The major narrative difference is that, at the end of his strips, Captain Tootsie offers Tootsie Rolls to all the other characters—though mainstream superhero comic books during World War Two adopted this exact diegetic style to sell war bonds. The stylistic similarities draw attention to the closely related histories of comics and

⁸⁶ Cartoonist Beck was the original artist of Captain Marvel for Fawcett Comics from 1939 until 1951. His “studio” of artists under his direction also produced advertising art such as the Captain Tootsie campaign.

advertising. As Ian Gordon points out, “Comic books owe their existence to the success of comic-art-style advertising in the early 1930s” (Gordon 1998 129). This is true of the format of American comic books, but also their style. That comic-art-style continues to encompass both comic books and advertising, particularly comic ads such as the Hostess example I discussed in an earlier chapter.

What differentiates Pud and Bazooka Joe from the majority of mascots is that they are characters whose adventures are primarily circulated through products. A comparison with other premiums suggests a few important divergences. *Bugs Bunny and Buried Treasure* is a comic that was offered as a premium with Quaker Oats cereals in 1949. A small pamphlet (3” X 7”, roughly the size of a newspaper comic strip) consisting of seven pages glued together, the book is much longer than any Pud or Bazooka Joe adventure except the latter’s 1983 *Bazooka Joe Super Fun Pad* colouring books and his assorted View-Master adventures. The story of *Bugs Bunny and Buried Treasure*, despite a superficial resemblance to 1948’s theatrical short “Buccaneer Bunny,” is apparently original to this publication, and contemporary newspaper ads claim that the stories are “ALL-NEW.” Despite this originality, *Bugs Bunny and Buried Treasure* bears striking differences from *Dubble Bubble Funnies* in terms of its connection to other texts and to food products. Not only does the comic end with an ad for the *Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies Magazine*, but the newspaper advertisements for the promotion also strengthen the links into other formats, connecting to the daily *Bugs Bunny* comic strip which began in 1948. Furthermore, the actual process of obtaining the comic is another monetary exchange: as the back cover explains, “Just get a package of Quaker Puffed Wheat or Quaker Puffed Rice,” fill in the blank on top of the package, and then mail it along with fifteen cents.

Though Topps offered a number of premiums in exchange for wrappers, Pud and Bazooka Joe belong to a more immediate category of premium, since they come along with the product itself.

The one exception for Pud is that the character appeared in advertisements outside of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, or perhaps it is more accurate to say that *Dubble Bubble Funnies* have been published outside of bubblegum. Pud appeared in half-page comic advertisements in 1950s comic books. In these narratives Dubble Bubble appears in adventure stories performing much the same role that Grape Nuts Flakes do for Volto, the Man from Mars. In most of them, the bubbles blown with Dubble Bubble allow Pud to float over a high jump, or help a friend be lifted out of a crevasse. The snapping of the bubble also replicates the sound of a blowdart in the jungle, or a gunshot. Aside from glorifying bubblegum play, sometimes the gum is simply an exchange, as in the case when Pud pays a pirate's ransom with a case.

In one strip (Figure 43) Pud impresses a braggart Egyptian with an American wonder to rival the pyramids and the Sphinx: a colossal bubble that puts the Egyptian in his place and emphasizes the American-ness of Dubble Bubble bubblegum. Aside from barely resembling the adventures of Pud in the comics attached to actual gum, these ads eventually ceased.

Furthermore, the labelling of these strips as advertisements indicates that despite their more elaborate narratives, full colouring, and larger size, they are clearly of secondary significance to the *Funnies* included with gum. The ads position the gum as the object of primary desire, followed by the printed material ("YOU'LL LIKE THE COMICS... TOO!").

In this context, Pud is an example of a comic strip that is an extremely efficient premium, contained within the product it is incentivizing. Pud is a comic strip character so associated with a product that he can essentially only be encountered in that product. Pud's circulation most closely resembles another kind of premium, the collectible gum card. These cards are a version

of cigarette cards, which, as Moor points out (22), were a part of an imperial project to provide a panorama of imperial troops, projects, and locations, a project easily translatable to the history and sports cards of a later period. Interestingly, before the 1950s innovations of the Topps company, sports cards “usually measured around two inches by two and a half inches, in the tradition of tobacco and candy cards from the 1910s and 1920s” (Jamieson 90)—the size that *Dubble Bubble Funnies* continue to be into the present. The concept of premiums would become extremely important for both major American gum companies Fler and Topps, particularly once the shift towards sports cards began in the 1950s (Jamieson 90-102). By the 1990s the sports card “premiums” had economically supplanted the candy, and both companies had shifted their focus almost entirely to collectible sports cards, with Fler being purchased by the Marvel Entertainment Group in 1992 and becoming both a significant part (roughly 50%) of Marvel’s business and a significant producer of comic book superhero cards (Carr 41). When Marvel entered bankruptcy court in 1998, Canadian company Concord Confections Inc. purchased the Fler Confections division (Carr 41). Concord Confections was in turn acquired in 2004 by Tootsie Roll Industries Inc. (Saunders). Bubble gum has no history outside of the world of twentieth-century consumer culture, and bubble gum comics exist on a continuum with trading cards and bubble gum itself, as marketing. However, by contrast to trading cards, which began as marketing but became a significant business themselves, bubble gum comics remained financially subordinate to the products for which they were premiums.

Dubble Bubble Funnies can be likened both to bubble gum itself as a highly artificial object of play, and to bubble gum wrappers in the sense that they are marketing whose purpose was to brand the gum. In terms of their circulation, they can also be associated with trading cards. Trading cards have an intriguing relationship to narrative, one that reveals the narrative

possibilities of candy premiums. While sports cards are non-narrative and instead rely on ideas of complete teams, leagues, and sports, there is a tradition of stories being remediated into card form, and of original stories told in the form of trading cards. In the select medium of narratives that come attached to candy, there have been serialized narratives spread across several premiums. Topps' *Star Trek* card series of 1976 adapted several episodes of the show, incompletely and erratically but sometimes showing a suggestive correlation in the gap between cards and the advertising breaks of the original episodes (Block and Erdmann *passim*). The three original *Star Wars* films (Topps Company Inc. *Star Wars*, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*) as well as *Back to the Future Part II* were also released in the form of gum cards shortly after their theatrical releases (Cracknell). In these examples, serialization was linked by paratext, such as the *Back to the Future Part II* cards' "CONTINUED ON CARD #" blurb. There are even narratives native to candy. In 1965, Cadet in the United Kingdom released *Doctor Who and the Daleks* cards that told an original story, bundled with "sweet cigarettes" ("Cadet Sweets: Doctor Who and the Daleks"). The American examples here used actual frames from their TV series and films, while the *Doctor Who* story consisted of painted, original illustrations with captions. Perhaps this is best considered a comic book released in the form of individual panels attached to gum. Finally, the infamous *Mars Attacks* of 1962 (also Topps) went one better, selling itself on its own violent, sexual, and tasteless content with no tie-in to another property. The remediation of film and television into the form of bubblegum cards highlights the fragmentary nature of bubblegum narratives and the use of narrative suspense to drive collecting.

For bubblegum comics like Pud and Bazooka Joe, however, there is no element of serialization in the story, indicating that narrative serialization was not obligatory in the context

of gum. When Bazooka's imprint Blony gum carried Archie comics in the 1950s, the kind of Archie stories adapted were "half-page" Archie strips, already the briefest of Archie stories.

For example, Figure 44 adapts a story that appeared over half a page in *Archie's Joke Book Magazine* #3 (Summer, 1954). While longer Archie stories could have been turned into serialized narratives in gum, the kinds of Archie stories published with gum were the kinds that most resembled Pud and Bazooka Joe. The physical affordances of candy premiums allowed for serialization, but the majority of cases seem to be completely self-contained. Furthermore, there seems to be a sharp divide between non-serial humour and serialized adventure, suggesting that, as in the *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who* cards, the purpose of splitting a narrative between the wrappers of different pieces of candy is to create cliffhangers. *Mars Attacks* is an anomaly for telling an ongoing storyline while also clearly deriving pleasure from the grotesque dark humour of each individual card. In premium narratives, a distinct division exists between serialized and non-serialized narratives such as *Dubble Bubble Funnies*.

The division between serialized and non-serialized premiums is further reflected in their physical differences. Trading cards, packaged along with candy, are made out of different, thicker cardboard than the wrappers encasing them and the candy. Their construction distinguishes them from the materials of packaging, and indicate that they are meant for preservation since they are harder than the rest of the packaging. Since the 1950s, trading cards have also typically been larger (two and 5/8 inches by three and 3/4 inches) than bubblegum comics, though they began as the same size (Jamieson 90). In terms of reading, the physical construction of cards promotes a protracted period of assembling the story, rather than repetitious encounters in which the "story" is meant to be discarded. Candy comics seem to invariably be

printed on material that is identical with the wrapper, and in some cases literally is the wrapper. The waxy paper narratives are materially different than the cardboard narratives.

In contrast to periodicals published at regular intervals and numbered sequentially, the only form of serialization attached to these bubblegum comics are the numbers attached to each comic. These numbers do not seem to sequence the comics in any particular order. Where trading card narratives have numbers attached to make sense of the sequence of events they portray, bubblegum comics are numbered in an altogether mysterious way that seems to only indicate the order in which they were published. The suggestion seems to be that these numbers fix the uniqueness of each comic, and imply the practice of collecting—or, since it requires more purchases, marketing. The idea of collecting and exchange is important the history of candy wrappers, including Topps and Dubble Bubble, and analogous operations such as the Popsicle Pete Points⁸⁷ attached to the popsicle sticks of Popsicle brand popsicles. The fact that bubblegum comics could be exchanged for “prizes” indicates a further complication to the consumer network. Topps and Fleer offered items as “prizes,” turning a purchase into a competition, but also turning the wrappers of their own product, which they had already turned into premiums, into currency. Unlike Topps’ card series, the original reason to collect bubblegum comics was not because they told a story but because a company would accept them in exchange for further premiums. Some stories, told in cards and attached to bubblegum, are valued as stories but bubblegum comics are positioned with artistic value as an afterthought.

There are premium narratives that have been salvaged and rehabilitated from their status as trash. In addition to *Mars Attacks*, the Topps *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* cards have been collected

⁸⁷ Popsicle Pete was created in 1939 by the advertising team of former animator Woody Gelman and Ben Solomon, who would later, as employees of Topps, conceive of the basic premise of Bazooka Joe (Topps 55).

in hardcovers by Topps in conjunction with art publisher Abrams ComicArts. So has *Dubble Bubble Funnies*' rival *Bazooka Joe*. While *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* seem to gain their prestige from the work to which they are attached, *Mars Attacks*' cult status is related to the cultural value of original illustrator Wally Wood, along with penciller (and fellow comic book artist) Bob Powell, and the painter Norm Saunders (a former pulp cover illustrator), to say nothing of the 1996 Tim Burton film. The *Mars Attacks* hardcover contains an essay by Saunders' daughter, as well as numerous sketches by Wood.⁸⁸ The role of the individual artist in each of these cases is significant, since the recovery of premiums as valuable often follows the same procedure as occurred to the work of Carl Barks, where the auteuristic genius of an artist is used to grant "exceptional" or "subversive" status to a subset of examples. The role of Art Spiegelman's work for Topps is epitomal: his work for Topps on *Wacky Packages*⁸⁹ and *Garbage Pail Kids*⁹⁰ receives significantly more attention than the *Bazooka Joe* strips he wrote, which were printed on lollipops (Topps *Bazooka Joe* 127). This fact suggests that it isn't simply the presence of candy that hampers works from considerations of value, but rather that the work itself needs to have some distance from obvious consumer culture. What unites *Mars Attacks*, *Wacky Packages*, and *Garbage Pail Kids* is an idea of subversion, of consumer culture being used as a medium for distasteful, unappealing messages. By transcending the category of premium, the salvaged premiums enhance the notion that the "other" premiums are particularly valueless.

⁸⁸ Powell's pencils do not survive, since Saunders painted directly over them.

⁸⁹ Originally printed by Topps between 1973 and 1974, *Wacky Packages* were hundreds of stickers, packaged with bubblegum, spoofing commercial packaging—specifically 'advertising cards' of the nineteenth century which displayed the shape of products on one side of the card (Spiegelman 2008 7). Spiegelman wrote and drew gags for the series, which were painted by Norm Saunders (Spiegelman 2008 7).

⁹⁰ *Garbage Pail Kids*, originally conceived of by cartoonist Mark Newgarden as a *Wacky Packages* spoof of contemporary toy license the Cabbage Patch Kids, presented hundreds of paintings of "impossibly grotesque creatures" (Spiegelman 2012 7) in stickers packaged with bubblegum in 1985 and 1986. As Spiegelman points out, his anonymous work for Topps coincided with the earliest book publication of his Holocaust graphic novel *Maus* (Spiegelman 2012 10).

In the context of bubblegum comics, the key fact of authorship is that Bazooka Joe was designed by advertising artist Wesley Morse.⁹¹ Though nowhere near as famous, Morse's reputation has undergone a process comparable to Carl Barks over the past three decades, one that can be seen to be directly connected to Spiegelman's own relationship with trash culture. As identified by Spiegelman (Adelman 7), Morse is essentially the only artist known to have worked on Tijuana bibles.⁹² The existence of Morse as an author function—as an organizing narrative principle to let us see “behind the scenes” shapes Bazooka Joe's 60th anniversary collection. Did the name “Wesley Morse” in some way afford for a collection and celebration of his work? The inclusion of a memoir by Morse's son Talley Morse, linking Bazooka Joe to personal experiences of the artist, suggests that it did. To further the use of the author function, the *Bazooka Joe* anniversary retrospective book contains reminiscences by many artists (such as underground cartoonists Jay Lynch, R. Sikoryak, and Howard Cruse) who worked on *Bazooka Joe* and who are recognizable from other contexts. The cultural status of Bazooka Joe is higher than that of Pud, partially because *Bazooka Joe* can be made into a book.

By contrast to the function of Wesley Morse, for the history of Pud we have almost no information.⁹³ In the beginning, Pud was illustrated in longer ads by cartoonist Ray Thompson.

⁹¹ American newspaper cartoonist and promotional artist Wesley Morse (1897-1963) is most famous for Bazooka Joe and his 1940s logo for New York's Copacabana nightclub, the latter exemplifying his risqué drawings of women (Topps *Bazooka Joe* 52).

⁹² Tijuana bibles don't include attribution. Standard practice is to identify artists by artistic similarities and give them nicknames such as “Mr. Prolific.” The other named Tijuana bible artist, Ainsworth “Doc” Rankin, is given by sexologist Gershon Legman; Adelman 2004 explains his identification of Wesley Morse who, however, had died decades earlier (in 1963).

⁹³ Due to a lack of archival information, the origin of the name “Pud” is unknown. The surprising slang definition links “pud” to male masturbation, as an abbreviation of “pudding” in the phrase “pull your pudding” (Dalzell and Victor 1551). In this capacity the word “pud” has been traced back to the 1940s in the United States (Green 341), but Allen Walker Read's book of American graffiti has an example of the phrase from 1928 (Read 71). Read suggests that “pud” is short for the Latin *pudendum*, the genital organs, while Henke (203) suggests that “pudding” was associated with the penis because of the British use of the word “pudding” to refer to (phallic) sausages. The double entendre of the bubblegum character's name was known to readers at the time, as a sexual parody of Fleer Funnies in underground

The signature of Thompson, a newspaper cartoonist and advertising artist who lived from 1905 until 1982, appears on many Dubble Bubble advertisements starring Pud. It's unclear to me if Thompson also wrote and drew *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, and who designed the characters. Thompson's papers remain in the archives of Syracuse University, and the status of Fleer's archive is unknown. If Bazooka Joe represents trash that can be recuperated by association with such notable figures as Spiegelman, Morse, and Cruse, Pud has very little cultural capital. Because *Bazooka Joe* can be easily fit into a continuity with the more acclaimed and well-known work of its contributors, *Bazooka Joe* is recuperated in a way that is extraordinarily difficult for Pud. While *Bazooka Joe* returned from the trash through the operations of nostalgia and the association of several famous creators, Pud remains in the cultural sphere of garbage.

The divergent fates of *Bazooka Joe* and *Dubble Bubble Funnies* indicate two historically diachronic ways of considering comic books. *Bazooka Joe* is representative of former "low art" that is now considered valuable, making it an exceptional bubblegum comic. Comic books have been figured differently than bubblegum comics. Despite their origins as premiums deeply embedded in consumerism, they have been, as a form of art, recovered from the trash heap (Beatty 18). In some cases this has been due to collectors valuing comics for rarity rather than artistic value: ironically, the rarest professional comics are editions printed exclusively and assembled hastily to secure copyright, known as "ashcans" because of their intended purpose of being destroyed immediately after securing copyright. In other cases, it has been publishers or academics setting a text as having literary or historical value. Though this recovery hasn't

cartoonist R. Crumb's *Uneeda Comix* of 1970 makes clear. While "pud" has also been historical slang for "the hand of a child" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1933) and the related verb use of "to greet affectionately" (Barrère and Leland, 155), as well as "a fool" or "a young girl" (Green 341), given Pud's original appearance it seems more likely that the character's name refers to "pudge" or "pudgy" in the sense of an overweight person (Dalzell and Victor 1551). Lending credence to this theory is that "pud" was evidently historical Australian slang for a fat person (Green 341).

occurred evenly or consistently, the transformation of comics into cultural capital is a well-trodden path. Comics' imitation of older forms, most notably the novel in the creation of the "graphic novel," as outlined in chapter four, has proved to be a viable way to increase the cultural capital of comics. Bubblegum comics like *Dubble Bubble Funnies* still exist in an unsalvaged state. In their analysis, though Heller and Fink identify food packaging as "the least experimental and probably the most conservative of any graphic design form" (4), they also identify a 1980s/1990s style of packaging they call Post Modern, in which older styles of packaging or other art are sampled to indicate a self-awareness (18). In the case of the packaging style of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the style resembles Heller and Fink's description of 1950s supermarket brands: "bold gothic type, loud primary colors, and friendly (often goofy) trade characters and mascots" (10). This strategy in packaging can be likened to the same move as the "graphic novel," making it all the more notable that bubblegum comics instead traffic in nostalgic designs, for example the very 1950s design of 21st-century *Dubble Bubble* wrappers. Despite the possibility of other packaging strategies, bubblegum comics like *Dubble Bubble Funnies* have not been "recovered" in a way that has reverberated back into the comics.

Complicating this case is comics' history of being considered trash themselves. A rhetoric of trash exists in discussions of comics, usually as "other" to the subject being discussed. For example, in his 1971 history of comics, fan Les Daniels' introduction is followed by a caricature of underground cartoonist The Mad Peck proclaiming "WELL FOLKS, LIKE THE MAN SAYS ABOVE, COMICS ARE SWELL! UNFORTUNATELY, THEY ARE MOSTLY PRINTED ON SLEAZY PAPER THAT FALLS APART IN FIFTEEN YEARS" (Daniels X) as an explanation for Daniels' hardcover collection of comics. This use of "trashy" rhetoric often appears to sympathetic historians to define a portion of comics, typically the majority. For example,

responding to the infamous anti-comics claims of mid-century psychiatrist and activist Dr. Fredric Wertham, author of *The Seduction of the Innocent*, historians Perry and Aldridge disagree but add the revealing compromise that “many shady publishing houses were undoubtedly putting out quantities of sordid rubbish” (Perry and Aldridge 168). Wertham, probably the most important public figure in the comics-as-trash rhetoric of the 1950s, was one contributing factor in the creation of the Congressional Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency’s investigation into comic books, which the Subcommittee described in terms of hygiene: a mission to ensure that the comics placed before children at every newsstand “are clean, decent, and fit to be read by children” (27). Figures within the comic industry adopted this rhetoric: contemporaneously, Helen Meyer of Dell Comics claimed that “We abhor horror and crime comics. We would like to see them out of the picture because it taints us” (qtd. In Nyberg 77). The rhetoric of trash also existed for comics creators. The attitude that, in the words of historian David Hajdu, comics were “a diversion that may serve a purpose for a time but is best abandoned before too long” (193), could also be expressed with the same rhetoric of rubbish as Daniels; Perry and Aldridge; the Subcommittee; and Meyer. From cartoonists considering their comics to be fish wrapping, to fans admitting that most comics are rubbish, to politicians insisting that comics be clean and not tainted, the evaluative words used here indicate a midcentury conversation where people with a variety of relationships to comics, from fans to politicians, could agree that there was something trash-y (and not book-y) about comics, a move that eventually had to be reversed by salvage.

The status of being disposed and then recovered, a process that comic books underwent mostly successfully as they became a respectable art form and cultural capital and that bubblegum comics have mostly failed to undergo, is pivotal to the complicated concept of trash

in a consumer culture such as twentieth century America. Histories and theories of trash (and the related but sometimes distinct concepts of garbage, refuse, and waste) locate the key moment in the history of American trash as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is linked to the rise of consumerism, or the transformation of American society into a consumer culture. As John Tomlinson points out, while humans in all cultures consume, the stakes in the idea of “consumer culture” and “consumerism” is “a culture whose *central preoccupation* seems to be that of consuming” (122). While the material roots of the “consumer revolution” that created a consumer culture in the West go back to the practices of the wealthy in late-eighteenth century western Europe (Strasser 4), the cultural backdrop of these changes is somewhat mysterious. Colin Campbell provocatively argues that by legitimating the pursuit of personal pleasure, Romanticism gave rise to the fantasizing constituting the insatiable pursuit of personal pleasure that requires consumer culture: “In struggling to cope with the necessity of making trade-offs between need and pleasure, whilst seeking to reconcile their Bohemian and bourgeois selves, modern individuals inhabit not just an ‘iron cage’ of economic necessity, but a castle of romantic dreams, striving through their conduct to turn the one into the other” (227). Whatever the cause, Western societies in the nineteenth century saw a dramatic rise in the remnants of production (Scandura 18-19).

In this context, the concept of trash evolved from the Victorian concept of “dust,” which described the residue inevitably accumulated by urban spaces (Strasser 6). The common profession of the dustman revealed that “dust” still had some potential value, and the exigence of dust was that it must be sifted by dustmen for this value. “During the forty or so years around the turn of the twentieth century, mass production and mass distribution created unprecedented quantities of trash that disturbed private citizens and plagued city administrations” (Strasser 17)

Anxieties connected to increasing urban density and mass production led to the newer concept of “trash” as a specifically harmful build-up. Piles of trash were figured “as menaces to public health and as public eyesores” (120). Influenced by the then-popular miasmatic theory of hygiene, Western society largely thought of trash as corrosive to the health of a community. This theory involved a shift in exigence: where dust had to be sifted, trash had to be relocated to a space separate from the community. This imperative has a moral dimension. “Trash” is not merely physically distasteful and dangerous, but creates an exigency that demands it be removed, and to fail to address this miasma is to morally fail the community (Strasser 121). As Carolyn Steedman points out, “Dust is... the opposite principle to Waste. It is about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being going. Nothing *can be* destroyed” (164). In contrast to dust, trash defines value in the same way dirt defines cleanliness. Trash is the remainder or waste of value. Bubblegum comics, for example, are literally the waste of the practice of consuming bubblegum.

Trash functions as a waste in the context of consumer culture. In such a culture, trash is the remainder of consumption, most notably including packaging because packaging is a component of marketing. Paper is particularly significant in discourses of trash because of its use in packaging and other forms of marketing. As Strasser points out, “marketing produced its own ephemera” (171). Tadeusz Slawek theorizes two kinds of waste, both of which apply to consumer trash. According to Slawek, one kind of waste is the undesirable by-product of production itself. This “waste” is “a barely tolerated by-product of making which is hidden on the far margins of society” (10). The other kind of waste is the inevitable shadow of everything that is produced in a capitalist consumer society: “The ever increasing rate of production hides in itself a dark heart of the un-productive: objects must be disposable, must be made in such a way

so that either technologically (due, for instance, to poor quality materials) or culturally (due to insistent pressures of advertisement) they will not only “use themselves up” rapidly becoming their own waste, but they will also tend to concentrate our attention upon their process of getting used-up...” (11). Bubblegum wrapping and *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are the second kind of waste. Both these kinds of waste trouble us culturally because, as Slawek suggests, “in the culture centered upon things they move within a sphere which borders both upon NOTHING and SOMETHING” (10). The significance of waste is precisely that it is carried away rather than destroyed: “To become a part of waste does not mean to be annihilated, to undergo the process of *Vernichtung* [“annihilation” or “destruction”], but to obtain a strange mode of existence suspended between being and not being” (10-11). Rather than industrial byproduct, trash specifically is a consumer byproduct. It is required by a consumer culture, but it questions the basic precepts of value that underpin such a culture. Packaging is in this “strange mode of existence” because it consists of manufactured objects that are perceived to have no value but are essential to the value of consumer products. The Bubblegum comic, like candy, exists in Slawek’s “strange mode of existence” because it is simultaneously garbage as well as valued items to be collected.

Conceiving of trash as something that operates between modes of existence might seem to exclude projects that seek value in trash, such as a literary analysis of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. However, Anna Chromik-Kryzkawska points out a key feature of modern rehabilitations of trash: “What is considered dirty/useless/out of place by a modern discourse is first excluded and marginalized, but then there is a strong imperative to reclaim it into the circuit of usefulness. This process requires, however, certain exorcising procedures which will deprive the excessive of its transgressive qualities” (106). This exorcism and revaluation, which requires a separation

from the sphere of order (typically, the city), consists of a “mark of order and purposefulness” which Chromik-Krzykawska exemplifies by the “rational, sophisticated machinery of sewers” (106). While her example is sewage, I would suggest that “trash” undergoes a similar process in the space of the garbage can or dumpster, and the garbage dump or landfill. Chromik-Krzykawska points out how Slawek’s “strange mode of existence” allows for some trash to move out of the category of trash and back into the realm of value. In her historical analysis of the modernist dump, Jani Scandura locates this impulse in progressive narratives of modernism, particularly the American government’s Depression-era efforts at reclamation and salvage. Paying attention to the affect of “refuse,” Scandura finds that trash is subject to ambivalence even on a theoretical level, casting “depressive modernity” against “progressive modernity” and describing the same division as Slawek in terms of being on a borderland between Lacanian ideas of the symbolic and the real (13). Trash’s unceasing ambivalence comes from the fact that capitalist America needed trash to be created: as Scandura points out, 1930s America is the culture where the marketing philosophy of “progressive obsolescence” was invented (19). Trash implies ideas of depression and failure, as well as opposing concepts such as productivity and recovery, but the category of trash never resolves the tension between these two ideas.

In the case of bubblegum comics, the materiality of the comics always invokes the condition of trash even when they are valued by a mark of order and purposefulness. When *Bazooka Joe* comics were collected into a hardcover reprint book, giving them considerable order and purpose as well as upscaling those comics as cultural capital, anxiety about the concept of trash was not silenced. Despite the fact that this chapter functions as a collection and a kind of salvage of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, it cannot fully bring Pud into the realm of value in the way

that Chromik-Kryzkawska suggests. In an attempt to understand *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the possibilities are limited by an awareness of their unchallenged status as trash.

A number of particular historical trends intersect to put bubblegum comics in the category of trash, but one of the most notable is the discourse around marketing. The key historical moment for consumerism is the decades surrounding the beginning of the twentieth century, making this the key moment in the history of trash, but also the key moment in the history of marketing. Liz Moor locates the first “rise of the brand” to the late nineteenth century, when contemporary developments in manufacturing, printing, transportation, and nationalism made it possible and desirable for consumers to recognize the same, uniform products no matter where they were. Such packaging, to Moor, constitutes a national imagining. However, Moor’s work is among the few⁹⁴ that discusses branding critically without being reductive of marketing’s project. Less critical overviews of marketing⁹⁵ tend to portray marketing as the straightforward manipulations of consumers, often using the language of violence. This is particularly the case when discussing the characters and narratives attached to products associated with children. For example, Norma Odom Pecora writes on media convergence: “What has happened more recently is the acceleration of the process and the takeover of all aspects of children’s play and imagination” (153). *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, as marketing associated with children, are difficult to perceive even in light of Moor’s understanding of brands as having a significant purpose.

⁹⁴ Rodgers and Thorson trace “advertising theory” through the development in the 1970s of the “Theory of Reasoned Action” in which the behaviour of consumers is determined by “multiattribute calculations” (11)—inculcating non-marketing attributes such as social and personal attitudes. More simply, in his catalogue of techniques Stephen Brown acknowledges that “Sometimes [consumers] simply dislike the brand, often for no rational reason” (184). Ellen Seiter develops a compelling feminist metatheory concerning the figuring of female consumers and children as the helpless subjects of marketing.

⁹⁵ The titles of a few diverse works are indicative: Leslie Savan’s 1994 *Sponsored Life*; Heller and Fink’s 1996 *Food Wrap: Packages that Sell*; Simon’s 2006 *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines our Health and How to Fight Back*; Albritton’s 2009 *Let Them Eat Junk: How Capitalism Creates Hunger and Obesity*; Andrews’ 2013 *Hidden Persuasion*.

It is a commonplace to see consumer culture, and especially marketing, as a despicable deception practiced on the weak-minded and vulnerable. In one revealingly mixed metaphor, critic Leslie Savan claims that “advertising now infects just about every organ of society, and wherever advertising gains a foothold it tends to slowly take over, like a vampire or a virus” (1). But marketing is not a simple command that is obeyed wherever it is heard, and more recently scholars have objected to the specific idea that consumers are simply victims of advertising. Ed Schiffer points out that, “if advertising were completely successful at inscribing the consumer, it would not insist on depicting him/her as an at least potentially oppositional force” (290-291): aside from the possibility of lack of comprehension, advertising theory also includes the concept of Agent Knowledge. “Rather than a target consumer passively receiving messages, the target is an active receiver, interpreter, and responder to advertising messages” (Rodgers and Thorson 174). Indeed, what I have suggested in Chapters 2 and 3 happened to Richie Rich’s brand by fans is an example of what marketing theorist Stephen Brown calls “cannibalization” or “dilution” where “additional products or services or branches can undermine existing products” (184). Feminist scholar Ellen Seiter points out that critiques of consumer culture often either focus on consumers who are literally female or children, or they feminize or infantilize all consumers. For example, the subtitle of Benjamin Barber’s 2008 book *Consumed* promises to address “How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole.” Seiter argues persuasively that while consumer culture should be actively criticized, women and children are not simply its helpless victims (Seiter 41), while Daniel Thomas Cook uses anthropological research to unveil the way that discourse over children’s attachment to commercials is a parental anxiety over children’s subjectivity (Cook 118). Marketing for children’s products such as

bubblegum is widely culturally understood to be noxious, which has particular consequences for the dismissal of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*.

A related element of consumer critiques, essentially the same as the infantilizing rhetoric described above, is a (usually implicit) concern that the bodies of consumers will become fat. Michele Simon recounts controversy between health advocates about whether cartoon characters should not be used to advertise food at all, or should be used to advertise only healthy food (139), essentially a controversy over whether manipulation or fatness is ethically worse for children. Even more subtle discourses still imply that the stakes in consumerism are the bodies of consumers: attempting to define “junk food” for example, Robert Albritton declares that “‘Junk food’ is of course a colloquialism, but it is one that can be given a very precise meaning. It is food that is extremely high in sugars, fats and salts, or what are often called ‘empty calories.’ Of course, the ‘junkiness’ of foods is a matter of degree” (3). While this definition of junk food illuminates Albritton’s purpose in critiquing the capitalist food system, it does not acknowledge that the “junk” in food discourse functions very similarly to Slawek’s concept of “trash” precisely in defying classification. To complicate this final category of rhetoric involved in marketing critiques, the notion of fat and fat bodies is culturally constructed and historically contingent: as Laura Fraser points out, American culture came to figure the previously pleasant notion of “fat” as a health risk in the same period in which “dust” became “trash,” as part of the same discourse of hygiene. Fraser is skeptical of appeals to the objective meaning of fat, noting that turn-of-the-century “physicians came to believe that they were able to arrive at an exact measure of human beings; they could count calories... But when the plump figure fell from fashion, physicians found new theories to support the new fashion” (13). Most critical discourses about marketing are excessively simple, preferring to adopt one culturally contingent category

(usually childhood, fat, or as Samira Kawash points out, femininity) in order to critique another (consumerism or capitalism more generally). As John Tomlinson points out in his analysis of cultural imperialism, many critiques that are overtly hostile to the problems of contemporary Western society trade in “a mistrust of the satisfactions of the body over the ‘spirit’” (124), thus replicating a prevalent binary of Western culture. It’s difficult to read marketing texts like *Dubble Bubble Funnies* because, as Tomlinson’s comment implies, there is already a deceptively simple and problematic widespread understanding of marketing in consumer culture.

A similar metacritique to Tomlinson’s was developed by Janice Radway in her 1984 analysis of romance novels. Noting the widespread metaphor of ingestion and consumption when conceiving of participants in mass culture, Radway finds that these kinds of readers “are understood to be helpless in the face of ideology” (6). In her understanding, clichéd critiques wind up doing worse than failing to illuminate the culture:

Like many other mass-culture critics, these students of the romance finally produce their explanations simply by positing a desire in the reading audience for the specific meaning they have unearthed, a meaning that they then declare to have been there from the start. (7)

Radway also notes that the repetitive messages and recurring readings of a text indicate to critics “a more insistent need to receive [the message] again and again” (19). By contrast, Radway calls for a focus on the way that “various groups appropriate and use the mass-produced art of our culture” (222). In her reasoning, this activity reveals that consumer culture is not as an uncomplicated transmission of messages down from the corporate heights, but rather an ongoing negotiation between many parties. While Radway’s readers are women whom she sees seeking to oppose a dissatisfying patriarchal culture, I would suggest that the audience for *Dubble Bubble*

Funnies may be correctly conceived of as children, who have their own reasons to not be satisfied by mass culture and their own negotiation with that culture.

While Radway's critique relies on the distinction between readings of the text (whether performed by her or by her informants) and the patterns of the text's consumption, the case of Pud presents a challenge to this method. It is very difficult to distinguish between Pud and Dubble Bubble. Pud is not an existing character endorsing a product. For many decades, his texts have had no official circulation outside packaging, and they have never existed outside of marketing—except when traded back and forth by consumers after purchase, or found as discarded garbage. Whatever the text of Pud says, and whatever meanings readers can find in it, the physical circulation of Pud has largely determined the reception of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*: namely as hardly being a text at all. The feature that makes *Dubble Bubble Funnies* waste in the Slawek sense, is that it both is and is not text. The undeniable fact of Pud's bounded existence as a part of a brand associates him closely with the realm of marketing, and not with the realm of literature. Whether Savan and Barber are right to figure consumers as child-like victims, they indicate a common view that makes it difficult to see *Dubble Bubble Funnies* as a text. Indeed, it is much easier to see it as trash, because trash requires no systematic, methodical reading.

Material affordance complicates this matter by allowing for *Dubble Bubble Funnies* to be detached and to circulate outside purchases. *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are not actually printed on the packaging of Dubble Bubble bubble gum. They are included within the packaging, and are usually attached to, rather than a part of, the wrapper. There is a historical distinction between texts included *with* a product and texts printed *on packaging*. As Ian Gordon points out, "Comic books owe their existence to the success of comic-art-style advertising in the early 1930s" (Gordon 1998 129), and they specifically began as "premiums" offered as inducements for

shoppers in department stores and gas stations in that decade. Even earlier, in the 1890s, the comic strip sections comic books were based on were conceived of by newspapers as a “bonus” inducement for subscribers. One of the primordial myths of comics culture is the 1931 Gallup poll that, sampling adults in Des Moines, revealed that more adults read the least-popular comic strip than nearly any non-comics content. There exists no evidence that this poll is the reason that the Hearst papers expanded their comic content in the 1930s, but as Gordon suggests, the poll may have simply provided a scientific rationale for actions that made intuitive sense. The idea of the survey emphasizes the degree to which comics were seen as extraneous to the primary purpose of a newspaper. The earliest comic books in the modern format were designed explicitly as premium versions of comic strips, to be offered to customers as an incentive to choose those retailers over others. When they became self-contained items, a shift which coincided with the idea that comic books should contain original material unavailable anywhere else, comic books became advertisements for premiums of other kinds. By being included with packaging, *Dubble Bubble Funnies* becomes the specific kind of text Gordon calls, following marketing language, a premium.

Pud is difficult for theories of comics because the materiality of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* aggressively confronts the reader with the reader’s participation in a particularly disreputable and unvirtuous sphere of consumer culture. Furthermore, what is undeniable about Pud threatens to taint the status that comics have acquired by being the subject of academic analysis. Comics come from a realm of consumerism that is infantilized and certainly figured as viscerally unhealthy in the same terms as candy. Unhelpfully, if we want to treat comics as art, Pud reminds us that the two exist in the same cultural place of kids’ commodities. The concepts of art and literature provide us with ways to study comics aside from being trash, but this pretense

doesn't work with Pud. The material conditions of Pud and Pud's circulation are extraordinarily difficult to overlook. Even *Bazooka Joe* has been collected into hardcover, in a volume whose emphasis on the work of original *Joe* artist Wesley Morse suggests auteuristic logic, but not Pud. To study *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is a confrontation with the part of comics that we easily refuse from the literary conversation. This trashy negotiation between candy, comics, and consumerism forms the backdrop for understanding what happens in the text of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the premium comics, which are about negotiating consumption.

Reviewing the 175 *Dubble Bubble Funnies* contained in my 1-kilogram bucket, it is immediately apparent that the *Funnies*, due to their brief length, strongly resemble a subject for which a critical apparatus does exist, newspaper comics strips. Many of the observations regarding Ernie Bushmiller's *Nancy* in Karasik and Newgarden's⁹⁶ recent intensive study of one *Nancy* strip hold true for the *Funnies*, including their economy of imagery, plot, characterization, words, and structure. To begin with the recurring structures of the *Funnies*, some consist of one panel (Figure 45).

In this strip, reading from right to left and top to bottom, the composition is balanced roughly between Pud and Bigfoot, with Pud's remark in the centre, balanced with the campfire. Pud, whether familiar from other strips or not, is the more mundane element, just as the campfire is also mundane compared to what Pud is saying. This single panel has a rough vertical asymmetry between the more banal Pud and the legendary Bigfoot, as well as a less pronounced diagonal asymmetry. We interpret these "events" as taking place simultaneously, and humour arises from the inclusion of the bizarre into a standard scenario. The juxtaposition is spatial,

⁹⁶ As an employee of Topps Inc. in the 1980s, underground cartoonist Mark Newgarden helped create the Garbage Pail Kids with Art Spiegelman.

because this is a single panel. In some cases, *Funnies* contain two panels. These, the most common *Funnies* configuration, are always formed with a vertical gutter (Figure 46).

The Funnies can also have three panels, always created with one horizontal gutter and one vertical one (Figure 47). Gutters, the space in between panels, have been imagined as the construction that encourages the reader to infer what has happened in between two images in a process theorist Scott McCloud calls “closure” (McCloud 63). The horizontal line between the first two panels of #25 implies a different function: not only is it a thin line with no space between images, but it is obviously different than the vertical gutter elsewhere in the strip. Readers may find panels divided by only a line to “feel” closer together when juxtaposed with the break of a gutter. Since time passes between the first two panels, and the characters take actions (Pud walking away to catch Daisy’s pitch, Daisy winding up) between both kinds of gutters, it’s difficult to understand the distinction between the two kinds of gutters.

Sometimes *Dubble Bubble Funnies* have four panels (Figure 48). Four panels can be created with these even panels, each a quarter of the strip, or by the subdivision of a “quarter” panel (Figure 49).

In my particular bucket, there were no examples of this *Dubble Bubble Funny*, #22, the only example of this particular configuration in the *Funnies circa 2017*. The two-panel structure is predominant both in the complete 60 *Funnies* and in the random sampling in my kilogram bucket. The two-panel structure seems to be default even in multiple-panel *Funnies*, all of which have a significant gutter running vertically in the centre of the strip regardless of how many panels it has. Even the evenly-divided four panel strip such as *Funny #29* only uses black lines horizontally and a white gutter vertically. The structure is notable because it has a discernible effect on the joke style of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. See #17, another strip randomly not present in

my bucket (Figure 50). This joke appears to not require the first panel at all, since the information in the first panel (Pud's friend Daisy and the childlike pictures beside Pud's self portrait) are also present in the second panel. It's easy to imagine a single panel version, which like the Bigfoot strip (#9) above, would balance elements on opposite sides of the image. However, the way this joke is structured in the two-panel form suggests a pause between panels, and the use of a second panel rather than part of a single panel to display a new idea creates a rhythm to this joke, in what I see as the familiar rhythm of the *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. Two-panel strips bear a common structure that is best understood as a separated set-up and punchline. Because *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are physically very small, compositions are often repeated between panels, as seen in two near-identical panels (Figure 51).

Two-panel strips sometimes have only minute visual variations between panels, though another comedic technique makes use of significant differences between panels (Figure 52). In terms of repetition, three and four panel strips always have at least two almost-identical panels (Figure 53).

A panel that takes up one-fourth of the available space is five-eighths of an inch tall and at most one and one-eighths of an inch wide, suggesting that repeating composition is a useful tool for reader comprehension. *Dubble Bubble Funnies* participate in artistic and narrative techniques common in newspaper comic strips: single panel strips usually derive humour from the reader's assumptions about what happened just before or just after the scenario depicted, while two-panel strips use the second panel to subvert expectations raised by the first or to explain the mystery of the first panel. In their work on Ernie Bushmiller's *Nancy* newspaper strip, Karasik and Newgarden centre the idea of the "gag," a brief joke or narrative, and report the workings of Bushmiller's artistic theory. Bushmiller, as reported by Karasik and Newgarden, would begin

with “the snapper” (67)—the last panel of the strip, often a surreal image—and work backwards to explain how it came about, creating a gag out of the journey to the strip’s narrative destination. This concept is useful when looking at Pud’s most frequent structure, the two panels.

For example *Dubble Bubble Funny* #38 (Figure 54). Pud’s second panel comment does the work of explaining his pricing to Daisy, and his comment functions as an explanation of the mystery raised by the first panel, of Pud’s extremely expensive lemonade. The *Funnies* most commonly presents one of two joke formulas. In the first, a common situation or figure of speech invoked in the first panel is followed by an absurd result, as in #46 (Figure 55).

In the other variety of joke (such as #38), a puzzling image in the first panel is followed by an explanation. Both are techniques present in newspaper strips. For instance, Robert Harvey explains this latter technique in the context of a *FoxTrot* strip by Bill Amend: the panels “become a sort of puzzle which is explained by the last panel” (131). This is an apt description of *Funny* #2 (Figure 56). The mystery-or-puzzle joke is significantly less common than the absurd-result joke in this bucket of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*.

The *Funnies*, similar to strips like Bushmiller’s *Nancy*, have very little plot. As Karasik and Newgarden observe, “Emotional depth, social comment, plot, internal consistency, and common sense were all merrily surrendered in Bushmiller’s universe to the true function of a comic strip as he now unrelentingly saw it: to quickly and efficiently trip the “gag reflex” of his readership on a daily basis” (62). Most characters (including Pud) are typically unnamed, and most strips minimize narrative even within the events they recount. For example, #9, the Bigfoot panel, affirms this paradigm by using an unseen narrative for humour: as in many single-panel newspaper “strips,” the joke is the implicit events that take place before the ones narrated, so the reader is compelled to imagine an outlandish series of earlier events which resulted in the

depicted situation. The assumption is that whatever series of events led to Pud roasting marshmallows with the mysterious primate is funniest in the reader's imagination. The fact of *Dubble Bubble* as a sequence of randomly-distributed strips not connected to each other emphasizes the limits of its narrative, since if *Dubble Bubble Funnies* told a tale spread over dozens of comics the reader might never encounter all its constituent parts. In bubblegum comics, the same logic of the newspaper strip's extreme ephemerality is at work, but even more emphatically. Karasik and Newgarden make this point about *Nancy*: "Like every last one of them, it was intended to be read once, discarded with the rest of the newspaper at the end of the day, and forgotten" (Karasik and Newgarden 72). Although narrative can be sustained over a period of time in newspaper strips, since a reader may be assumed to read the same newspaper every day, it is also the case that a strip needs to be able to stand alone as a coherent event. That is, a reader should be able to pick up a newspaper and more or less engage with the story without background information. A consumer of *Dubble Bubble* may or may not read the *Funnies* and may or may not chew gum every day; the *Funnies* thus operate within a discontinuous narrative (things that happen to Pud), without being part of a story per se. Therefore, the purpose of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is not to tell stories but rather to circulate gags.

This purpose is further defined by a noticeably limited number of jokes. The highly formulaic nature of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is enhanced by the extreme repetition of the comics collectively. In 175 random comics unevenly selected from 60 possibilities, some comics repeat many, many times. Outré elements such as Pud meeting Bigfoot or posing as a superhero seem underlined by the banal subject matter of most strips. For the most part, the matter of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is the same as *Nancy*, what Karasik and Newgarden call "basic, iconic, coin-of-the-realm truisms," "popular conventions" and the "schema of an entire culture": "Functionally,

these no-brainers allowed the strips to be rapidly understood and quickly digested; they helped the gag go down faster, cleaner, clearer” (70). In the case of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, these conventions include stuffed animal tea parties, soapbox derby races, family dinners, lemonade stands, skateboarding, and other fixtures of postwar (white, middle-class?) American youth culture, alongside references to the Internet and mp3s. The milieu is enhanced to archetypal levels by repetition outside of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*: Pud’s life seems to take place in the same place as rival bubble gum character Bazooka Joe; which is the same as nearly-forgotten bubble gum series *Tommy Swell’s Gang*;⁹⁷ all three of which closely resemble Archie Andrews’ postwar Riverdale;⁹⁸ which is itself interchangeable with the settings of *Nancy*, *Peanuts*,⁹⁹ and countless other American comics narratives. As Bart Beaty remarks, “the key to the narrative function of Riverdale is not the idea that it might be an actual place but rather that it could be any place,” although it is also distinctly “the bucolic suburban utopia” (30).

As the two major categories of jokes—the mystery and the absurd result—suggest, Pud primarily traffics in irony in the sense of the pointedly unexpected. #46, where Pud becomes a human pizza, and #25, where a humble Pud asks Daisy to teach him how to throw so hard, are representative of this trend. It might be the case that the writers for Pud are aware of the presumption that these comics are deeply unfunny, and are using irony and outré elements to play with expectations raised by the specific example of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. In the less realistic strips, it seems likely that the writers are playing on the perception that the *Funnies* are

⁹⁷ *Tommy Swell*, designed by an unknown artist, appeared around pieces of Swell gum produced by the Philadelphia Chewing Gum Company at some point in the 1950s (“Tommy Swell”).

⁹⁸ Riverdale is the setting of *Archie* comics from 1941 to the present.

⁹⁹ Written and drawn by Charles Schulz from 1950 until his death in 2000, *Peanuts* depicts the lives of a cast of children in a setting that biographer David Michaelis argues resembles Schulz’s childhood in interwar St. Paul, Minnesota (passim but especially 84-93).

bound to banality. In the more realistic ironic strips, the jokes frequently play on the perception of Pud as a generic boy.

In terms of Pud's character, this play with assumptions leaves him an ambiguous figure of ironic masculinity, the last major category of Pud jokes. Pud blends the character of the boy prankster, familiar in comic strips from Buster Brown onwards, with irony. The irony is one of an incompetent prankster invested in an aggressive masculine identity. #56 is an ironic take on the genre of the masculine superhero, as "Pud the Protector" is positioned as the persona associated with an embarrassing childhood phase. In #25, the ball-throwing strip, if Pud were a different generic character such as an overweight boy (as he was in the 1950s), and were to be beaten by a girl at sports (another "coin-of-the-realm" truism and sexist stereotype), the joke could be seen as idealizing the (absent) fit masculine body rather than subverting the character's chauvinism. The distinction indicates a strain in *Dubble Bubble Funnies* of making Pud the object of humour, raising the question of whether he is meant to be an audience role model. Not all *Funnies* are ironic, meaning that some *Funnies* present unsubverted sexism (Figure 57). Pud is not entirely a role model in these strips, but he is also not an entirely ironic figure.

As in *Nancy*, where the characters have no particular consistent attributes, this inconsistency suggests that these strips have little to no purpose beyond the frivolous gag. Various morals and imperatives—turn the lights off when they're not in use (#39), ask even girls to help when they're better than (#25)—are raised, but their weight is lightened by the strip's lack of consistency. What unites the inconsistent *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is their overwhelming structural predictability. If the first panel has Pud being cocky, the second panel will twist this idea and present a moral; if the first panel presents a moral, the second will twist this message into subversion. What stands out in Pud is less the messages than this structure, which is

particularly noticeable in the context of the relative sameness of the *Funnies*. While the jokes in Pud are more often at the expense of his pranks and his arrogance, those character traits essentially only exist to set up punchlines, or to provide them.

The repetitiveness of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is enhanced by their distribution within the bucket. A 1-kilogram bucket of Original Dubble Bubble contains 175 pieces of gum, each of which are wrapped in an instalment of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. In my bucket, distribution of numbered comics was as follows:

Comic number 2	appeared 14 times.
#7	5
#9	1
#11	30
#16	3
#18	4
#20	17
#25	3
#27	1
#29	14
#33	1

#34	2
#36	2
#38	9
#39	1
#43	5
#45	1
#46	5
#47	39
#52	1
#54	2
#55	2
#56	13

As can be seen from this table, the apparently random distribution of comics produced extremely lopsided numbers. The five rarest comics appear once in the bucket, while the five most common make up 113 of the 175 comics, or roughly 65%. Twenty-three distinct comics appear out of a possible sixty, meaning that this particular bucket has no examples of the majority of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* in the contemporary series. These random numbers underscore the fact that encountering Pud in the form of a bucket full of Dubble Bubble is not really the encouraged material encounter with this text. The 1-kilogram bucket is evidently designed for retailers, bearing the MSRP of 10¢ per stick of gum printed on the outside.

In terms of motifs, in this particular bucket the most common *Funny* was #47 (Figure 58). In this example of the “absurd result” joke, while the raccoons are visible in the first panel, the strip turns out to delve into the fantastical by presenting the raccoons as speaking (and using human body language). The chiasmus structure whereby Pud turns from a human in the foreground to a faceless shape in the background, and the raccoons go from animal faces to human-like speakers, underlines both the similarities (the raccoons are also speaking, and speak about food as humans do) and the differences (food humans might reject could be considered a feast by animals). The subjective value of trash when considered from outside Pud’s taste is humourously exaggerated into the difference between raccoons and humans. Whatever Pud’s mother said in response to Pud’s remark is unimportant compared to the raccoon view on the situation.

The second most common *Funny* in this bucket was #11 (Figure 59). In #11, Pud’s comment indicates a desire for more bubbles, and the second panel indicates that he got what he wanted, to an absurd degree. In the first panel, bubbles (of soap, but looking identical to bubblegum in the *Funnies*) are overflowing the bathtub already, a situation magnified to absurdity in the second panel. Some features of this strip seem required to have it make sense within the milieu of the *Funnies* (Pud’s bathing suit and to some extent his hat, but also his speaking his plans out loud to an inanimate object), but other details are clearly for humorous purposes, such as Pud attributing the desire for more bubbles to Mr. Ducky. The second panel also uses the reader’s imagination by not showing whoever is yelling “Pud” and what might have happened to them as the house filled with bubbles and overflowed. Here the absurd result is an astonishing surplus of bubbles.

The third most common *Funny* in this bucket is #20, in which Daisy has a tea party with Pud's dog. With 39, 30, and 17 instances respectively, *Funnies* #47, #11, and #20 account for nearly one half of the entire bucket. Conversely, the five rarest (which each appear only once) include #9 (Pud's encounter with Bigfoot) and #27 (Figure 60). #27 combines the "absurd result" joke with the ironic undercutting of the banal dialogue in the first panel, emphasizing that reading the first dialogue literally ("what you want") produces, with Pud, an absurd stack of boxes. Pud's comment in the second panel further emphasizes this with understatement: he only "thinks" that this column of junk food taller than himself is everything he needs.

#33 (Figure 61) also only appears once in this bucket. Reminiscent of the Bigfoot strip, #33 shows us the ridiculous end result of a series of events and asks us to imagine both the preceding and subsequent events. Pud's tendencies towards pranks as well as his surprising (within the strip) artistic streak (as seen in #17's cubist self-portrait) come together, again showing the reader a bizarre illustration at odds with the style of the rest of the strip.

The other strips of the five that only appear once are #39 (Pud hoping that lights-out doesn't apply to scary movie night), and #52 (Figure 62).

In #52, the first panel's dialogue is again ironic, but the structure of the two panels is inadequate to fully emphasize how ironic Pud's desire for his tricks to "last longer" will be, without the insertion of a caption indicating that the second panel takes place "later." Narrative captions being quite rare in the *Funnies*, and the second panel presumably always taking place after the first, the use of this caption is evidently to enhance the joke: Pud's hubris in the first panel has had time to completely invert into desperation.

I mention these frequencies of the most and least frequent *Funnies* only to note that the distribution appears random in the sense that frequency doesn't emphasize any particular themes

(Pud's refusal of "healthy" food, for example, is the subject of both the most frequent and rarest comics in the bucket), though rarer structures could be minimized by it: of the three possible single-panel strips, only two appeared in my bucket, and each of them only once. As Gerald Saul notes of an uncut sheet of *Funnies*, each printed sheet contains 81 comics, meaning that there aren't an even number of *Funnies* produced—since there are 60 possible strips, 21 of them are printed twice and are thus twice as common, though of course each bucket is entirely random within this parameter (Saul). Combining this information with the observation that the gum is more likely encountered one piece at a time suggests that Pud is subject to a more extreme version of the readings I identified as possible in *Watchmen*'s serial printing: the themes of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* exist subject to the reader's material encounter with instalments. Every observation I made above about the "themes" of Pud's gags is contingent on encountering them: a reader might never encounter Pud's misogyny being subverted, or see Pud skateboard, and equally a reader might theoretically only ever see Pud roast marshmallows with Bigfoot, leading to three different visions of the character. As Bushmiller once commented of *Nancy*, "Ninety per cent of my strips are just individual gags without any theme tying them together," an estimate Karasik and Newgarden call conservative (62). This simplicity became more pronounced in the strip's history, for "although Bushmiller's true audience was composed of anyone within reach of a newspaper, he came to slant *Nancy*, he once said, 'for the gum chewers'" (66).

The subject of gum itself appears throughout *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. Six of the series of sixty strips are centered around bubble gum. Only two of these appeared in my bucket: #2 (where bubblegum is fed to animals) and #54 (Figure 63).

In #54, the overflowing result of Pud's decision (reminiscent of the soap bubbles in #11) is the punchline because of the characters' aghast anticipation of what is about to happen when the

bubble bursts. Despite bursting bubbles being the key innovation of bubblegum in 1928, the joke here is that Pud was intending instead to create the (ridiculous) bubble gum soup. #54 subverts the “absurd result” formula by setting up an absurd intended result and then showing a result that is more realistic (while still not being realistic). Where #11 showed us the absurd extent of Pud’s desire for more bubbles, this strip asks us to imagine what happens to Pud and Daisy next, imagining the inevitable given the improbable set-up.

A reader might encounter four other *Dubble Bubble Funnies* about bubblegum.

In #50 (Figure 64), bubble gum once again behaves absurdly, not bursting but shattering in the “cold weather.” Once again, the two-panel structure is asserted, making the second panel into a snapper rather than a single moment that asks us to consider what happened. The second panel would work as a strip on its own, but #50 seems to not trust the reader to infer what Pud was intending and what the weather is like, regardless of the visual cues such as his full mouth, the clothing, the pieces of shattered gum, and the snow. It might be that visual cues are less reliable at this size or for this audience.

In #12 (Figure 65), gum is once again absurd, but rather than subverting Pud’s boasting as in #50, the statement in the first panel is absurdly subverted to showcase Pud’s incredible abilities.

#13 (Figure 66), however, is a straightforward example of Pud’s boast being subverted, like #50. Unlike #50, #13 seems to come close to telling the reader how not to use bubblegum.

#14 (Figure 67) is a close variation of #12, where Pud produces an impossible bubble. The absurdity of the gum castle is positioned as an ironic subversion of the character’s remark in the first panel, so rather than showing us a ridiculously ornate bubble being blown, the *Funnies* use

the two-panel structure to make it clear that this is an unexpected response to an innocuous remark.

Considering that the consumption of bubble gum is perhaps the safest assumption for the *Funnies* to make about their reader, it seems worth noting that, of these six, three portray gum being used incorrectly, from the absurd visions of a forest of animals blowing bubbles and Pud's immense stovetop bubble to the more mundane #13, where realism intervenes to spatter Pud's bubble over his face. The remaining three, #50, #12, and #14, portray impossible uses of gum, with the final panel a "snapper" as Ernie Bushmiller dubbed it. Bubble gum appears incidentally in a few other strips (Figures 68, 69, and 70).

It also appears incidentally in #25. Bubble gum, and even the particular properties of bubble gum as opposed to any other kind of treat, can be significant without being the focus of the joke in the *Funnies*. In #36, a bubble gum-based dare could be based in any candy, but in #28, the property of gum to stick to hands (and hair) is an important feature of the (four-panel, and thus longest) narrative. #10 and #25 both portray characters incidentally blowing bubbles, but in neither case does bubble gum serve any, even minor, narrative role. However, in light of a visual narrative, it's worth pointing out that bubble gum is a candy whose use can be portrayed visually with remarkably efficiency, not even requiring multiple panels to establish what's happening. In #25 and #28, bubble gum use is portrayed with a transparent pink bubble floating over a character's mouth. Since #25 isn't about gum in any sense, it seems believable that the gum is simply gratuitous, adding nothing *but* a self-reflexive reminder to the reader about the usage of the product to which *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is attached. #10's visual portrayal is more in line with the common rendering of gum chewing: to wit, Pud's cheek is portrayed as inflated (as it is in #12, #14, and #50), so not just the bubble but the blowing of the bubble is represented.

Gum is also unnecessary to the joke of #10, but the portrayal of gum chewing as a process draws attention to the idea of sequence.

To return to #50, the cold weather bubble, in the first panel Pud declares that what is going to happen next is him blowing a bubble in cold weather. Part of this strip (Pud's mention of cold weather) is redundant given the visual information, indicating that the *Funnies* are trying to minimize the need to reread the strip for visual clues. The mystery of the early panels, or the snapper of the last panel, is not meant to be a protracted mystery but a mystery resolved immediately, especially considering that *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are so physically small as to be difficult not to take in at a glance. Consider what must happen between panels in #50: Pud blows a bubble, which attains an impressive size (the same size as Pud's head, in fact), and then freezes solid, and then partially shatters. Telling this story in four panels (the seeming maximum) could portray more stages in this sequence, but the decision to make the story two panels emphasizes the juxtaposition between Pud's boasting and his ironic comeuppance. The style of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* makes the sequence of events mostly irrelevant. The way *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is about gum isn't concerned with narratives of gum or the practice of using bubble gum, instead emphasizing the spectacle of the bubble. #10 is instructive because it artistically represents an artistic representation of bubble blowing. In the context of the joke, Pud giving Daisy a picture of himself for a birthday present, the fact that the picture includes Pud blowing a bubble is self-reflexive in another way, suggesting that Pud's role as mascot is at absurd odds with his portrayal as an ordinary person. The picture-within-a-picture suggests a self-reflexive way to read the other portrayals of blowing bubbles in the series, namely as a self-conscious representation of the very product bound up in *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. It could be argued that *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is simply taking the opportunity to remind the reader of gum at all times,

but this is manifestly untrue. Not only do other strips focus on foods unrelated to Dubble Bubble, but some strips seem to swerve away from mentions of bubble gum. An example is #27, where Pud picks a stack of junk food out at a store. In this case, not only would bubble gum being one of Pud's purchases not disrupt the joke, it would underline the point of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* if they were meant to be unironic portrayals of Concord Confections Inc.'s desired consumer behaviour. Equally, the *Funnies*' ironic handling of gum has a limit, as in #52, where Pud uses "skateboard glue" to stick to his skateboard. Used bubble gum, of course, is a sticky substance that seemingly might be used to secure a cartoon character to a skateboard. While "skateboard glue" is a real concept, it refers to the glue used in the manufacturing of skateboards, meaning that the gag of this *Funny* involves going so far as to invent a sticky product rather than mention the gluing potential of bubble gum. Overall, *Dubble Bubble Funnies*' portrayal of gum is quite subtle since, as we saw in #28, the *Funnies* are perfectly willing to portray gum as potentially unpleasant. I would hypothesize that the reason bubble gum is not used in #52 is that this would be a non-food use of bubble gum, and would involve portraying bubble gum as trash. The thematic priority of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is consumption, not gum.

As would be expected of 60 joke narratives set in the twenty-first-century industrialized world, characters are often portrayed in the act of consuming products. #38, Pud's lemonade stand, is particularly interesting in the material context of bubble gum comics (and not only because it mysteriously contains a self-reflexive Fun Fact). The strip fits into the gag pattern described above of a mystery in the first panel resolved in the second. Though one suspects this could also be a single-panel strip, the affordance of two panels is to have a panel where Pud's tremendously overpriced lemonade stands without explanation or doubt from passers-by. As with many *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the concept of irony is useful, as once again Pud has taken a

concept to an absurd degree without realizing it. Clearly, the point of this strip is that marking the price of lemonade up severely doesn't make it taste any better. The point might be underlined if the reader's encounter with Pud also included #44 (Figure 71).

In #44's portrayal of fresh-squeezed orange juice, part of the joke is the simple though messy process by which fresh juice can be extracted. However, my suggestion that #38 treats Pud ironically should not obscure the fact that #38's message about the overpriced lemonade is far from ironic when applied to Dubble Bubble itself. Could there be a more appropriate message than "price doesn't equal quality" for a comic strip found only wrapped around a piece of gum that retails for 10¢ per piece? Encountering this same message in different consumer contexts would change its implications. A reader encountering this joke for free, for example spray-painted on the side of a public wall, would take it differently than if it were an enormously expensive oil painting. In the context of cheap bubble gum, and *Dubble Bubble Funnies'* printing on paper that is literally the same as the wrapping it comes in, the message seems inextricably connected to the concept of marketing. If they weren't attached to a product, and specifically bubblegum, these themes wouldn't seem as significant; for one thing, the theme of candy wouldn't register as marketing.

The marketing/theme of consumption interacts with the theme of Pud's wastefulness, as in #11, where he floods the house with bubbles from a bubble bath. In #11, the joke is the extent of Pud's excess (structurally the same joke as #27). In #39, where Pud is told to turn the lights off when he's not using them, the joke shares some thematic similarities. Told to "help the planet" in this way, Pud says that he hopes this rule doesn't apply to scary movie night. Because the first panel involves Pud being told a moral about consumerism, the standard structure of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* requires Pud's response to be irreverent. Another strip presents a similar

structure of asserting a moral about consumerism (and trash disposal) but instead uses the two-panel structure to present Pud as incompetent (Figure 72).

The suggestion in #48, that Pud is the reason that care should be taken with waste disposal, and this unbeknownst to himself, unites several other strips. *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, though it presents Pud's antics for our amusement, makes it possible to see these ironically, particularly in light of other strips—again, a highly contingent possible reading. The small size of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, the simple structure of the drawing, the material style of its circulation, the product and pricing it is associated with, all combine to indicate that the themes of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are ambivalent because they aren't supposed to be coherent. The suggestion is not that one should collect all 60 *Funnies* because only then will a reader learn the “real” message of *Dubble Bubble Funnies*. Like *Nancy*, the characters in the *Funnies* are not intended to display consistent characteristics. In the case of these gum comics, the matters that recur are given a new significance because Pud is not only, like *Nancy*, disposable and intended to convey gags, but because unlike newspaper strips, *Dubble Bubble Funnies* are packaging. The material form of *Dubble Bubble Funnies* is not just ephemeral paper, but waste paper, making the comics' ambivalent portrayal of consumerism unusually fraught.

In his history of the comic book subculture, Matthew Pustz points out that “although there is a history of comics as collectors' items, the extreme commodification of the hobby is fairly recent. In the golden age of comics, comic books were ephemera” (14) and that “the resale value of an old comic is based in part on its condition” (14). Another part of the value of old comics is the unspoken fact that their ephemerality meant that the majority became trash. As mass-produced consumer items, few comics begin as truly rare, and the majority become rare thanks to the subsequent incursions of becoming-garbage. The idea of trash is important to the culture of

comics because, as an absence, it defines the values of the present objects, making them existing copies rather than just copies. This scarcity is intimately related to the fact that comic books were and are rarely printed to survive for long periods. But the idea of trash still informs comics as objects of reading rather than collecting. As Ian Gordon says, “It is the very ubiquity of comics that gives *Maus* its narrative power. Which is to say, without Mickey Mouse there would be no *Maus*” (Gordon 1998 157), a remark that is less direct but equally true when applied to *Dubble Bubble Funnies* and any comic valued as a book. Just as ads are not simply impositions that interfere with the “real” stories of Carl Barks, and the hostile reading of Richie Rich is not really a misreading, the idea of trash is not simply a tragic flaw in the materiality of comics. Instead it is a consequence and a reminder of comics’ deeply embedded history in twentieth-century American consumer culture. The existence of bubble gum comics demonstrates that comics are in a sense, like bubble gum wrappers.

Conclusion.

Reading Comic Books

Speaking of his time owning and operating a comic-book store in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, from 1978 through 1989, comic book writer Tony Isabella remarks that “My most enthusiastic customers for Richie Rich comics were middle-aged black women” (4). To Isabella, the seeming contradiction between “this most Aryan of comics characters” and his customers prompted him to ask these women about the appeal:

These ladies loved their Richie Rich comics on two levels. First, and most obviously, they absolutely got and relished the humour of the absurd displays of wealth seen on virtually every page of every Richie Rich story. It was fantasy wealth and not something to be envied in the slightest. More importantly, they loved that all that money meant very little to Richie. What was important to Richie were the same things that were important to them: family and friends (Isabella 4).

They went to work most every day to provide for their families and they would do anything for friends. They saw themselves in Richie and Richie in themselves.

In this tantalizing and all-too-rare record of how people *read* comics, we can see without too much effort the cultural ideology that resolves the racial and classed distinctions: the higher value placed on friends and family than on material wealth. A further contradiction reveals itself: as Isabella indicates, his customers went to work to provide for their families, very much unlike inheritor of fabulous wealth Richie Rich. Furthermore, of course, Isabella’s customers are just that, his customers. Isabella introduces his most intriguing customers by cataloguing his varieties of customers, including his favourites, “workers who came from both sides of the city to buy the comic books that were, in many cases, were [sic] their favourite form of relaxation... Harvey

was publishing over a dozen Richie Rich comics and digests every month and these ladies were buying them by the fistful” (3). As any good perusal of Darnton’s communication circuit would remind us, these transactions are not simply interactions between readers and the makers of Richie Rich: Harvey Comics and Isabella himself occupy important stations along that circuit as publisher and bookseller respectively.

Since its origins in the *Annales* school of social history, Book History has sought to connect case studies of publications, authors, and retailers to the overall culture in which those case studies took place. As Regis Debray notes, because “historians of ideas... having tended to concentrate on textual analysis, those who take up sociocultural history have, in place of that, turned more recently to the history of the book” (112), but he also records that book historians like Darnton now wish to move from the history of ideas to the history of communication, and that “it becomes necessary to move from the history of ideas to that of meaning if we want to take into account the broad spectrum of all flows of information that can circulate, in both directions, between the man in the street and the Great Author, taking such forms as pamphlets, rumours, songs, common reports, tracts, lampoons, caricatures, word of mouth, leaflets, and satires” (112)—the milieu of the early modern equivalents of the comic book. I have found comic books to be so understudied as having materiality that in the chapters of this dissertation it was necessary to spend a great deal of time establishing the foundation of each case’s history rather than relating them each to what the *Annales* school would call society’s *mentalité*, a culture’s world-view.

My overall argument, seen in all four chapters, has been that the portrayal of material value in the text is confused by the materiality of those texts. I would never argue, in the face of evidence, that *instead* of seeing Richie Rich as an unsympathetic, smug monster, readers actually

saw him as a good-hearted adventurer wryly plagued with wealth. Instead, both readings coexist, and are given emphasis by some particularities—I suggest that actual *readers* of Richie Rich such as Isabella’s customers would be much more likely to see Richie as an intentionally ironic figure for whom wealth is not ultimately very important; readers who were reached by the ramifications of Ernie Colón’s realization that money gets boringly repetitive. On the other hand, readers primarily aware of Richie as an iconic brand would perhaps only see him revelling in wealth for decades on end, and be more inclined to use the character as a caricature of the undeserving wealthy. In the case of Barks’ Uncle Scrooge McDuck, the change has been chronological: a reader encountering “Back to the Klondike” in the handsome Fantagraphics hardcover of 2012 is primed to appreciate the story as a moral model for Scrooge’s prizing of love above money—within reason. But again, it was entirely possible for a reader in 1953 to see the story that way, if a little less likely thanks to poor quality of the 1953 printing; and this is all to say nothing of the 1977 printing in which ads emphasize how little the reader is in Scrooge’s position. For *Watchmen* and *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, coherency itself is at stake, and while *Watchmen* is in the custody of a publisher deeply invested in forging a psychological-historical classic that stands above the genre, the other ways to read *Watchmen* still exist. *Dubble Bubble Funnies* has not yet had the fortune to be revalued by its publisher or by fans, but a key part of that would be resolving the text’s incompleteness and lack of a coherent stance on value within and around the pieces of gum.

What does this argument say about twentieth century American comics, and about the *mentalité* from which these comics originated? Pierre Bourdieu posited in *Distinction* that “Intellectuals and artists have a special predilection for the most risky but also most profitable strategies of distinction, those which consist in asserting the power, which is peculiarly theirs, to

constitute insignificant objects as works of art or, more subtly, to give aesthetic redefinition to objects already defined as art, but in another mode, by other classes of class fractions (e.g., kitsch). In this case, it is the manner of consuming which creates the object of consumption, and a second-degree delight which transforms the ‘vulgar’ artifacts abandoned to common consumption, Westerns, strip cartoons, family snapshots, graffiti, into distinguished and distinctive works of culture” (279). I would suggest that what a study of the varied fortunes of comic books reveals is that not just any “strip cartoon” can be turned into distinguished and distinctive works of culture—the vulgar artifact must have an ambiguous value in the first place, and that ambiguity must be altered as part of this redefinition. In other words, the unfixed portrayal of value within comic books, such as Barks’ ambivalent Scrooge or *Watchmen*’s investment in street-level comics, is precisely what has allowed comic books to be the subject of their enormous value transformation in American culture since the 1950s.

At the same time, ambiguous values are not enough. In much the same way that the transformation of comic books has prompted the remediation of comics into the new form of the graphic novel, maintaining a textual message while radically altering the material context, the messages of some comics have left them unable to remediate with anything like the same level of success. Bourdieu’s strategy of distinction has not functioned for *Richie Rich* or *Dubble Bubble Funnies*, and it is difficult to imagine that it could. The difference between these case studies no doubt has something to do with corporate ownership (Warner Brothers and Disney as against the defunct Harvey and the smaller Tootsie Roll of Canada), but more to do with reading practices. A major difficulty for this dissertation has been the enormous paucity of information about how texts have been read. I have tried to supplement evidence of critics’ readings (as in the Barks chapter) with constructions of possible of hypothetical readings as in the possible *Watchmens*,

much later references such as the Richie Rich tweets, and my own distant and close readings. As any book historian would suggest with a survey of Comics Studies, and as many comics scholars have suggested, significantly more work is needed on how people bought and read comics.

As an example, journalist Ryan Holmberg describes a very different *Richie Rich* encounter than Isabella's in his article about the rental bookstores—circulating libraries—of Mumbai. Noting that these rental comics are often physically repaired and refurbished by the owner, Holmberg detects in this material an element of satire: “In place of the wealthy and ingenuous blonde cartoon kid, the covers of some *Richie Rich* issues now feature images of wealthy white people taken from luxury advertisements in British fashion and lifestyle magazines. The ‘Richie Rich’ scrawled on these new covers, sometimes more than once, seems as much a description of the cover images as the content inside” (Holmberg 2013). In my study of *Richie Rich*, the cover images loomed extremely large in importance—but what if a reader came to Richie as an emanation from another country (and indeed, not just *any* other country, but the precise colonizing reason for the presence of English-language comic books, as Shilpa Davé points out (130)), an ambassador clad in photographs of wealthy Britons?

It continues to be my belief that because of their specific history, the material form of comics has a relevance to the history of the book in general. Comic books are a rare example of a cultural category that has, within living memory, become the abject physical form that is the source of texts regarded enormously well by critics and audiences. Comics have as a category undergone a serious shift in cultural capital (in Bourdieu's term), yet this shift has accompanied a large-scale change in physical format. Considering one of the major debates in book history is precisely the nature of a large-scale cultural change—was the shift from manuscript to print a revolution as Eisenstein maintains, or did it have to be constructed gradually as Adrian Johns

argues—a shift as unusual as that of comics, taking place within print culture but recently enough to be reconstructable by diligent application of book history methods, resonates with the field’s major concerns.

Figures



Figure 1: Marvel Comics #1, October 1939.

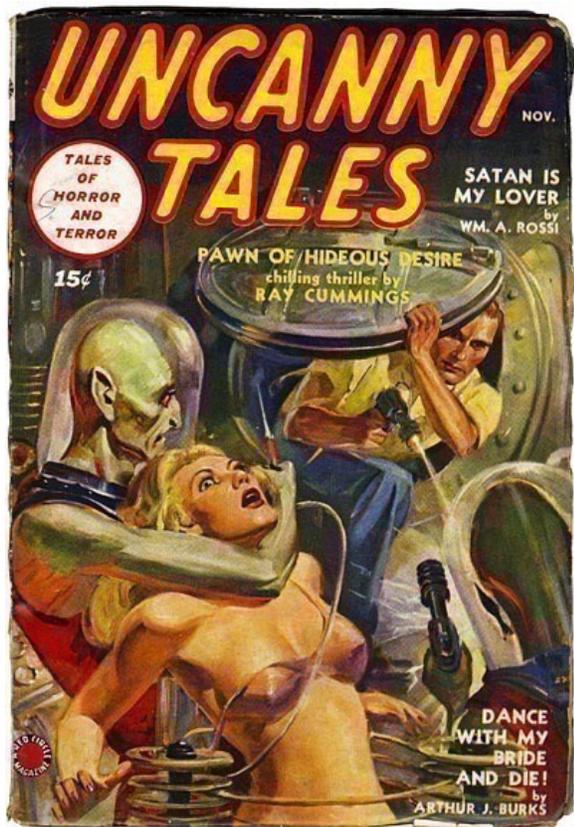


Figure 2: Uncanny Tales November 1939

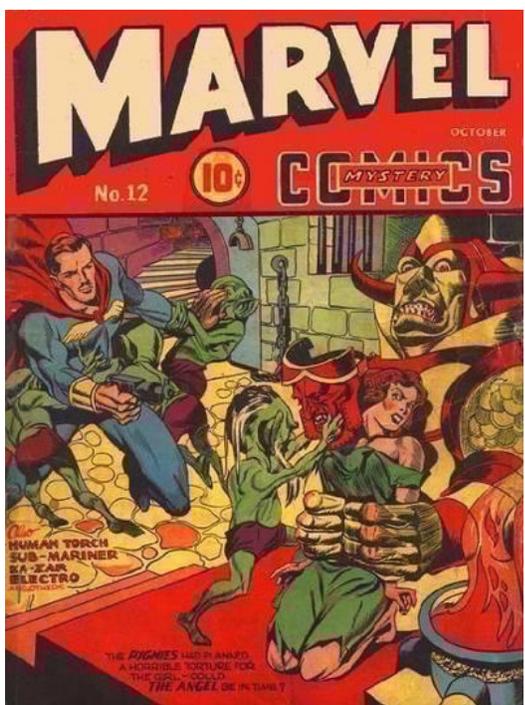


Figure 3: Marvel Mystery Comics #12, October 1940.



Figure 4: Marvel Science Stories November 1940



Figure 5: Detail from the cover of Marvel's Fantastic Four #4, May 1962, the first appearance of the phrase "The World's Greatest Comic Magazine."



Figure 6: Showcase #61, March-April 1966.



Figure 7: Fantastic Four #12, March 1963.



*a letter
to our readers
and their
PARENTS!*

MARVEL COMIC GROUP

HI, FRIENDS:

It has been reliably reported that in England, back in the 18th Century, book stores were called "slop shops of literature," simply because they sold novels. And that was the century in which some of our greatest classics were written; the century of Defoe, who wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, and Swift and his *Gulliver's Travels*. It was also the century of Dr. Samuel Johnson, one of the brightest stars in the history of English literature. And it was Dr. Johnson who most vociferously defended the right of booksellers to sell the new, much abused novels and the right of authors to express themselves in this medium if they desired.

But what Dr. Johnson defended most enthusiastically was the right of the public to read what they wanted to read. And what we are defending is the right of youngsters to read whichever they like of the many, many good, clean comics currently being published.

Just as the critics of the 18th Century rapped the books which are now classics, in the same way there are critics of today, screaming and tearing out their hair, because a new kind of magazine, still in its infancy, is not to their liking. And as in the case of the novel, it is still too early for any man to pass judgment on the comics.

Let these critics of today look to their history. Let them decide if they want to be remembered as the 20th Century counterpart of the people who called Robinson Crusoe "slop".

And let the people of America decide if they want to be swayed by critics exercising premature judgment . . . or if they want to wait and watch, and soon realize that most comic magazines are really good, clean, healthful and entertaining reading matter..

THE EDITORS,
MARVEL COMIC GROUP

P. S.—Remember: Dr. Jean Thompson, School Psychiatrist, Child Guidance Bureau, New York City Board of Education, is now our Editorial Consultant. Dr. Thompson's professional examination of our magazines, as advisor to our staff, (see Page 1) is your guarantee that the Marvel Comic Group magazines are striving to bring you the very best in reading matter . . . and it is also your best argument that no one should ever take away your right to read these magazines.

RED UNIT	BLUE-YELLOW UNIT
ALL WESTERN WINNERS BLAZE CARSON BLONDE PHANTOM CAPTAIN AMERICA CINDY COMEDY COMICS GEORGIE AND JUDY HEDY DeVINE HUMAN TORCH JEANIE JOKER COMICS KID COLT LANA	MARGIE MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS MILLIE THE MODEL NELLIE THE NURSE PATSY WALKER SUB MARINER TEEN COMICS TESSIE THE TYPIST TEX MORGAN TEX TAYLOR TWO GUN KID WILD WESTERN WILLIE
ALL TRUE CRIME CASES COMPLETE MYSTERY CRIMEFIGHTERS ALWAYS WIN FRANKIE AND LANA GAY COMICS IDEAL COMICS JUNIOR MISS JUSTICE COMICS LAWBREAKERS ALWAYS LOSE MITZI'S BOY FRIEND MY ROMANCE OSCAR	

Figure 8.

TABLE VII-5. Circulation and Advertising Rates of Selected Comic Magazine Groups

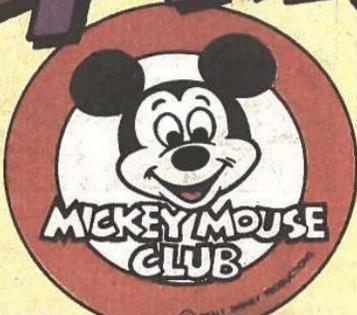
Comic Group	Paid Circulation ¹			Advertising Rates Four Color Page
	Total	Subscription	Single Copy	
Archie Comic Group	4,507,565	—	4,507,565	\$ 8,400
Charlton Comics	2,438,533	6,492	2,432,041	2,300
DC Comics Group	8,014,821	69,104	7,945,717	16,445
Gold Key Comics	3,969,574	—	3,969,574	4,950
Harvey Comics Group	3,297,135	—	3,297,135	6,600
Marvel Comics Group	14,634,089	—	14,634,089	16,365

¹ Circulation figures for Charlton Comics and Gold Key Comics are the groups' average sworn circulation for the six months ending 6/30/77. Figures for the DC Comics Group and the Harvey Comics Group are the Audit Bureau of Circulation figures for the six months ending 6/30/77. All other figures are the Audit Bureau of Circulations figures for the six months ending 12/31/77.

SOURCE: Standard Rate and Data Service, Consumer Magazines, March 28, 1978.

Figure 9.

HEY KIDS! **NEW!** FUN THINGS



FROM WHITMAN® AND GOLDEN BOOKS®

ALL YOUR MICKEY MOUSE CLUB FAVORITES!

LOOK FOR THIS DISPLAY AT YOUR FAVORITE STORE!

WOW! PUZZLES, STICKERS.

NEW STORIES AND, CUT-OUT DOLL BOOKS

PLUS OTHER EXCITING FUN PRODUCTS FROM WHITMAN® AND GOLDEN BOOKS:



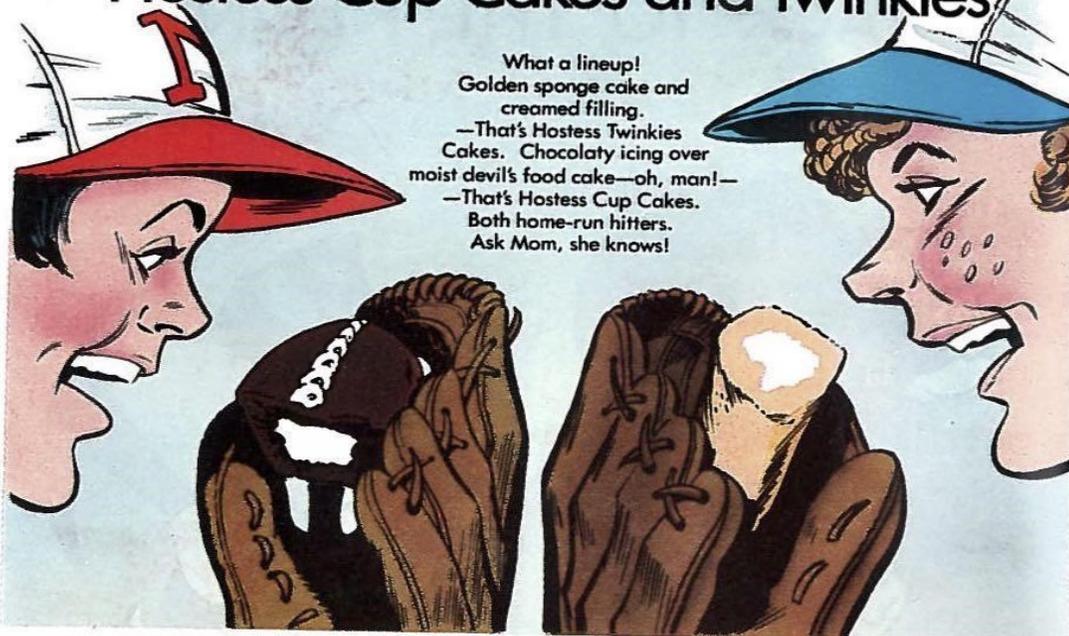
The illustration shows a boy on the left looking at a book, with a speech bubble saying "WOW! PUZZLES, STICKERS." Two girls on the right are also looking at books, with speech bubbles saying "NEW STORIES" and "AND, CUT-OUT DOLL BOOKS". The display is a wooden crate filled with various Mickey Mouse Club merchandise, including books, puzzles, and stickers. A sign on top of the crate says "MICKEY MOUSE CLUB". The background is a simple yellow wall.

Golden and Whitman® are trademarks of Western Publishing Company, Inc.

Figure 10.

ADVERTISEMENT

Hostess® brings you 2 delicious All-Star snacks: Hostess Cup Cakes and Twinkies®

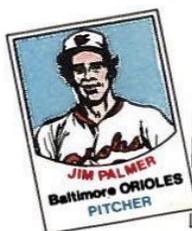


What a lineup!
Golden sponge cake and
creamed filling.
—That's Hostess Twinkies
Cakes. Chocolatey icing over
moist devil's food cake—oh, man!—
—That's Hostess Cup Cakes.
Both home-run hitters.
Ask Mom, she knows!

3 Free Baseball Cards

Collect 'em. Trade 'em.

3 full-color cards printed on the
bottom of every specially marked box of
Suzy Q's, Twinkies Cakes, Cup Cakes,
and other delicious Hostess Snacks.



A total of 150
major league baseball cards full of player facts.

*Available in most areas.
Offer expires August 27, 1977.

* Hostess, Twinkies and Suzy Q's are registered trademarks of ITT Continental Baking Company

Figure 11.

ADVERTISEMENT IRON MAN IN A DULL PAIN!



IRON MAN © 1977 MARVEL COMICS GROUP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
®HOSTESS IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF ITT CONTINENTAL BAKING COMPANY.

Figure 12.



Figure 13.



Figure 14.

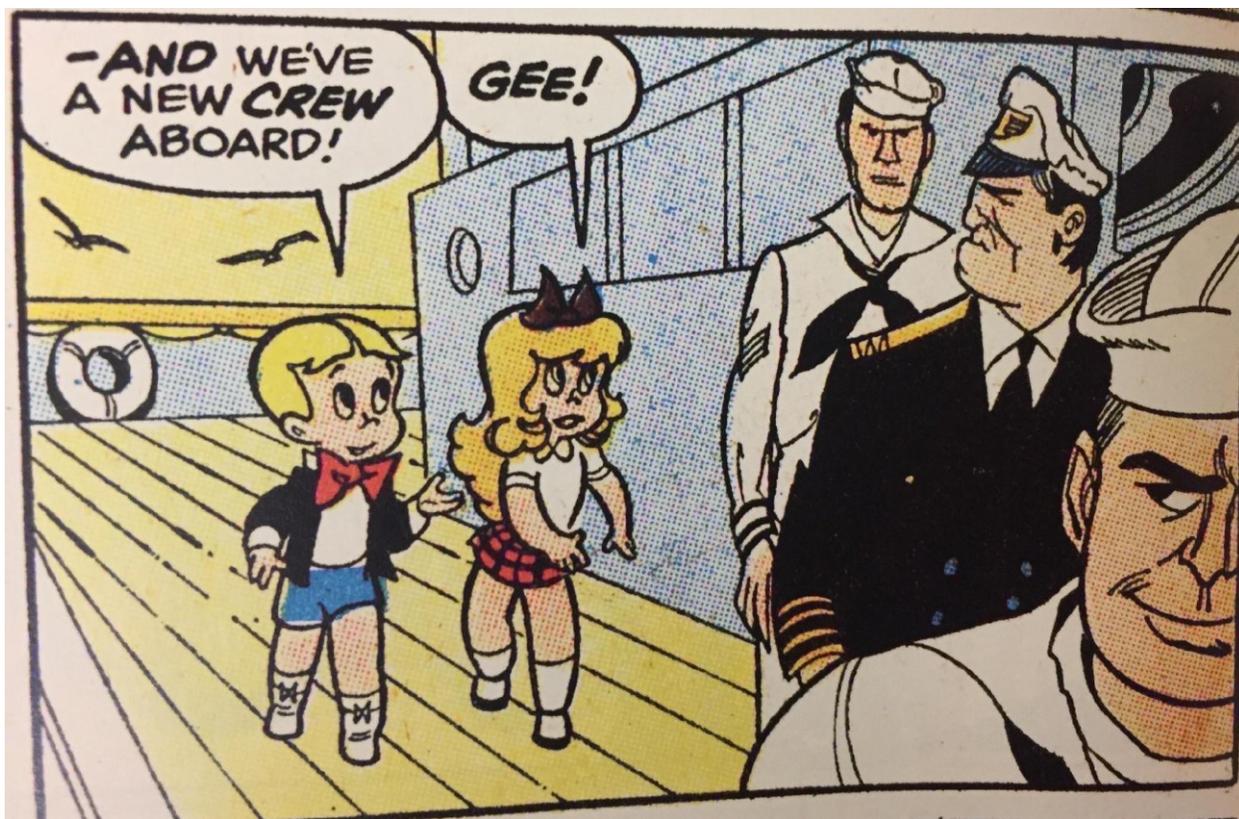


Figure 15.

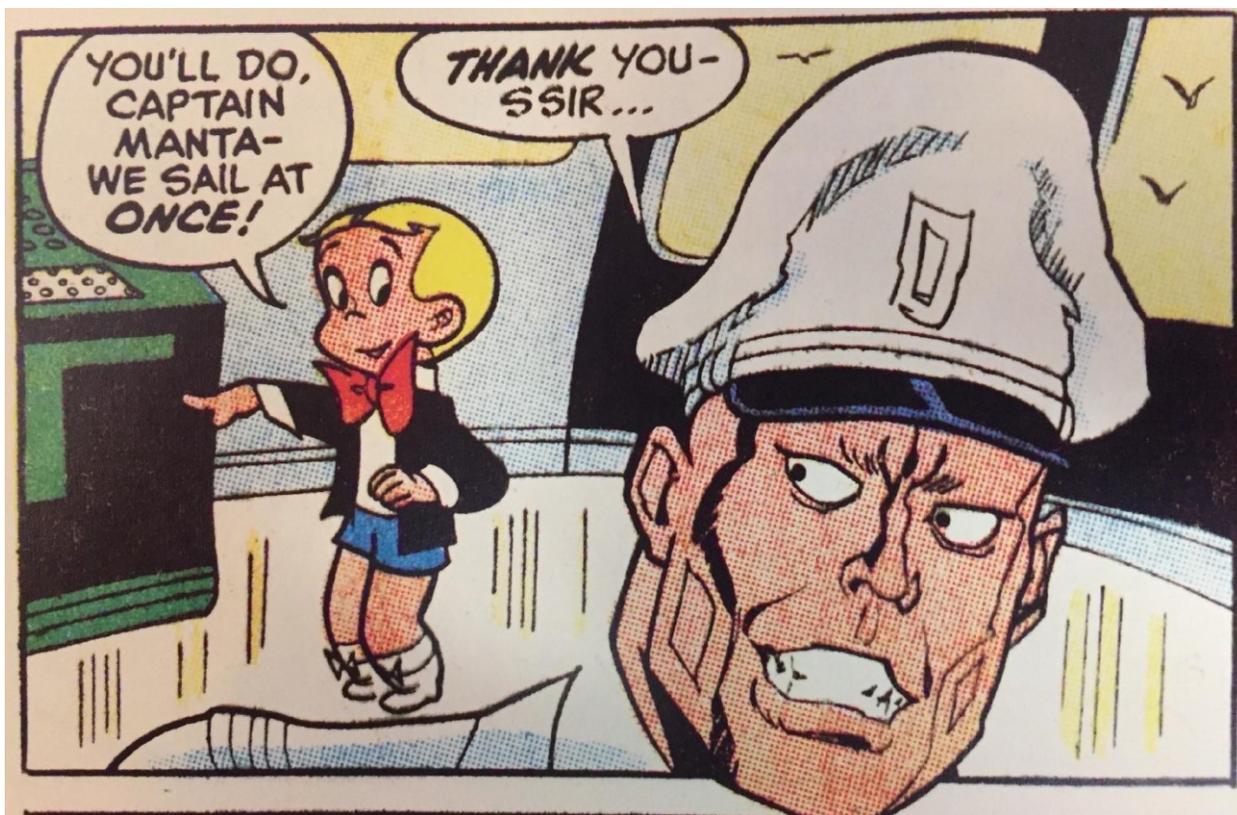


Figure 16.



Figure 17.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20: From *Richie Rich Digest* #37, May 1993.

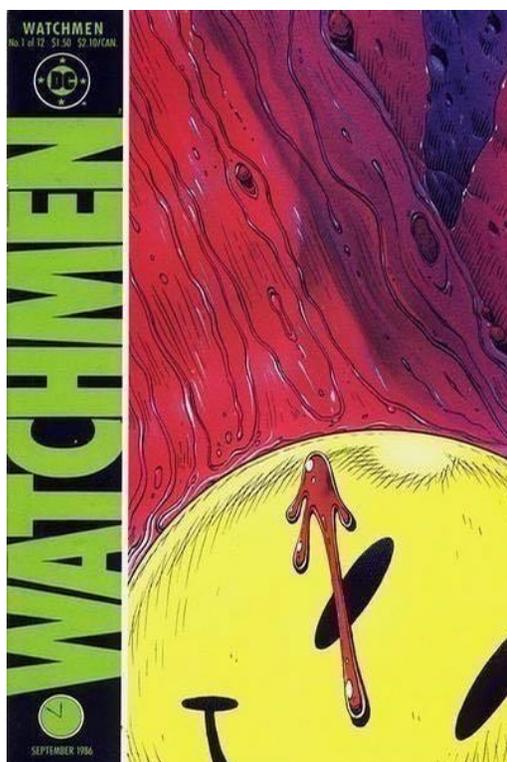


Figure 21: The first issue of Watchmen's original magazine publication.

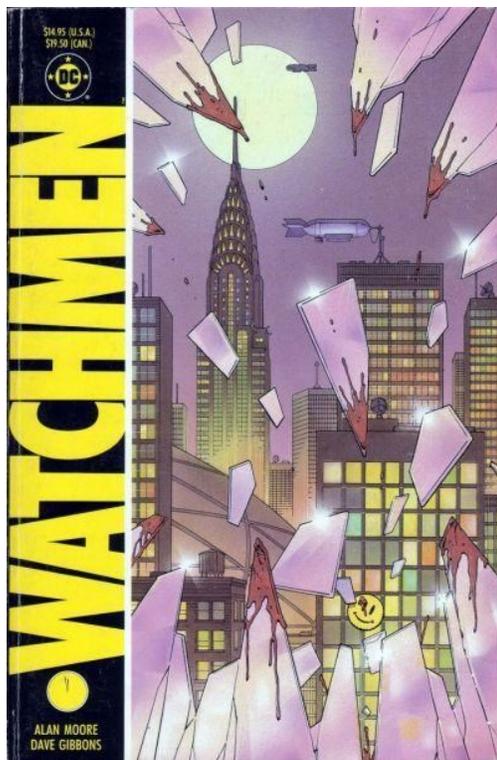


Figure 22: The cover of the original trade paperback, 1987.

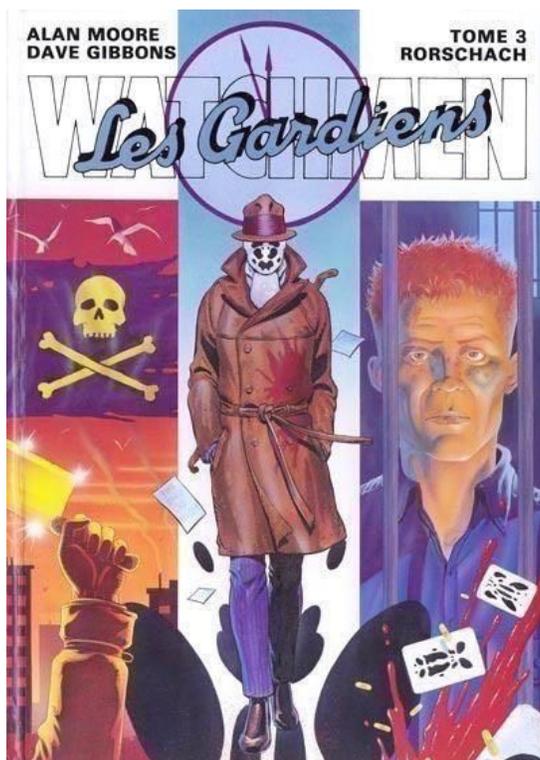


Figure 23: Cover of the Éditions Zenda album of Les Gardiens, Tome 3. 1988.

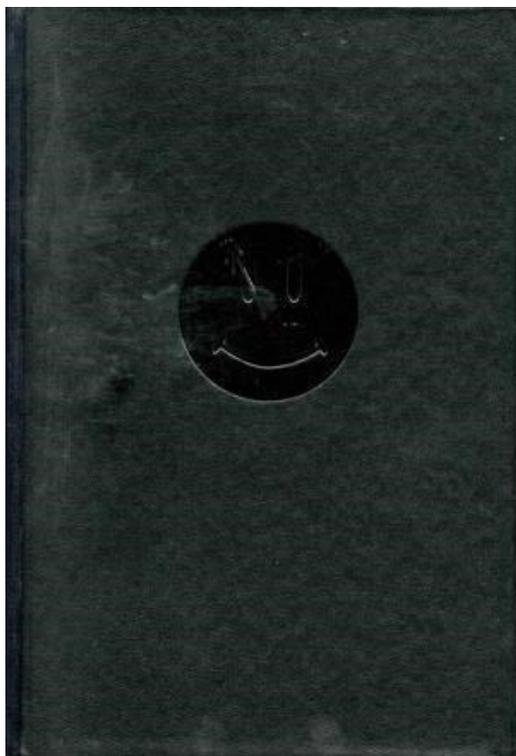


Figure 24: Cover of the Graphitti Designs hardcover, 1988.



Figure 25: The cover of the 11th edition of the trade paperback, c. 1995.

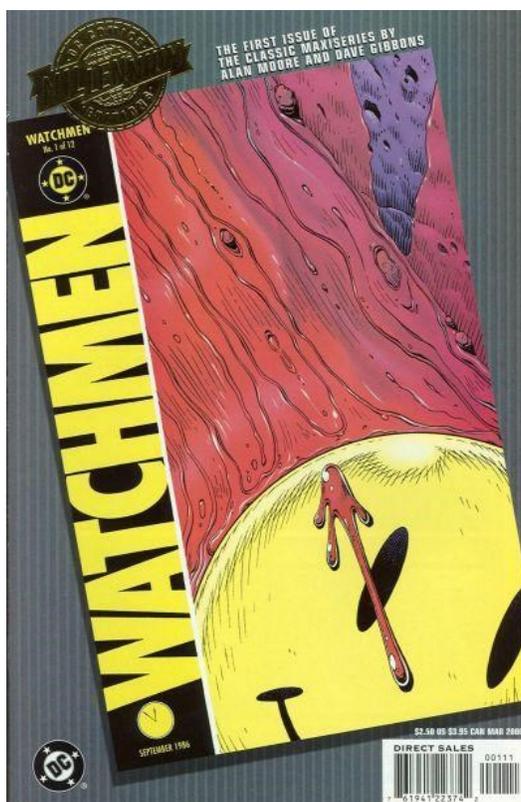


Figure 26: Cover to Watchmen #1, Millennium Edition, 2000.



Figure 27. Resident Evil advertisement, back cover of the Millennium Edition.

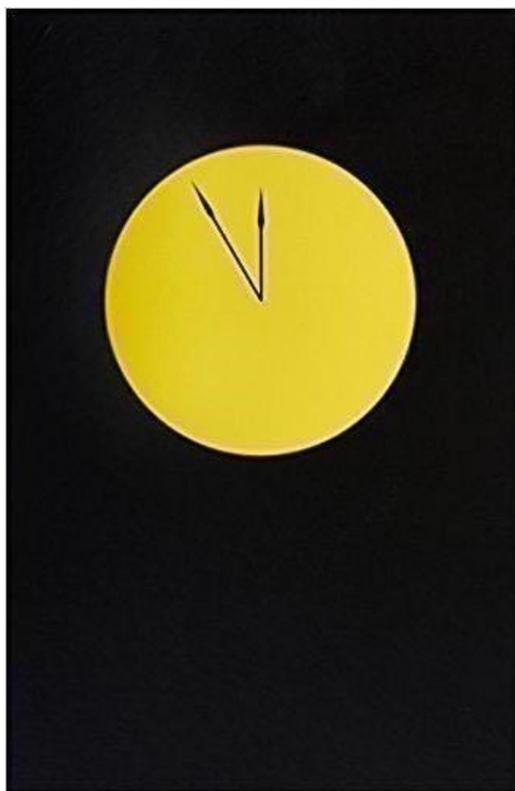


Figure 28: Cover to the slipcase of Absolute Watchmen, 2005.

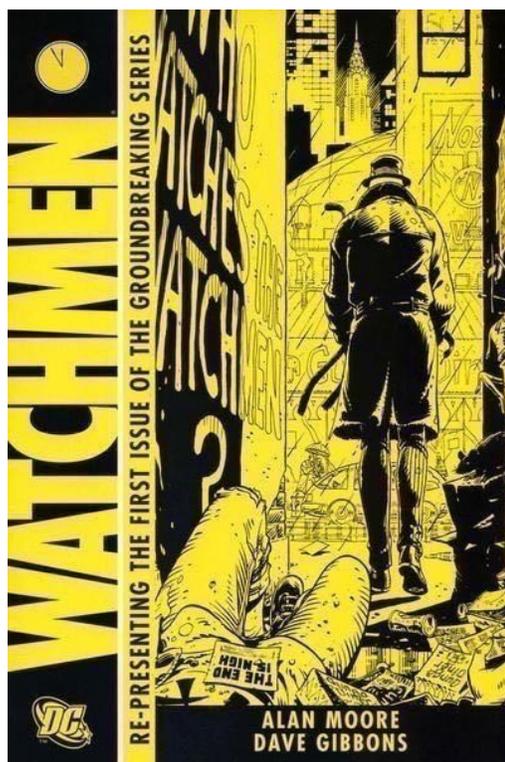


Figure 29: Cover to the 2008 Special Edition of Watchmen #1.

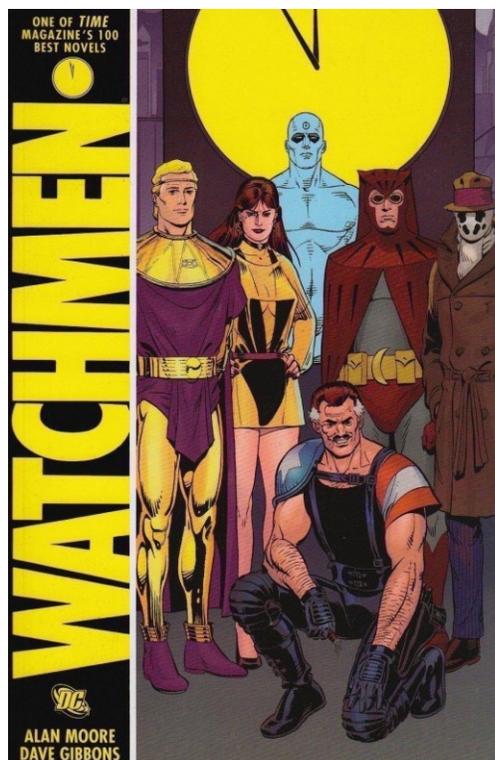


Figure 30: The cover of the International Edition of Watchmen, 2008.

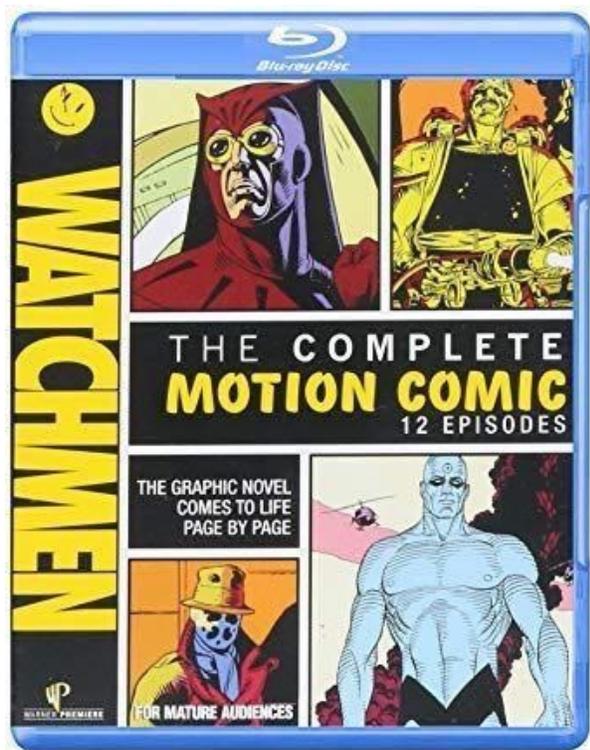


Figure 31: Cover of the Blu-Ray edition of the Motion Comic, 2009.

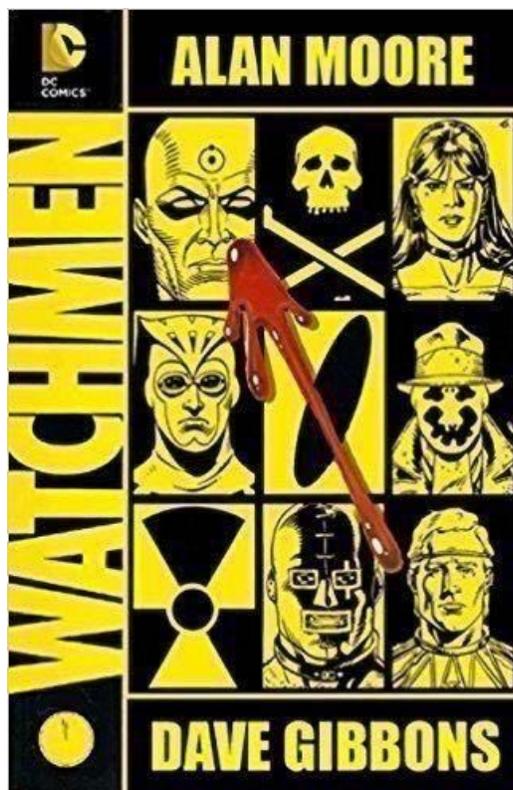


Figure 32: Cover to the Deluxe Edition of Watchmen, 2013.



Figure 33: The cover to the Essential Edition of Watchmen #1.

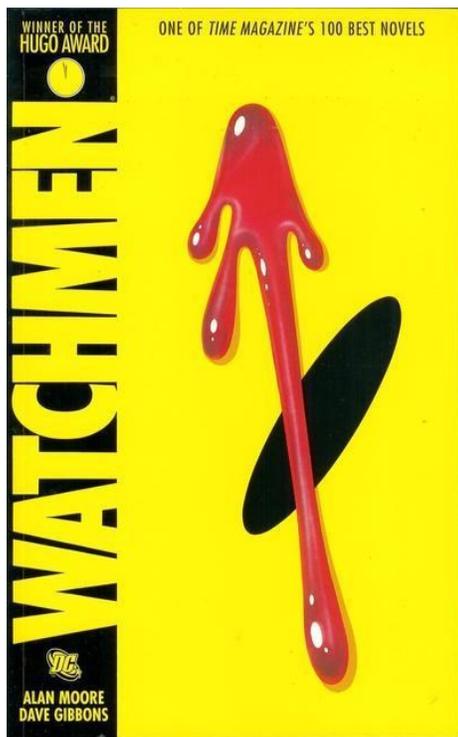


Figure 34: The cover of the 15th printing of the Watchmen trade paperback.



Figure 35: The cover of a subsequent printing of the Watchmen trade paperback.

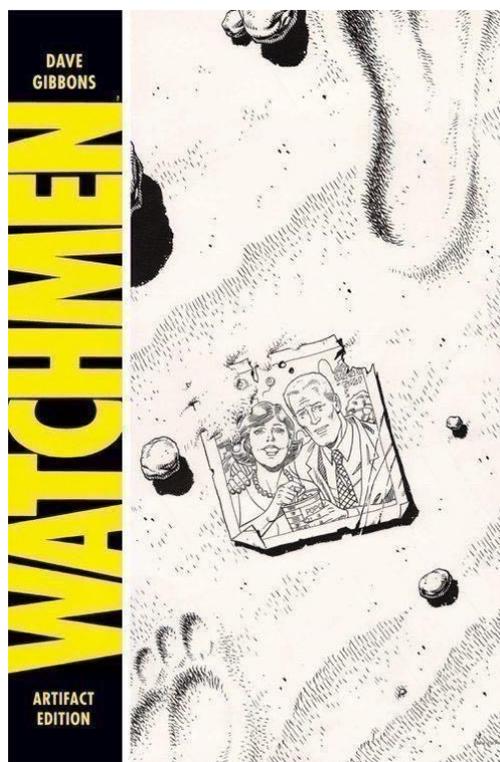


Figure 36: The cover of IDW's Watchmen Artifact Edition, 2014.



Figure 37: The slipcase of the Watchmen Collector's Edition, 2016. Penguin Random House Canada Website.

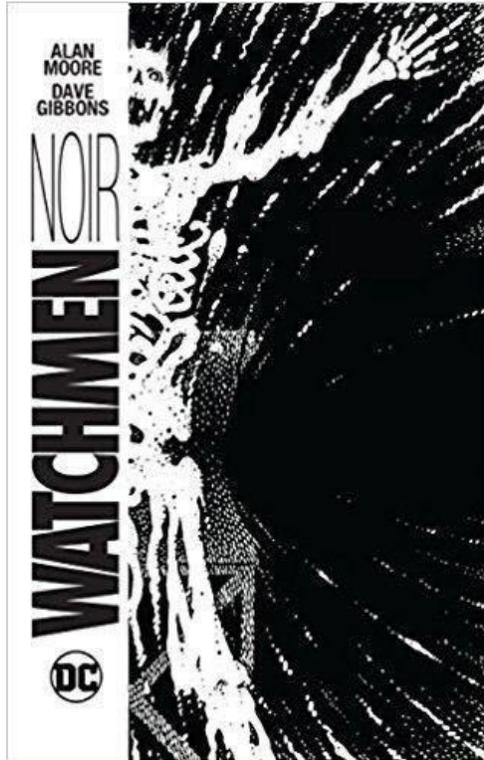


Figure 38: The cover of Watchmen Noir, 2016.

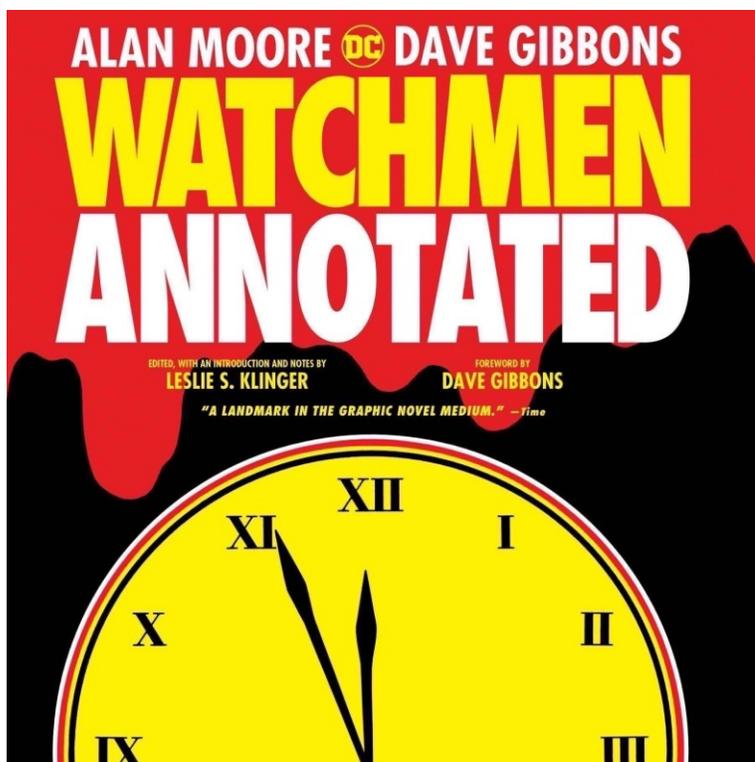


Figure 39: The cover of Watchmen Annotated, 2017.

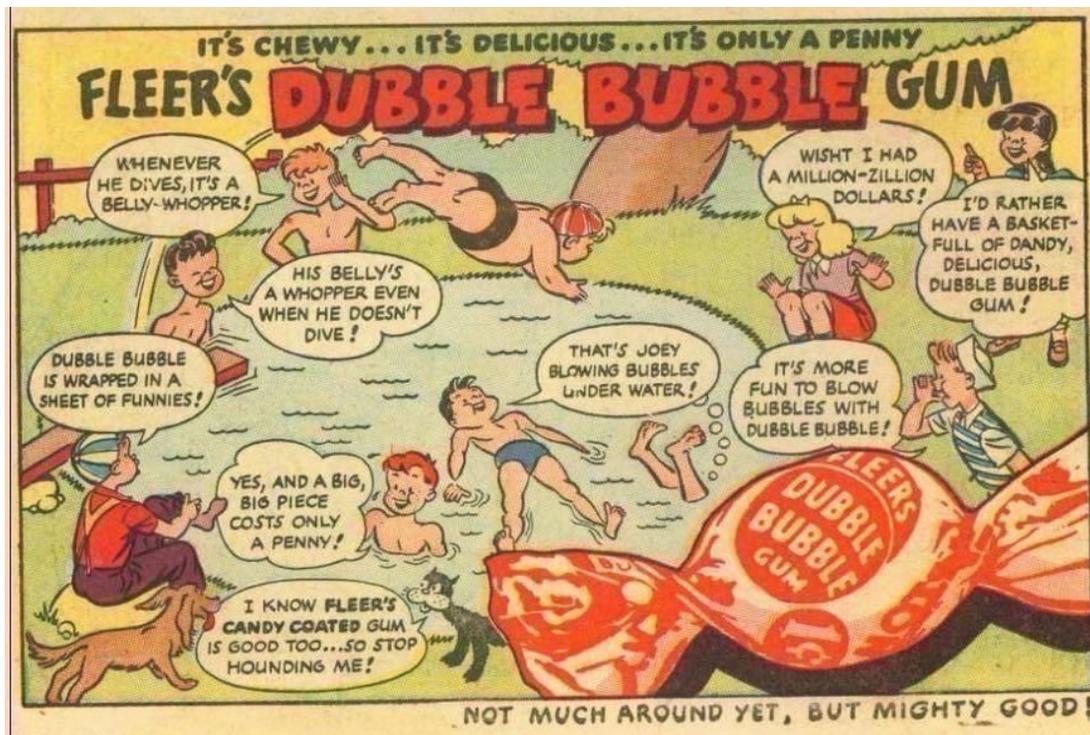


Figure 40: From Blue Bolt Comics volume 7, number 2, July 1946.

Bazooka
THE ATOM BUBBLE BOY
in
RANGER RESCUE

ADVERTISEMENT

FLASH! THE FIRE IN GREEN FOREST HAS COMPLETELY CUT OFF THREE FOREST RANGERS! THE MEN ARE TRAPPED!

SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR ME! LUCKY THING THAT DAD HAS A FIRE EXTINGUISHER IN THE GARAGE!

NOW FOR A GIANT BUBBLE FROM MY BAZOOKA BUBBLE GUM - I'LL SAY THE MAGIC PHRASE - "BAZOOKA, BAZOOKA, MAKE ME A BUBBLE - AND FLY ME TO WHERE MY GOOD FRIENDS ARE IN TROUBLE!"

NOW THE MAGIC WORD TO GO DOWN! AKOOZAB! AKOOZAB!

HOORAY! HERES BAZOOKA!! I KNEW HE'D COME!

I'M GLAD THAT BAZOOKA ATOM BUBBLE GUM MAKES THOSE GIANT BUBBLES!

I'VE CLEARED A PATH FOR US - LET'S GO!

NEW BIGGER BUBBLES BETTER BUBBLES

Bazooka
THE ATOM BUBBLE GUM

6 BIG CHEWS FOR 5¢

GUARANTEED PARENTS' MAGAZINE SEAL

AWARDED THE PARENTS' MAGAZINE SEAL

HEY, KIDS! HERE'S A REAL NICKEL'S WORTH! 6 BIG CHEWS FOR 5¢! COMICS IN EVERY PACKAGE!! SAVE WRAPPERS!! VALUABLE PRIZES!!

Figure 41: From Adventure Comics #128, May 1948.

ADVERTISEMENT

HURRY UP, SLOW-POKE!

HAW! AS AN ICE SKATER, PUD MAKES A GOOD POND PLOW!

STAND BY FOR CRASH LANDING!

DUBBLE BUBBLE GUM IS WHAT I NEED!

WOW! A DOUBLE FIGURE "8"! PUD'S GOOD!

YUM-YUM-

-AN' FLEER'S DUBBLE BUBBLE IS PLENTY GOOD TOO!

BIGGER'N BETTER BUBBLES-

PRICE-A PENNY A PIECE-

AN' THE SQUARE WRAP KEEPS THE FUNNIES FLAT--

1¢

DUBBLE BUBBLE

FRANK H. FLEER CORP. PHILADELPHIA 41, PENNA.

Figure 42: From Rocky Lane Western #11, March 1950.



Figure 43: From Sparkler Comics #119, August/September 1954.



Figure 44: A Blony wrapper from 1957-58 (Topps Bazooka Joe 105).



Figure 45.



Figure 46.



Figure 47.



Figure 48.

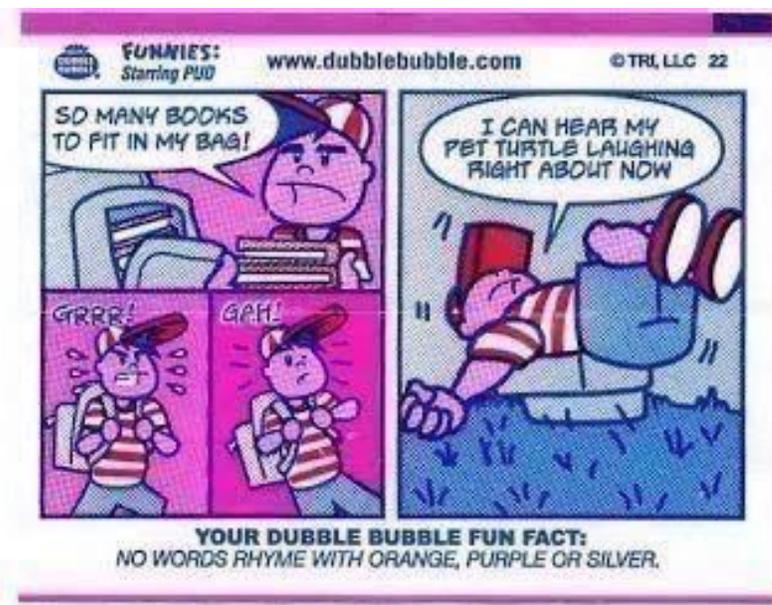


Figure 49.

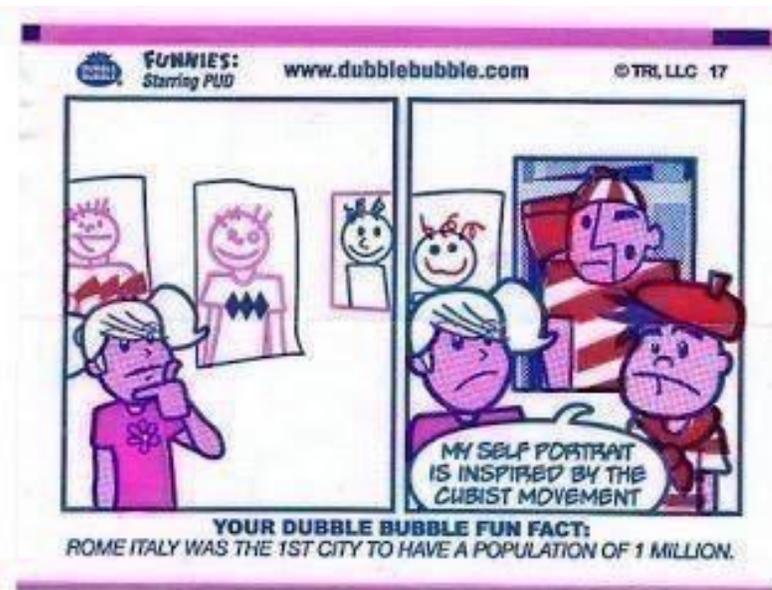


Figure 50.



Figure 51.



Figure 52.



Figure 53.



Figure 54.



Figure 55.



Figure 56.

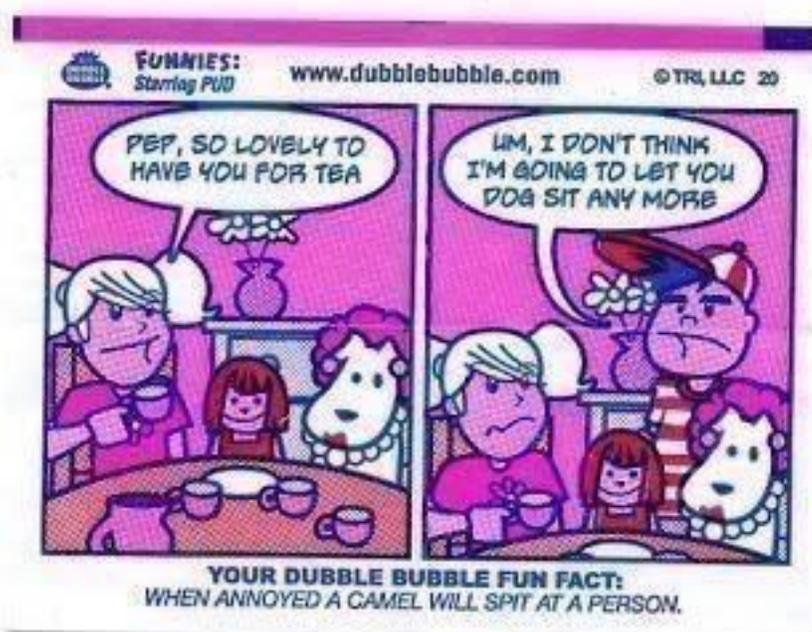


Figure 57.



Figure 58.

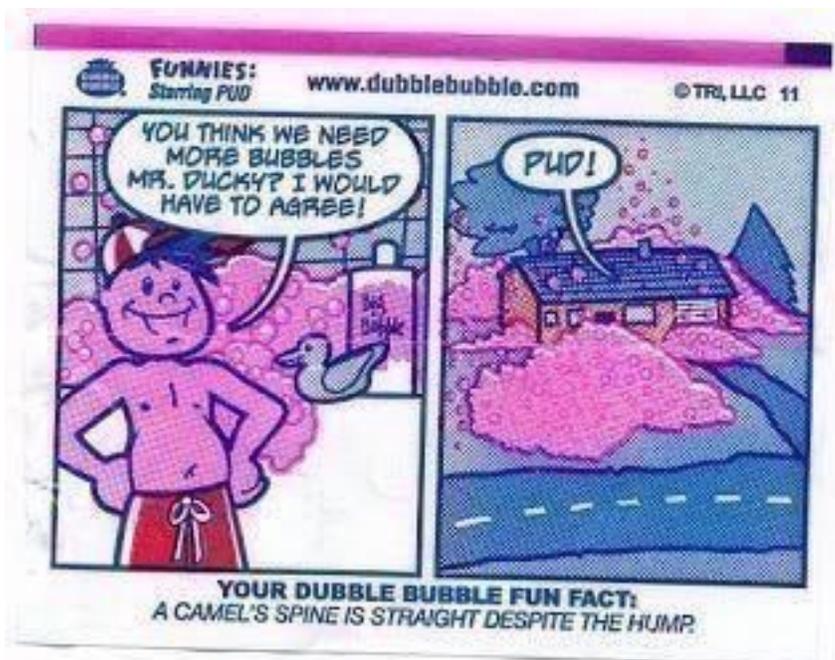


Figure 59.



Figure 60.

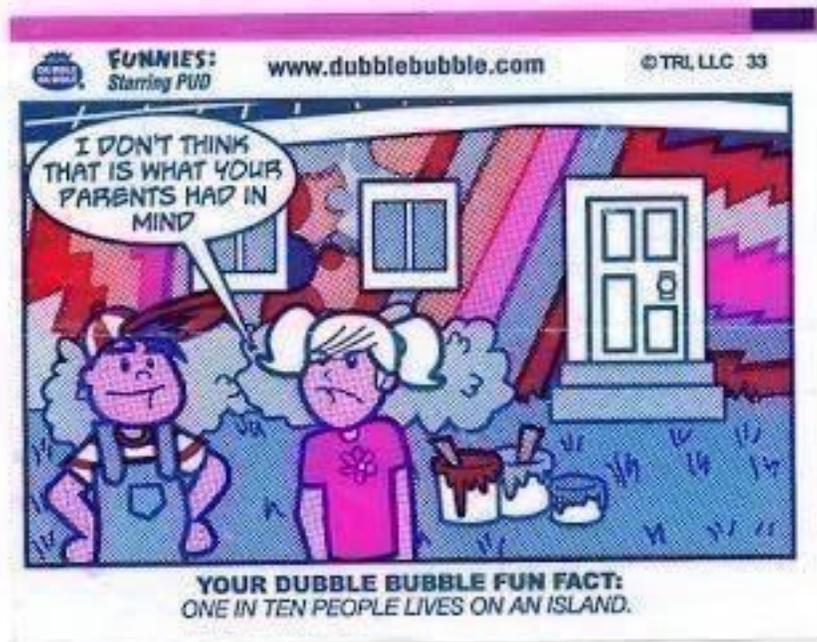


Figure 61.



Figure 62.



Figure 63.



Figure 64.



Figure 65.



Figure 66.

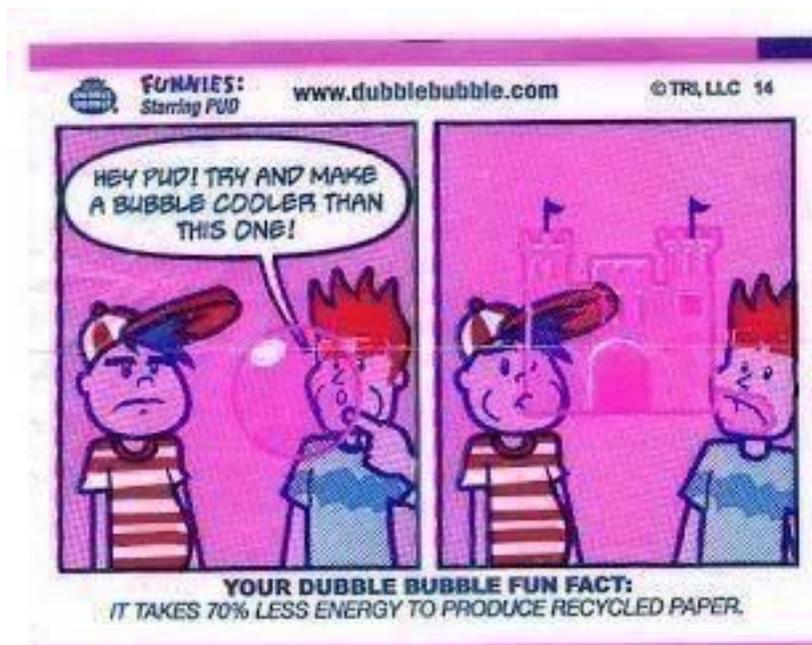


Figure 67.

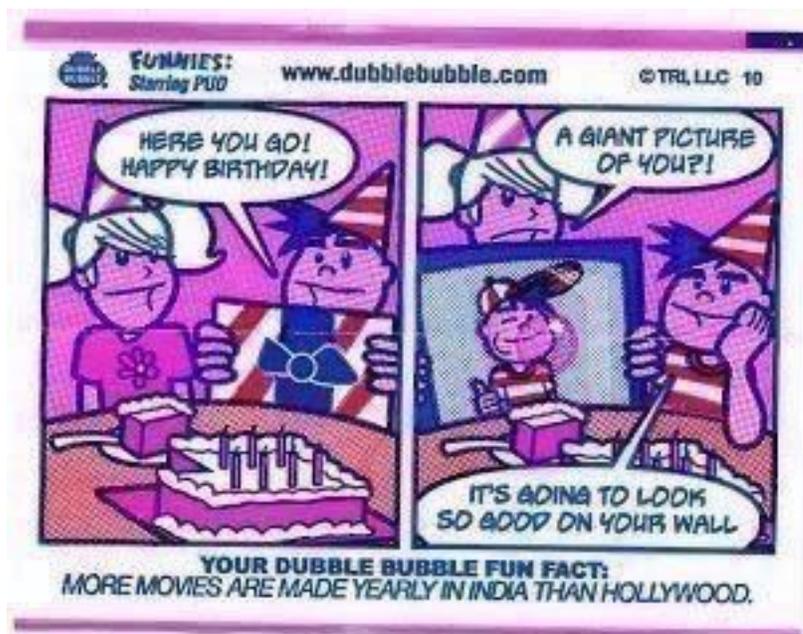


Figure 68.

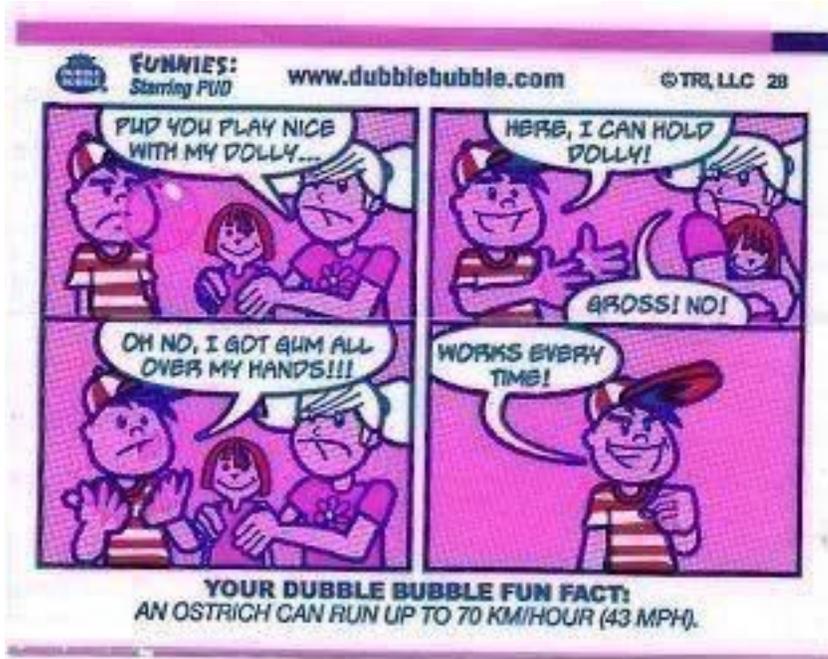


Figure 69.



Figure 70.



Figure 71.

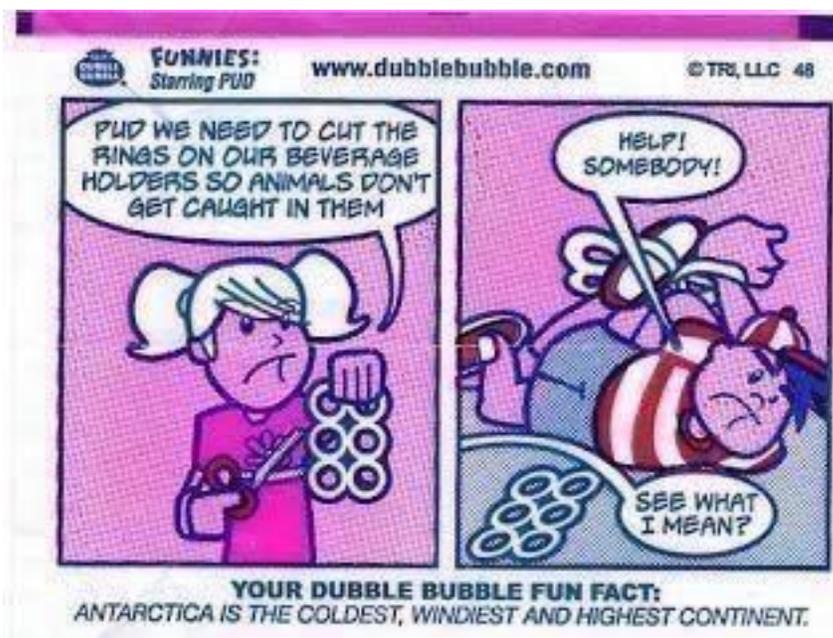


Figure 72.

Works Cited and Consulted

- “The 11 O’Clock Show.” Season 2, episode 16. 4 April 1999.
- “Actor Macaulay Culkin arrested for drug possession.” *USA Today*, 17 September 2004, usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/people/2004-09-17-culkin-arrest_x.htm
- Abate, Michelle Ann. “Art Spiegelman’s *In the Shadow of No Towers* as Board Book: From the Matter of Materiality to the Way that Materiality Matters.” *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, 7.2 (Winter 2015), pp. 40-64.
- Adelman, Bob. Introduction by Art Spiegelman, commentary by Richard Merkin. *Tijuana Bibles: Art and Wit in America’s Forbidden Funnies, 1930s-1950s*. Simon & Shuster, 2005.
- Adin, Mariah. *The Brooklyn Thrill-Kill Gang and the Great Comic Book Scare of the 1950s*. Praeger, 2015.
- Albritton, Robert. *Let Them Eat Junk: How Capitalism Creates Hunger and Obesity*. Arbeiter Ring, 2009.
- Anderson, John C. and Bradley Katz. “Read Only Memory: *Maus* and Its Marginalia on CD-ROM.” In *Considering Maus: Approaches to Art Spiegelman’s “Survivor’s Tale” of the Holocaust*, edited by Deborah R. Geis. University of Alabama Press, 2003. 159-174.
- Andrae, Thomas. *Carl Barks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmasking the Myth of Modernity*. University Press of Mississippi, 2006.
- Andrews, Marc, Matthijs van Leeuwen and Rick van Baaren. *Hidden Persuasion*. BIS, 2013.
- Arnold, Mark. “A Family Affair—The Harvey Comics Story.” *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 18-39.
- , editor. *The Best of the Harveyville Fun Times!*. Fun Ideas Productions, 2006.

-----, *The Harvey Comics Companion*. BearManor Media, 2017.

Atkinson, Doug. "Watchmen Complete." *Enjolrasworld—The Place for Comic Book*

Annotations & Bibliographies,

http://enjolrasworld.com/Annotations/Alan%20Moore/Watchmen/watchmen_complete.htm.

Ault, Donald. "Preludium: Crumb, Barks, and Noomin." *ImageText* 1.2 (2004):

http://imagetext.english.ufl.edu/archives/v1_2/intro.shtml

Ayres, Jackson: "The Integrity of the Work. Alan Moore, Modernism, and the Corporate Author." *Journal of Modern Literature*, 39, 2, 2016, S. 144–166.

Baetens, Jan: "Historicising achronism. Some notes on the idea of art without history in David

Carrier's *The Aesthetics of Comics*." *Image & Narrative* volume 12, issue 4, 2011,

<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/viewFile/205/169>.

Accessed 17 July 2016.

Ball, David M. "Comics Against Themselves: Chris Ware's Graphic Narratives as Literature."

The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts edited by Paul Williams and James Lyons, University Press of Mississippi, 2010, pp. 103-123.

Banham, Rob. "The Industrialization of the Book 1800-1970." *A Companion to the History of*

the Book. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, editors. Blackwell, 2007. 273-290.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Duke University Press, 2007.

Barber, Benjamin R. *Consumed*. W.W. Norton & Co., 2007.

Barbour, Chad A. *From Daniel Boone to Captain America. Playing Indian in American Popular*

Culture. University Press of Mississippi, 2016.

- Baring-Gould, William S, edited with an introduction, notes and bibliography by. *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Clarkson N. Potter, 1967.
- Barks, Carl. *Four Color* #456. Dell, 1953.
- *Uncle Scrooge* #142. Gold Key, 1977.
- *Only a Poor Old Man*. Fantagraphics Books, 2012.
- *The Ghost Sheriff of Last Gasp*. Fantagraphics Books, 2016.
- Barnes, David. "Time in the Gutter: Temporal Structures in *Watchmen*." *KronoScope* 9.1-2 (2009): 51-60.
- Barrère, Albert and Charles G. Leland. *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon & Cant*. 1888-1890.
Reprinted by Gale Research Company, 1967.
- Barrier, Michael. *Funnybooks: The Improbable Glories of the Best American Comic Books*.
University of California Press, 2015.
- Barrier, Michael, and Martin Williams. *A Smithsonian Book of Comic-Book Comics*.
Smithsonian, 1982.
- Bartosch, Sebastian. "Understanding comics' mediality as an actor-network: some elements of translation in the works of Brian Fies and Dylan Horrocks." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 7.3 (2016) 242-253.
- Bates, Brian. "Graphic and Digital Keats. "La Belle Dame sans Merci" in Poetry Comics."
Reconstruction volume 16 issue 1, 2016,
<http://reconstruction.eserver.org/Issues/161/Bates.shtml>. Accessed 1 June 2016.
- Beale, Nicole, Gareth Beale, Ian Dawson, and Louisa Minkin. "Making Digital: Visual Approaches to the Digital Humanities." *Journal of Digital Humanities*, 2.3 Summer 2013,

journalofdigitalhumanities.org/2-3/making-digital-visual-approaches-to-the-digital-humanities/

Beard, David. "'Corpus' and Pederson & Cohn's Latest Article." Received by

COMIXSCHOLARS-L listserv, 22 November 2016.

Beatty, Bart. *Comics Versus Art*. University of Toronto Press, 2012.

----- . *Twelve Cent Archie*. Routledge, 2015.

Beatty, Bart, and Benjamin Woo. *What Were Comics?* Whatwerecomics.com.

----- . *The Greatest Comic Book of All Time: Symbolic Capital and the Field of American Comic Books*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

"Behind the Laughter." *The Simpsons*, season 11, episode 22, Fox, 21 May 2000.

Belk, Russell W. "Material Values in the Comics: A Content Analysis of Comic Books Featuring Themes of Wealth." *Journal of Consumer Research* 14, June 1987, pp. 26-42.

Bell, Blake and Michael Vallasso. *The Secret History of Marvel Comics*. Fantagraphics, 2013.

Benson, John. "Silver Threads Among the Mold." *Alter Ego* 3.89, October 2009, pp. 3-12.

Bergengren, Ralph. From "The Humour of the Colored Supplement." *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium*. Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, editors. University Press of Mississippi, 2004. 9-12

Berger, Arthur Asa. *Li'l Abner: A Study in American Satire*. University Press of Mississippi, 1994.

----- . *What Objects Mean: An Introduction to Material Culture*. Left Coast Press, 2009.

Berliner, Mark, Jochen Ecke and Gideon Haberkorn, editors. *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures: Essays on the Interplay of Media, Disciplines and International Perspectives*. McFarland & Co., 2010.

- Blake, Brandy Ball. "Watchmen: The Graphic Novel as Trauma Fiction." *ImageText* 5.1 (2009).
- Blanch, Christina L. and Thalia M. Mulvihill. "The Attitudes of Some Students on the Use of Comics in Higher Education." *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*. Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner, editors. McFarland & Co., 2013. 35-47.
- Boschenhoff, Sandra Eva. *Tall Tales in Comic Diction. From Literature to Graphic Fiction: An Intermedial Analysis of Comic Adaptations of Literary Texts*. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2014.
- Boscagli, Maurizia. *Stuff Theory: Everyday Objects, Radical Materialism*. Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Routledge, 2010.
- Brake, Laurel. *Print in Transition, 1850-1910: Studies in Media and Book History*. Palgrave, 2001.
- Brand, Scott. "A Gordian Knot: Classical Elements in Watchmen." In March-Russell, Paul and Tony Keen (Eds), *Fantastic and the Greek and Roman Worlds. Foundation, the International Review of Science Fiction* 43.118 (2014), 19-31.
- Braun, Alexander. *The Complete Little Nemo by Windsor McCay 1905-1909*. Taschen 2016.
- Bredehoff, Thomas A. *The Visible Text: Textual Production and Reproduction from Beowulf to Maus*. Oxford UP, 2014.
- Brienza, Casey. "Books, Not Comics: Publishing Fields, Globalization, and Japanese Manga in the United States." *Publishing Research Quarterly* (2009) 25: 101-117.

Brooker, Peter and Andrew Thacker. General Introduction. *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines, Volume 1: Britain and Ireland, 1880-1955*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Brown, Bill. *The Material Unconscious*. Harvard UP, 1996.

----- . "The matter of materialism: literary mediations." *Material Powers: Cultural studies, history, and the material turn*. Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce eds. Routledge, 2010. 60-78

Brown, Chris, and Tyga. "Ayo." *Fan of a Fan: The Album*, RCA, 2015.

Brown, Jeffrey A. "Wearing One's Fandom." *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, eds. New York: Routledge, 2012. 280-290.

Brown, Saul. "Shazam! Here Comes Captain Relevant." *Popular Culture and the Expanding Consciousness*. Ray B. Browne editor. John Wiley & Sons, 1973.

Brown, Stephen. *Brands and Branding*. Sage, 2016.

Browne, Ray B. editor. *Popular Culture and the Expanding Consciousness*. John Wiley & Sons, 1973.

"Bugs Bunny and Buried Treasure." Warner Bros, 1949.

Cabarga, Leslie. *Harvey Comics Classics Volume Two: Richie Rich The Poor Little Rich Boy*. Dark Horse Books, 2007.

"Cadet Sweets: Doctor Who and the Daleks." *The Keys of Marinus*, BBC, 2010.

Carpenter, Greg. Review excerpt on book cover. *The Annotated Watchmen* by Leslie Klinger, Alan Moore, and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2017.

Carr, David. *Candymaking in Canada: The History and Business of Canada's Confectionery Industry*. The Dundurn Group, 2003.

- Carrier, David. *The Aesthetics of Comics*. Penn State University Press, 2000.
- Carvell, Tim. "How One Man Spooked Universal." *Fortune* 29 December 1997, p. 48.
- Casper, Scott E., Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves editors, *Perspectives on American Book History*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2002.
- Chartier, Roger. "The Practical Impact of Writing" *The Book History Reader* edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Routledge, 2006, pp. 118-142.
- Chen, Lindsey N. "Ethnic Marked Names as a Reflection of United States Isolationist Attitudes in Uncle \$crooge Comics." *Names : A Journal of Onomastics* 56.1, 19-22. 2013 19 July. Web. Accessed 6 May 2016.
- Chromik-Kryzkawska, Anna. "Reusing or Refusing? Waste in the Discourse of Wastelessness." In Rachwal, Tadeusz. *Rubbish, Waste and Litter: Culture and Its Refuse/als*. Wydawnictwo SWPSA Academica, 2008. 102-112.
- Chute, Hillary. "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative." *PMLA* volume 123 issue 2, 2008, pp. 452–465.
- *Graphic Women*. Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Ciemcioch, Mark. "Marvel For Kids: Star Comics." *Back Issue* 1.77, December 2014, pp. 65-74
- Cohn, Neil. "Building a better 'comic theory': Shortcomings of theoretical research on comics and how to overcome them." *Studies in Comics* 5.1 2014.
- Cohn, Neil and Hannah Campbell. "Navigating Comics II: Constraints on the Reading Order of Comic Page Layouts." *Applied Cognitive Psychology* 29 (2014):193-199.
- Cohn, Neil and Kaitlin Pedersen. "The changing pages of comics: Page layouts across eight decades of American superhero comics." *Studies in Comics* 7.1 (2016).

- Colón, Ernie. "The Importance of Being Ernie." Interview by Jon B. Cooke. *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 74-78.
- Cook, Daniel Thomas. "Children's Subjectivities and Commercial Meaning: The Delicate Battle Mothers Wage When Feeding Their Children" in Allison James, Anne Trine Kjørholt, and Verbjørg Tingstad, editors. *Children, Food and Identity in Everyday Life*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2009. 118-127.
- Cook, Roy T. and Aaron Meskin. "Comics, Prints, and Multiplicity." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 2015. 57-67.
- Couhey, Sid. "Whole Lotta Little Lotta." Interview by Shawn Hamilton. *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 68-73.
- Couperie, Pierre with Maurice C. Horn, Proto Desteganis, Edouard Francois, Claude Moliterni, and Gerald Gassiot-Talabot. Translated by Eileen B. Hennessy. *A History of the Comic Strip*. Crown Publishers, 1968.
- Cover copy. *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2014.
- Cover copy. *The Annotated Watchmen* by Leslie Klinger, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2017.
- Cracknell, Ryan. "A Brief History of Back to the Future Trading Cards." *Beckett*, 6 May 2018. <https://www.beckett.com/news/back-to-the-future-trading-cards/>. Accessed 1 June 2018.
- Cummings, Sarah W. "Decadent Decay: The Complexity of Social Corruption, Consciousness, and Critique in *Watchmen* and *You Can't Go Home Again*." *The Thomas Wolfe Review* 39. 2015. 21-30.

- Curtis, James. "'Let's Go Exploring!'. Illustrating Childhood Development in Calvin and Hobbes." *Good Grief! Children and Comics* edited by Michelle Abate and Joe Sutliff Sanders. Ohio State University Libraries, 2016, pp. 29–46.
- Dalzell, Tom and Terry Victor (eds). *The New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. Volume II: J-Z. Routledge, 2006.
- Daniels, Les. *Comix: A History of Comic Books in America*. Bonanza Books, 1971.
- The Dandy and the Beano: Fifty Golden Years*. D.C. Thomson, 1987.
- Danky, James, and Denis Kitchen. *Underground Classics: The Transformation of Comics into Comix*. Abrams ComicArts, 2009.
- D'Arcangelo, Adele. "'Slime Hero from the Swamp': The Italian Editions of Alan Moore's Horror Saga the *Swamp Thing*." In Federico Zanettin, *Comics in Translation*. St. Jerome, 2008. 133-151.
- Darnton, Robert. "What is the History of Books?" *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 231-250.
- "Dave Gibbons' Watchmen Artifact Edition HC." *IDW Publishing*, www.idwpublishing.com/product/dave-gibbons-watchmen-artifact-edition-hc/. Accessed 10 August 2018.
- Davidson, Sol. *Culture and the Comic Strips*. PhD Dissertation, 1958. Facsimile reprint by University Microfilms International, 1979.
- David-West, Alzo. "Sequential Art and Sentence Construction: Wordless Comics in an EFL Context." *Mulberry*, issue 61, 2012, pp. 141-158.
- Davis, Kenneth C. *Two Bit Culture: The Paperbacking of America*. Houghton-Mifflin, 1984.
- Davis, Paul. *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*. Yale UP, 1990.

- DC Entertainment Graphic Novel Essentials and Chronology 2014*. DC Comics, 2014.
- DC Essential Graphic Novels 2016*. DC Comics, 2016.
- DC Essential Graphic Novels 2017*. DC Comics, 2017.
- DC Essential Graphic Novels 2018*. DC Comics, 2018.
- Dejasse, Erwin and Philippe Capart. "In Search of the Lost Serial." *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty eds. Leuven University Press, 2014. 313-320.
- Delaney, Samuel R. "The Politics of Paraliterary Criticism." *Shorter Views*. Wesleyan University Press, 1999, pp. 218-270.
- Delwiche, Aaron. "Scanner tags, comic book piracy and participatory culture." *First Monday*, 19.5- 5 May 2014.
- DiCesare, Catherine R. *Sweeping the Way: Divine Transformation in the Aztec Festival of Ochpaniztli*. University Press of Colorado, 2009.
- Dietrich, Bryan. "The Human Stain: Chaos and the Rage for Order in *Watchmen*." *Extrapolation* 50.1 (2009): 120-144.
- @Digitkame. "He reminds me of Richie Rich... just the hair though" *Twitter*, 8 October 2016, 10:10AM, twitter.com/Digitkame/status/7848032
- Dittmar, Jakob F. "Experiments in Digital Comics: Somewhere Between Comics and Multimedia Storytelling." *Comics Forum*, 14 March 2015.
<https://comicsforum.org/2015/03/14/experiments-in-digital-comics-somewhere-between-comics-and-multimedia-storytelling-by-jakob-f-dittmar/>
- Donahue, Dick. "Paperback Bestsellers/Trade." *Publishers Weekly* 256.11, March 16 2009. 19.
- Douglass, Jeremy, William Huber, and Lev Manovich. "Understanding scanlation: how to read one million fan-translated manga pages." *Image & Narrative* 12.1 (2011). 190-227.

- Dorfman, Ariel and Armand Mattelart. Trans David Kunzle. *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. International General, New York: 1975. Second printing.
- Doyle, Larry, and Angelo de Cesare. "Richie Riche." *National Lampoon*, December 1991, pp. 45-51.
- Dubose, Mike S. "Holding Out for a Hero: Reaganism, Comic Book Vigilantes, and Captain America." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 40.6 (2007): 915-935.
- Duke, Judith S. *Children's Books and Magazines: A Market Study*. Knowledge Industry Publications, 1979.
- Duin, Steve, and Mike Richardson. *Comics between the panels*. Dark Horse Comics, 1998.
- Dutt, Guru, director. *Baazi*. 1951. itunes, 2016.
- EC Comics. *The EC Archives: The Haunt of Fear Vol. 3*. Comixology. Dark Horse Books, 2016.
- Eichenwald, Kurt. "Recent Casper Popularity Doesn't Show Big Picture." *New York Times* 11 June 1995, nytimes.com/1995/06/11/business/investing-it-street-smarts-recent-casper-popularity-doesn-t-show-big-picture.html
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Eisner, Will. *Comics & Sequential Art*. Poorhouse Press, 1985.
- Eliot, Simon and Jonathan Rose, editors. *A Companion to the History of the Book*. Blackwell, 2007.
- Erwin, Brent E. et al. *Richie Rich*. No. 1, Ape Entertainment, comixology, 2013.
- Feiffer, Jules. *The Great Comic Book Heroes*. The Dial Press, 1965.

- Feldman, Michael. "How Men's Magazines Got to the Masses." *The History of Men's Magazines 1900 to Post-WWII*. Dian Hanson editor. Köln: Taschen, 2004.
- Fernandez, Walter Jr. "The Cold Warrior of Watchmen." *Cinemaeditor* 1st Quarter 2009 (30-33).
- Fielder, Leslie. "The Middle Against Both Ends." *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium*. Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, editors. University Press of Mississippi, 2004. 122-133.
- Fishbaugh, Brent. "Moore and Gibbons's *Watchmen*: Exact Personifications of Science." *Extrapolations* 39.3 (1998): 189-198.
- Flagg, Gordon. "Another Look at: Watchmen." *Booklist* March 1 2009, 34.
- "Fleer Closes Philadelphia Plant." *Candy Industry* 12.160 (December 1995).
- Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" *The Book History Reader. The Book History Reader* edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Routledge, 2006, pp. 281-291
- Francis, Fred. "'Footnotes to Miller and Moore': Monomyth and Transnationality in the 1986 Superhero Comics." *Comparative American Studies: An International Journal* 14.3-4 (2016), 289-301.
- Fraser, Laura. "The Inner Corset: A Brief History of Fat in the United States." In Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay, *The Fat Studies Reader*. New York University Press 2009. 11-14.
- "The Fuddleduck Diggins." *Donald Duck* #125. Gold Key, 1969.
- Gabaccia, Donna. "As American as Budweiser and Pickles? Nation-Building in American Food Industries." In Belasco, Warren, and Philip Scranton, eds. *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*. Routledge, 2002. 175-190.

- Gabilliet, Jean-Paul. *Of Comics and Men: a Cultural History of American Comic Books*.
Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. University Press of Mississippi, 2010.
- Garvey, Ellen Gruber. "Out of the Mainstream and Into the Streets: Small Press Magazines, the Underground Press, Zines, and Artists' Books." In Casper, Scott E., Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves editors, *Perspectives on American Book History*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. 367-402.
- Gaskell, Philip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*. Oak Knoll, 2009.
- Gavaler, Chris: "The rise and fall of fascist superpowers." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* volume 7, issue 1, 2016, pp. 70–87.
- Gearino, Dan. *Comic Shop: The Retail Mavericks Who Gave Us a New Geek Culture*. Swallow Press, 2017.
- Genette, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Ghosal, Torsa. "Books with Bodies: Narrative Progression in Chris Ware's Building Stories." *Storyworlds* 7.1 (Summer 2015).
- Gibbons, Dave. *The Watchmen Portfolio*. DC Comics, 1988.
- . *Watching the Watchmen*. With Chip Kidd and Mike Essl. Titan Books, 2008.
- . *Watchmen: The Artifact Edition*. IDW, 2014.
- Gluckson, Robert. "The Big Boy's Comic Book." *The History of Men's Magazines 1900 to Post-WWII*. Hanson, Dian editor. Köln: Taschen, 2004.
- Goggin, Joyce, and Dan Hassler-Forest ed. *The Rise and Reason of Comics and Graphic Literature: Critical Essays on the Form*. McFarland & Co., 2010.
- "Goldie Gold and Action Jack." *Saturday Morning Cartoons: 1980s*. WarnerBros DVD, 2010.

Gordon, Ian. *Comic Strips and Consumer Culture, 1890-1945*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

----. "Culture of Consumption: Commodification through *Superman: Return to Krypton*." In Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan, *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*. Routledge, 2011. 157-166.

----. "Ideological/Sociological." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. 118-132.

Goulart, Ron. *The Adventurous Decade*. Arlington Press, 1975.

-----. *Great American Comic Books*. Publications International, Ltd, 2001.

-----. *The Comic Book Encyclopedia*. New York: Harper, 2004.

Great, Justin. *Black Richie Rich Mixtape*,

<https://shop.justingreat.com/collections/music/products/black-richie-rich-mixtape-free-download>

Green, Jonathon. *Green's Dictionary of Slang*. Volume 3: P-Z. Chambers Harrap, 2010.

Greenberger, Robert. "Comic Books Examine Themselves." Inside-cover essay. *Millennium Edition: Watchmen*, by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, March 2000.

Greenhalgh, Michael. "Art History." In Schreibman, Susan; Ray Siemens and John Unsworth. *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Blackwell, 2004, pp. 31-45.

Greenspan, Ezra and Jonathan Rose. "An Introduction to Book History." *Book History* 1.1 (1998). Ix-xi.

Gregory, Roberta. "Academic question." Email to author's query. 30 June 2018. Email.

Gregov, R.J. "The Art of Watchmen." *International Journal of Comic Art* 11.2 (Fall 2009): 473-474.

- Groensteen, Thierry. *Comics and Narration*. Translated by Ann Miller. University Press of Mississippi, 2013.
- , "Definitions." *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty eds. Leuven University Press, 2014. 93-114.
- Grossman, Lev. Review excerpt on book cover. *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2014.
- and Richard Lacayo. "10 of TIME's Hundred Best Novels." 17 October 2005. *Time.com*, content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1118375,00.html. Accessed 24 August 2018.
- Hajdu, David. *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America*. Picador, 2009.
- Hanna, Ralph. *Introducing English Medieval Book History: Manuscripts, their Producers, and their Readers*. Liverpool University Press, 2014.
- Hanson, Dian. *The History of Men's Magazines 1900 to Post-WWII*. Taschen, 2004.
- @HarrimanNelson. "Trump is doing what Bruce Wayne should have done instead of dressing in tights." *Twitter*, 7 November 2017, 9:20 AM, twitter.com/HarrimanNelson/status/927949001705623553.
- Harris-Fain, Darren. "Watchmen." *Critical Survey of Graphic Novels: Heroes & Superheroes Volume 2* edited by Bart H. Beaty and Stephen Weiner. Salem Press, 2012, p. 622-626.
- Harvey, Alan. "Harvey Shame." *Animation World Magazine* 5.06, September 2000, awn.com/mag/issue5.06/5.06pages/5.06letters.php3.
- Harvey, Robert C. *Children of the Yellow Kid: The Evolution of the American Comic Strip*. Frye Art Museum, 1998.

Hatfield, Charles. *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*. University Press of Mississippi, 2005.

----- "Indiscipline, or, The Condition of Comics Studies." *Transatlantica, American Studies Journal*. 1(2010). <https://journals.openedition.org/transatlantica/4933>

----- "Comics Studies, the Anti-Discipline." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. Xi-xxiii.

Hayles, Katherine. "Print is Flat, Code is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis." *Poetics Today*, 25.1 (2004). 67-90.

----- "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine." *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 491-510.

Hedges, Joseph. *Wild Times: An Oral History of WildStorm Studios*.
<http://www.wildstormoralhistory.com/>

Heer, Jeet and Kent Worcester, editors. *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium*. University Press of Mississippi, 2004.

Heller, Steven & Anne Fink. *Food Wrap: Packages that Sell*. Graphic Details, 1996.

Henke, James T. *Gutter Life and Language in the Early "Street" Literature of England*. Locust Hill Press, 1988.

Hensley, Tim. *Wally Gropius*. Fantagraphics, 2010.

Herman, Lenny, et al. *Royal Roy. Star Comics All-Star Collection Volume One*. Marvel Comics, 2009, pp. 50-95.

Herman, Lenny, et al. *Top Dog. Star Comics All-Star Collection Volume One*. Marvel Comics, 2009, pp. 96-164.

- Hindman, Sandra. "Introduction." In Hindman, ed., *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450-1520*. Cornell UP, 1991. 1-18.
- Hirsch, Michael and Patrick Loubert. *The Great Canadian Comic Books*. Peter Martin Associates, 1971.
- Hoberek, Andrew. *Considering Watchmen: Poetics, Property, Politics*. Rutgers University Press, 2014.
- Holbo, John. "Redefining Comics." *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach*. Aaron Meskin and Roy T. Cook, editors. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 3-30.
- Holland, Steve. *The Mushroom Jungle*. Zeon, 1993.
- Holtz, Allan. *American Newspaper Comics*. University of Michigan Press, 2005.
- Horn, Maurice. *100 Years of American Newspaper Comics*. Gramercy Books, 1996.
- *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*. 7 vols. Chelsea House, 1999.
- Horrocks, Dylan. "Inventing Comics: Scott McCloud's Definition of Comics." 2001. *Hicksville*.
<http://www.hicksville.co.nz/Inventing%20Comics.htm>. Accessed June 10 2016.
- Horton, Ian. "The Historians of the Art Form." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. 56-70.
- Howe, Sean. *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012.
- Howsam, Leslie. *Old Books & New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture*. University of Toronto Press, 2006.
- Hubbard, Katherine and Peter Hegarty. "Rorschach tests and Rorschach vigilantes: Queering the history of Psychology in *Watchmen*." *History of the Human Sciences* 30.4 (2017): 75-99.
- Hughes, Jamie A. "'Who Watches the Watchmen?': Ideology and 'Real World' Superheroes." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39.4 (2006): 546-557.

- Hunter, Beatrice Trum. "The Evolution of Chewing Gum." *Consumers' Research Magazine* October 2003, 18-23.
- Hutton, Robert. "A Mouse in the Bookstore: *Maus* and the Publishing Industry." *South Central Review* 32.3 (Fall 2015): 30-44.
- Imray, Kathryn. "Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do Right?: Theodicies in *Watchmen*." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 29.2 (Summer 2017): 119-131.
- @IndependentGms. "That one is an image of Richie Rich. Can't fool me." *Twitter*, 4 November 2017, 5:28 PM, twitter.com/IndependentGms/status/926969557046063105
- @ItMustBeNice1. "Trump "unknown?" LOL! He's an elite billionaire self-professed tax cheat and p*ssy grabber. Richie Rich is not for the people." *Twitter*, 9 October 2016, 10:12 PM. twitter.com/ItMustBeNice1/status/785347279788003328
- Itzkoff, Dave. Review excerpt on book cover. *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2014.
- . "Behind the Mask." 20 November 2005. *New York Times Book Review*, www.nytimes.com/2005/11/20/books/review/behind-the-mask.html. Accessed 24 August 2018.
- Jackson, H.J. *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. Yale University Press, 2001.
- Jacobson, Sid. "Sid's Kids: The Harvey Years." Interview by Bill Matheny. *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 40-56.
- "You Could Get Away With Murder!" Interview by John Benson. *Alter Ego* 3.89, October 2009, pp. 24-40.
- Jagodzinski, Jan. *Youth Fantasies: The Perverse Landscape of the Media*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.

- Jakaitis, Jake, and James F. Wurtz editors. *Crossing Boundaries in Graphic Narrative: Essays on Forms, Series and Genres*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2012.
- James, Allison, Anne Trine Kjørholt, and Verbjørg Tingstad, editors. *Children, Food and Identity in Everyday Life*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2009.
- Jamieson, Dave. *Mint Condition: How Baseball Cards Became an American Obsession*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2010.
- Jenkins, Henry. "The cultural logic of media convergence." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. 7.1 (2004). 33-43.
- "Should we discipline the reading of comics?" *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods* edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. Routledge, 2012, 1-14.
- "The Guiding Spirit and the Powers That Be: A Response to Suzanne Scott." *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson. Routledge, 2013, 53-58.
- Jensen, Jeff. Review excerpt on book cover. *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, 2014.
- . "Watchmen: An Oral History." *Entertainment Weekly*. 21 October 2005.
<http://ew.com/books/2005/10/21/watchmen-oral-history/>
- Johanningsmeier, Charles. "The Industrialization and Nationalization of American Periodical Publishing." In Casper, Scott E., Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves editors, *Perspectives on American Book History*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. 311-338
- Johns, Adrian. "Introduction: The Book of Nature and the Nature of the Book." *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 267-288.

- Johns, Geoff and Ethan van Sciver. *Absolute Green Lantern: Rebirth*. DC Comics, 2010.
- Johnson, Robin. "Just Ducky." Review of *Carl Barks and the Art of the Comic Book* by Michael Barrier and *The Carl Barks Library* edited by Bruce Hamilton, Thomas Andrae, and Geoffrey Blum. *The New York Review of Books* 26 June 1986. Web. 6 May 2016
- Johnston, Rich. "How Watchmen Will Be Annotated – And Remind You About Vietnam." *Bleeding Cool*. 16 March 2017. Accessed 16 August 2018.
<https://www.bleedingcool.com/2017/03/16/how-watchmen-will-be-annotated-and-remind-you-about-vietnam/>
- Juricevic, Igor. and Horvath, Alicia Joleen. "Analysis of Motions in Comic Book Cover Art: Using Pictorial Metaphors." *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship*. 6, 2016, p.6. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.16995/cg.71>
- Juvenal. *The Satires*. Translated by Niall Rudd. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kahn, Michael Alexander and Richard Samuel West. *What Fools These Mortals Be: The Story of Puck, America's First and Most Influential Magazine of Color Political Cartoons*. IDW, 2014.
- Karasik, Paul and Mark Newgarden. *How to Read Nancy: The Elements of Comics in Three Easy Panels*. Fantagraphics Books, 2017.
- Kashtan, Aaron. "Digital comics and material richness." 12 July 2013. *Comics Forum*.
<https://comicsforum.org/2013/07/12/digital-comics-and-material-richness-by-aaron-kashtan/>
- , "My mother was a typewriter: Fun Home and the importance of materiality in comics studies." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 4.1, 2013, 92-116.

- , *Between Pen and Pixel: Comics, Materiality, and the Book of the Future*. Ohio State University, 2018.
- Katz, Bill. *Dahl's History of the Book, Third English Edition*. Scarecrow Press: 1995.
- Kawash, Samira. *Candy: A Century of Panic and Pleasure*. Faber and Faber, 2013.
- Keating, Erin M. "The Female Link: Citation and Continuity in *Watchmen*." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 45.6 (2012): 1266-1288.
- Kimmerle, Beth. *Candy: The Sweet History*. Collectors Press, 2003.
- Kirkpatrick, Robert J. *From the Penny Dreadful to the Ha' Penny Dreadfuller*. British Library / Oak Knoll Press, 2013.
- Kirtz, Jaime Lee. "Computers, Comics and Cult Status: A Forensics of Digital Graphic Novels." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 8.3.
- Klaehn, Jeffrey. "An interview with Chris Ryall, Chief Creative Officer and Editor-in-Chief of IDW Publishing." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 7.1, 88-92.
- Klinger, Leslie S. Edited, with an introduction and notes by. Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen Annotated*. DC Comics, 2017.
- Koch, Shelley L. *A Theory of Grocery Shopping: Food, Choice and Conflict*. Berg, 2012.
- Konstantinou, Lee. "Watching *Watchmen*: A Riposte to Stuart Moulthrop." *Electronic Book Review* 25 January 2012.
- Kool G. Rap and DJ Polo. "Crime Pays." *Live and Let Die, Cold Chillin'*, 1992.
- Korda, Andrea. *Printing and Painting the News in Victorian London*. Ashgate, 2015.
- Kremer, Warren. "Strange Things Went On In Those Days." Interview by John Benson. *Alter Ego* 3.89, October 2009, pp. 41-55.
- Krieger, Todd. "Getting Rich off 'Richie's' Trademark." *Daily Breeze* 18 December 1994.

- Krugman, Dean M. And Jameson L. Hayes. "Brand Concepts and Advertising." In Rodgers, Shelly and Esther Thorson editors, *Advertising Theory*. Routledge 2012, pp. 434-448.
- Lacassin, Francis. "Dictionary Definition." *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty eds. Leuven University Press, 2014. 39-46.
- La Cour, Erin. "Comics as a Minor Literature." *Image [&] Narrative* volume 17 issue 4, 2016, <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/view/1336>. Accessed 10 November 2016.
- Lee, Stan. "Stan Lee: 1974." Interviewed by Jay Maeder. *Alter Ego* 3.74, December 2007, pp. 36-46.
- Lefèvre, Pascal. "Mise en Scène and Framing : Visual Storytelling in *Lone Wolf and Cub*." *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods* edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. Routledge, 2012, pp. 71-83.
- Legman, Gerson. *Love and Death: A Study in Censorship*. Breaking Point, 1949.
- Levine, Michael G. "Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the Bleeding of History." In *Considering Maus: Approaches to Art Spiegelman's "Survivor's Tale" of the Holocaust*, edited by Deborah R. Geis. University of Alabama Press, 2003. 63-104.
- Levitz, Paul. Inside cover note. *Millennium Edition: Watchmen*, by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, DC Comics, March 2000.
- . *75 Years of DC Comics: The Art of Modern Mythmaking*. Taschen, 2017.
- Levy, Matthew and Heather Mathews. "The Abyss Gazes Also: The Self-Refential Cynicism of *Watchmen*." *ImageTeXT* 7.2.
- Levy, Michelle and Tom Mole. *The Broadview Introduction to Book History*. Broadview Press, 2017.

- @lezingham. "Striking resemblance Donald & Richie Rich. Comical times" *Twitter*, 22 November 2016, 7:24 AM, twitter.com/LezIngham/status/801083844304715776
- Lil' Romeo. "Richie Rich." *Gametime*, No Limit Records, 2002.
- Liu, Yen-Lian. "The Masculine Masquerade of Superheroes in *Watchmen*." *Gender Forum* 62 (2017): 39-65.
- Lopes, Paul. "Growing Up: The Popular Genre Strategy in Transforming Mainstream Comic Books." *Conference Papers—American Sociological Association* (2004).
- "Lord Snooty needs to get his house in order." *Western Daily Press* (Bristol, England), 14 July 2012.
- Lupoff, Dick, and Don Thompson. *All In Color for a Dime*. Arlington House, 1970.
- Lyles, William H. *Putting Dell on the Map: A History of the Dell Paperbacks*. Greenwood Press 1983.
- Lyons, Matthew. *A History of Reading and Writing in the Western World*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.
- @MAGerrity. "We're all just in a fucking Richie Rich comic now" *Twitter*, 23 November 2016, 3:53 PM, twitter.com/MAGerrity/status/801574490148847616
- Manivannan, V. "Interplay Amidst the Strangeness and the Charm: Under-language and the Attenuation of Meaning in the Film Adaptation of *Watchmen*." *ImageTeXT* 5.4 (2010).
- Margerum, Eileen. "The Case for Sunny Jim: An Advertising Legend Revisited." *Sextant: The Journal of Salem State College*. 12.1-2 (2001-2002).
https://web.archive.org/web/20080604161845/http://www.salemstate.edu/sextant/volXII_2/SEXT-essay-sunny-jim.htm Accessed 6 October 2018.

- Marrone, Daniel. *Forging the Past. Seth and the Art of Memory*. University Press of Mississippi, 2016.
- Marschall, Rick, and Warren Bernard. *Drawing Power: A Compendium of Cartoon Advertising*. Fantagraphics & Marschall Books, 2011.
- Martina, Guido. Illustrated by Angelo Bioletti, script adaptation by Stefan Petruca. *Mickey's Inferno*. Papercutz, 2016.
- Mash Out Posse. "Get the Fuck Outta Here." *Mash Out Posse*, Family First, 2004.
- Mathews, Jennifer P. *Chicle: The Chewing Gum of the Americas, from the Ancient Maya to William Wrigley*. University of Arizona Press, 2009.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. William Morrow, 1994.
- McCoy, Beth A. "Race and the (Para)Textual Condition." *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 199-211.
- McDonnell, Patrick, Karen O'Connell, and Georgia Riley de Havenon. *Crazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman*. Harry N. Abrams, 2004.
- McGann, Jerome. "The Socialization of Texts." *The Book History Reader* edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Routledge, 2008, pp. 39-46.
- McGann, Jerome. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton University Press, 1991.
- . "Shall These Bones Live?" *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 113-124.
- McKenzie, D. F. "The Dialectics of Bibliography Now." *The Broadview Reader in Book History*. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, editors. Broadview, 2015. 45-61.
- McNeal, James U. *Becoming a Consumer: Development of Consumer Behaviour Patterns in Childhood*. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007.

- Meskin, Aaron. "Comics as Literature?" *British Journal of Aesthetics* volume 49 issue 3, July 2009, pp. 219-239.
- Meskin, Aaron and Roy T. Cook, editors. *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Meyer, Christina. "Medial transgressions: comics—sheet music—theatre—toys." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 7.3 (2016), 293-305.
- Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty eds. *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Leuven University Press, 2014.
- Miller, Ann. "Formalist Theory: Academics." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. 150-163.
- Miller, Daniel. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- Millington, Michael P. "Paneling Rage: The Loss of Deliberate Sequence." *Crossing Boundaries in Graphic Narrative: Essays on Forms, Series and Genres* edited by Jake Jakaitis and James F. Wurtz. McFarland, 2012 pp. 207-218.
- @mjvandam. "Shout out for the Richie Rich nod. I've got 100s of his comics in my parents' attic which I'll have to sell for food when this passes." *Twitter*, 3 November 2016, 2:48 PM, twitter.com/mjvandam/status/926566828222173184
- Molotiu, Andrei. "Abstract form : sequential dynamism and iconostasis in abstract comics and Steve Ditko's Amazing Spider-man." *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods* edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. Routledge, 2012, 84-100.
- Moor, Liz. *The Rise of Brands*. Berg, 2007.
- Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. DC Comics, 2014.
- . *Watchmen* #1-12. DC Comics, 1986-1987.

- . *Watchmen* #1. DC Comics, 2000.
- . *Les Gardiens Tome 3*. Éditions Zenda, 1988.
- . *Absolute Watchmen*. DC Comics, 2005.
- . *Watchmen: The Deluxe Edition*. DC Comics, 2013.
- . *Watchmen Collector's Edition*. DC Comics, 2017.
- . *Watchmen Noir*. DC Comics, 2016.
- . Interview with Barry Kavanagh. "The Alan Moore Interview." *The Blather*, 17 October 2000. <http://www.blather.net/projects/alan-moore-interview/>
- Morton, Drew. "“Watched any good books lately?”: The Formal Failure of the *Watchmen* Motion Comic." *Cinema Journal* 56.2 (Winter 2017): 132-137.
- Moses, Geoffrey. "What a Life! Carl Barks' Donald Duck as Nervous Modern." *International Journal of Comic Art* 12.1 (2010). 288-301.
- Mosley, Walter. *Maximum FF: A Visual Exegesis of Fantastic Four #1 by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, Conceived and Orchestrated by Walter Mosley, Essay by Mark Evanier*. Marvel, 2005.
- Mott, Frank Luther. *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1930, Vol. 3*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958.
- Mougin, Lou. "Thrilling Harvey Heroes." *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 88-96.
- Murray, Padmini Ray. "Behind the Panel: Examining Invisible Labour in the Comics Publishing Industry." *Publishing Research Quarterly* volume 29 issue 4, 22 October 2013. Accessed 20 July 2016.
- Nasaw, David. *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst*. Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Nead, Lynda. *The Haunted Gallery: Painting, Photography, Film c. 1900*. Yale University Press, 2007.

“New Trump Hotel on Central Park.” *The New York Times*, 19 January 1997, nytimes.com/1997/01/19/travel/new-trump-hotel-on-central-park.html

Noakes, Richard. “*Punch* and comic journalism in mid-Victorian Britain.” In Cantor, Geoffrey; Gowan Dawson; Graeme Gooday; Richard Noakes; Sally Shuttleworth; and Jonathan R. Topham, *Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical: Reading the Magazine of Nature*. 91-122

Nolan, Michelle. *Love on the Racks*. McFarland, 2008.

Nyberg, Amy Kiste. *Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code*. UP of Mississippi, 1998.

O’Malley, Andrew. *The Innocence Project*, <http://www.ryerson.ca/cdh/projects/innocence-project/>

“The One Wherein There Is a Big Twist, Part 1.” *Drawn Together*. Season 1, episode 7, Double Hemm & Rough Draft Studios, 2004.

Opie, Iona and Peter. *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. Clarendon Press, 1959.

Oppolzer, Markus. “Reaching an audience: The publication history of David Hine’s *Strange Embrace*.” *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*. 7.3 (2016). 268-282.

Orbán, Katalin. “A Language of Scratches and Stitches: The Graphic Novel Between Hyperreading and Print.” *Critical Inquiry* 40.3 (Spring 2014) 169-181.

Orbanes, Philip E. *Monopoly: The World’s Most Famous Game & How It Got That Way*. Da Capo Press, 2006.

Owen, Chris. “Tintin Crosses the Atlantic: The Golden Press Affair.” *Tintinologist*. January 2007. <http://www.tintinologist.org/articles/goldenpress.html>

- The Oxford English Dictionary Volume VIII. Clarendon Press, 1933.
- Parent, Dan and Fernando Ruiz. *Die Kitty Die Volume Two: Hollywood or Bust*. Comixology. ChapterHouse Comics, 2017.
- Parille, Ken. "Friendly Ghosts and Comic Form." *The Comics Journal*. The Comics Journal, 14 February 2013. Web. 6 March 2016. <http://www.tcj.com/friendly-ghosts-and-comics-form/>
- Parkin, Lance. *Magic Words: The Extraordinary Life of Alan Moore*. Aurum, 2013.
- Pearson, David. *Books as History*. Revised edition. The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 2012.
- Pecora, Norma Odom. *The Business of Children's Entertainment*. Guilford Press, 1998.
- Perry, George and Alan Aldridge. *The Penguin Book of Comics*. Penguin Books, 1971.
- Petrie, Donald, director. *Richie Rich*. Warner Bros., 1995.
- Petrovic, Paul. "The Culturally Constituted Gaze: Fetishizing the Feminine from Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons's *Watchmen* to Zack Snyder's *Watchmen*." *ImageText* 5.4 (2010).
- Piatti-Farnell, Lorna. "'For God's sake, cover yourself': sexual violence, disrupted histories, and the gendered politics of patriotism in *Watchmen*." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 8.3 (2017): 238-251.
- Pogrebin, Robin. "52-Story Comeback is So Very Trump; Columbus Circle Tower Proclaims That Modesty Is an Overrated Virtue." *The New York Times*, 25 April 1996, nytimes.com/1996/04/25/nyregion/52-story-comeback-so-very-trump-columbus-circle-tower-proclaims-that-modesty.html
- Polley, Jason S. "Watching the Watchmen, Mediating the Mediators." *Literature Compass* 10.8 (2013): 593-604.

Post, Howard. "Howie's Hot Stuff." Interview by Chris Knowles and Jon B. Cooke. *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 80-85.

Postema, Barbara. *Narrative Structure in Comics: Making Sense of Fragments*. New York: RIT Press, 2013.

@PrBud72. "Trump is a Richie Rich spoiled brat who's destroying the Republican Party!"

Twitter, 11 October 2016, 6:47 PM, twitter.com/PrBud72/status/786020490943066112

Priego, Ernesto. "On Cultural Materialism, Comics and Digital Media." *Opinion 1826*, issue 9, Autumn 2010. 1-3.

Prince, Michael J. "Alan Moore's America: The Liberal Individual and American Identities in *Watchmen*." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 44.4 (2011): 815-830.

Pustz, Matthew. *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers*. University Press of Mississippi, 1999.

Quattro, Ken. "The Ken Quattro Interview." *Will Eisner: A Spirited Life*, by Bob Andelman. Deluxe edition, TwoMorrows Publishing, 2015, pp. 23-28.

Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

Rauscher, Andreas. "The Last Action Hero's Swan Song." *The Rise and Reason of Comics and Graphic Literature* edited by Joyce Goggin and Dan A. Hassler-Forest, McFarland, 2010, pp. 130-141.

Ray, Alice. "Who translates the Watchmen? (Re)traduire les héros marginaux d'Alan Moore." *TranscUlturAl* 8.2 (2016): 42-67.

Read, Allen Walker. *Classic American Graffiti*. Maledicta, 1977.

Redclift, Michael. *Chewing Gum: The Fortunes of Taste*. Routledge, 2004.

- Rehak, Bob. "Adapting *Watchmen* after 9/11." *Cinema Journal* 51.1 (Fall 2011). 154-159.
- Reitberger, Reinhold and Wolfgang J. Fuchs. *Comics: Anatomy of a Mass Medium*. Little, Brown, 1972.
- Resig, John. "Using Computer Vision to Increase the Research Potential of Photo Archives." *Journal of Digital Humanities*, 3.2 Summer 2014, journalofdigitalhumanities.org/3-2/using-computer-vision-to-increase-the-research-potential-of-photo-archives-by-john-resig/
- Ricca, Brad. *Super Boys: The Amazing Adventures of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, The Creators of Superman*. St. Martin's Press, 2013.
- Richie Rich*, No. 219, Harvey Comics, 1986.
- "Richie Rich Finds a Friend." *Time Magazine*, 25 September 1989, p. 57.
- Rifkind, Candida. "The Biotopographies of Seth's *George Scott (1894-1975)*. In Thomas Allen and Jennifer Blair, *Material Cultures in Canada*. Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2015. 225-246.
- Robinson, Jerry. *The Comics: An Illustrated History of Comic Strip Art*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.
- Robinson, Solveig C. *The Book in Society: An Introduction to Print Culture*. Broadview, 2014.
- Roberts, Garyn G. "Understanding the Sequential Art of Comic Strips and Comic Books and Their Descendants in the Early Years of the New Millennium." *The Journal of American Culture* 27.2 (June 2004).
- Rockwell, Geoffrey and Stéfan Sinclair. *Hemeneutica: Computer-Assisted Interpretation in the Humanities*. ProQuest. The MIT Press: 2016.
- Rodgers, Shelly and Esther Thorson editors. *Advertising Theory*. Routledge 2012.

@RussellTheDrive. "Burger King??? Look at Richie Rich over here..." *Twitter*, 8 October 2016, 6:23PM, twitter.com/RussellTheDrive/status/784927114709663744

Round, Julia. "Fantastic Alterities and the Sandman." *Crossing Boundaries in Graphic Narrative: Essays on Forms, Series and Genres* edited by Jake Jakaitis and James F. Wurtz. McFarland, 2012, pp. 71-92.

Round, Julia. "'Is this a book?' DC Vertigo and the Redefinition of Comics in the 1990s." *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts*. Williams, Paul and James Lyons editors. University Press of Mississippi, 2010. 14-30.

Ryall, Chris, and Scott Tipton. *Comic Books 101: The History, Methods, and Madness*. Impact Books, 2008.

Saul, Gerald. "Amazing Pud delivery." *Blogspot*, 23 August 2017. <https://geraldsaul.blogspot.ca>. Accessed April 10 2018.

Sassienie, Paul. *The Comic Book: The One Essential Guide for Comic Book Fans Everywhere*. Chartwell Books, Inc, 1994.

Saunders, John. "Tootsie Roll buys Dubble Bubble." *The Globe and Mail* 1 September 2004.

Savan, Leslie. *Sponsored Life: Ads, TV, and American Culture*. Temple University Press, 1994.

Scandura, Jani. *Down in the Dumps: Place, Modernity, American Depression*. Duke University Press, 2008.

Schechter, Russell. "Kat and Maus." *Communication Research* 16.4 (August 1989) 552-566.

Shelley, Percy. *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*. Introduction and notes by Bruce Woodcock. Wordsworth Poetry Library, 2002.

Schenk, Ramon. "Hey, Who Took That?!" *Alter Ego* 3.89, October 2009, pp. 82-83.

- Schiffer, Ed. ““Fable Number One”: Some Myths about Consumption.” In Scapp, Ron and Brian Seitz, editors. *Eating Culture*. State University of New York Press, 1998. 288-297.
- Schilling, Peter Junior. *Carl Barks’ Duck: Average American*. Uncivilized Books, 2014.
- Scott, Sharon M. *Toys and American Culture: An Encyclopedia*. Greenwood, 2010.
- Seiter, Ellen. *Sold Separately: Parents & Children in Consumer Culture*. Rutgers UP, 1995.
- Selig, Ken. “Come Back When You Learn How to Draw.” Interview by Jim Amash. *Alter Ego* 3.89, October 2009, pp. 56-66.
- @ShaynessMac. “Donald Trump is Richie Rich 50 years later #debate” *Twitter*, 9 October 2016, 7:16 PM, twitter.com/ShaynessMac/status/785302977976213506
- “SherlockNet: tagging and captioning the British Library’s Flickr images.” *British Library digital scholarship blog*, 22 August 2016, blogs.bl.uk/digital-scholarship/visual-arts/
- @ShezrehMirza. “Congrats @cyalm, you are clubbed along the likes of the Richie-Rich Sharjeel Memon and Ms Ayyan Ali.” *Twitter*, 11 October 2016, 1:05 PM, twitter.com/ShezrehMirza/status/785934287489081344
- Sikoryak, R. *Masterpiece Comics*. Drawn and Quarterly, 2009.
- . “The Unquotable Trump.” *Tumblr*, unquotabletrump.tumblr.com
- Silbermann, Alphons and Hans-Dieter Dyroff editors. *Comics and Visual Culture: Research Studies from Ten Countries*. Saur, 1986.
- Simon, Michele. *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back*. Nation Books, 2006.
- Simon, Joe. “Harvey Gets Simonized.” Interview by Jon B. Cooke. *Comic Book Artist* 19, June 2002, pp. 86-87.

- Skidmore, Max J. and Joey Skidmore. "More Than Mere Fantasy: Political Themes in Contemporary Comic Books." *Journal of Popular Culture* Summer 1983. 83-92.
- Slawek, Tadeusz. "The Vase and Broken Pieces. Productivity and the Margin of Waste." In Rachwal, Tadeusz. *Rubbish, Waste and Litter: Culture and Its Refuse/als*. Wydawnictwo SWPSA Academica, 2008. 9-29.
- Smith, Craig. "Motion comics: Modes of adaptation and the issue of authenticity." *Animation Practice, Process & Production* 1.2 (2011): 357-378.
- Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan. *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Routledge, 2017.
- Smolderen, Thierry. "Graphic Hybridization, the Crucible of Comics." *The French Comics Theory Reader*. Miller, Ann and Bart Beaty eds. Leuven University Press, 2014. 47-61.
- . *The Origins of Comics: From William Hogarth to Winsor McCay*. Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. University Press of Mississippi, 2014.
- Sokolow, Michael. "More Often than Not, It's Put in a Bag': Culture and the Comic Book Collector." *Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy* 1997 Fall-1998 Spring 38-39, 63-82.
- Spiegelman, Art. "Wacky Days." In The Topps Company, *Wacky Packages*, Abrams ComicArts, 2008. 6-8.
- . *MetaMaus*. Pantheon, 2011.
- . "Putting Out the Garbage." In The Topps Company, *Garbage Pail Kids*, Abrams ComicArts, 2012. 6-10.
- Spurgeon, Tom. "Comics Made Me Fat." *The Comics Reporter*. 1 January 2000.
<http://www.comicsreporter.com/index.php/briefings/commentary/1865/>
- Steedman, Carolyn. *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*. Rutgers University Press, 2002.

- Stein, Daniel. “‘Mummified objects’: Superhero comics in the digital age.” *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 7.3 (2016) 283-292.
- Steirer, Gregory. “No more bags and boards: collecting culture and the digital comics marketplace.” *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 5:4 455-469.
- Stern, Roger, et al. *Avengers: Heavy Metal*. Marvel Comics, 2013.
- @stevenmalcolm. “Money doesn’t mean a happy life.... even Richie Rich became a drug addict.....” *Twitter*, 7 October 2016, 6:05 AM,
twitter.com/IMGMalcolm/status/784379049875480577
- Stevens, J. Richard and Christopher Edward Bell. “Do Fans Own Digital Comic Books? Examining the Copyright and Intellectual Property Attitudes of Comic Book Fans.” *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012), 751-772.
- Stewart, Bbob. “Bubbling Over.” *Bazooka Joe and His Gang*. Topps, 2013.
- “The Story of Richie Rich.” *The Richie Rich / Scooby-Doo Show Volume One*. Hanna-Barbera Classics Collection, 2008.
- Strasser, Susan. *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*. Metropolitan Books, 1999.
- Susman, Warren I. *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century*. Pantheon, 1984.
- Svensson, Patrik. *Big Digital Humanities: Imagining a Meeting Place for the Humanities and the Digital*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 2016.
- Syma, Carrye Kay and Robert G. Weiner, editors. *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*. McFarland & Co., 2013.
- Terras, Melissa. *Image to Interpretation: An Intelligent System to Aid Historians in Reading the Vindolanda Texts*. Oxford UP, 2006.

- . "Image processing in the digital humanities." In Claire Warwick, Melissa Terras, and Julianne Nyhan, *Digital Humanities in Practice*. Facet Publishing, 2012.
- Thon, Jan-Noël & Lukas R.A. Wilde. "Mediality and materiality of contemporary comics." *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 7.3 (2016), 233-241.
- Thomas, Roy editor. *The All-Star Companion Volume 2*. TwoMorrows Press, 2006.
- Thompson, Don and Richard Lupoff. *The Comic-Book Book*. Arlington House, 1973.
- "Three Men and a Comic Book." *The Simpsons*, season 2, episode 21, Fox, 9 May 1991.
- Tilley, Carol L. "Using Comics to Teach the Language Arts in the 1940s and 1950s." *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*. Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner, editors. McFarland & Co., 2013. 35-47. 12-22.
- . "Educating with Comics." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. 1-11.
- Tinker, Emma. "Manuscript in Print: The Materiality of Alternative Comics." *Literature Compass* 4.4 (2007): 1169-1182.
- Tomlinson, John. *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1991.
- Topps Company Inc. *Mars Attacks*. Abrams ComicArts, 2012.
- . *Bazooka Joe and His Gang*. Abrams ComicArts, 2013.
- . *Star Wars. The Original Topps Trading Card Series Volume One*. Abrams ComicArts, 2015.
- . *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back. The Original Topps Trading Card Series Volume Two*. Abrams ComicArts, 2016.
- . *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi. The Original Topps Trading Card Series Volume Three*. Abrams ComicArts, 2016.

- Travis, Trysh. "Print and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture." *Perspectives on American Book History*. Casper, Scott E., Joanne D. Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves editors. University of Massachusetts Press, 2002. 339-366.
- Troutman, Philip. "'Indisciplinary' Teaching: Comics Studies and Research Writing Pedagogy." Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner, editors. *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*. McFarland & Co., 2013. 120-134.
- Unser-Schutz, Giancarla. "Developing a text-based corpus of the language of Japanese comics (*manga*)." In Newman, John; Baayen, Harald, and Sally Rice. *Corpus-Based Studies in Language Use, Language Learning, and Language Documentation*, Rodopi, 2011, pp. 213-238.
- United States Congress. Senate. Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency. *Interim Report: Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency*, 84th Long. 1st Sess., 1955. Greenwood Press: 1969.
- United States, President's Special Review Board. *Report of the President's Special Review Board, February 26, 1987*. Government Printing Office, 1987.
- Van Ness, Sara J. *Watchmen as Literature: A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel*. McFarland & Company, 2010.
- Varma, Sandeep K. "Quantum Bhangra: Bhangra Music and Identity in the South Asian Diaspora." *Limina*, 2005, 11, pp. 17-27.
- Walker, Brian. *The Comics Before 1945*. Harry N. Abrams, 2004.
- Walsh, John A. "Comic Book Markup Language: An Introduction and Rationale." *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly* 2012 6.1.

Wanzo, Rebecca. "The Superhero: Meditations on Surveillance, Salvation, and Desire."

Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies. 6.1 (March 2009), 93-97.

"WATCHMEN: INTERNATIONAL EDITION." *Dccomics.com*.

<https://www.dccomics.com/graphic-novels/watchmen-1986/watchmen-international-edition>

"Watchmen." *Grand Comics Database*. <https://www.comics.org/issue/43793/>

Weiner, Robert G. "Educating about Comics." *The Secret Origins of Comics Studies*. Smith, Matthew J. and Randy Duncan, editors. Routledge, 2017. 12-30.

Wernick, Andrew. *Promotional Culture: Advertising, ideology and symbolic expression*. SAGE, 1991.

White, David Manning, and Robert H. Abel editors. *The Funnies: An American Idiom*. Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.

Whitson, Roger and Jason Whittaker. *William Blake and the Digital Humanities*. Routledge, 2013.

Wilde, Lukas R.A. "Distinguishing Mediality: The Problem of Identifying Forms and Features of Digital Comics." *Networking Knowledge* 8.4 (July 2015).

Williams, Jennifer H. "The Canon and the Cutting Edge: On Teaching the Graphic Novel." 2011. A review of Stephen E. Tabachnick's *Teaching the Graphic Novel*. In *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 12.1.

Williams, Paul and James Lyons. *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts*. University Press of Mississippi, 2010.

@WineCoffeeLove. [.@EricTrump literally looks like a grown version of Richie Rich.](#)

[#Election2016 #Trump #debates](#) *Twitter*, 11 October 2016, 9:35 AM,

twitter.com/WineCoffeeLove/status/785881397068050433

Witek, Joseph. *Comic Books as History*. University Press of Mississippi, 1989.

----- "Comics Modes. Caricature and Illustration in the Crumb Family's Dirty Laundry."

Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan. Routledge, 2012, pp. 27-42.

Wolk, Douglas. *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean by Douglas Wolk*. Da Capo, 2007.

Wolf, Mark J.P. "World-Building in *Watchmen*." *Cinema Journal* 56.2 (Winter 2017): 119-125.

Wolf-Meyer, Matthew. "The World Ozymandias Made: Utopias in the Superhero Comic, Subculture, and the Conservation of Difference." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 36.3 (2003) 497-517.

@Wonkette. "RAGE" *Twitter*, 3 November 2017, 2:30 PM,

twitter.com/Wonkette/status/926562236113580033

Woo, Benjamin. "Considering *Watchmen*: Poetics, Property, Politics by Andrew Hoberek (review)." *Cinema Journal* 56.2 (Winter 2017) 151-155.

Worcester, Kent, editor. *Peter Bagge: Conversations*. University Press of Mississippi, 2015.

Wright, Bradford W. *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Würth, Kiene Brillenburg. "Posthumanities and Post-Textualities: Read *The Raw Shark Texts* and *Woman's World*." *Comparative Literature* 63.2 (2011) 119-141.

Wüllner, Daniel. "Suspended in Mid-Month: Serialized Storytelling in Comics." *The Rise and Reason of Comics and Graphic Literature* edited by Joyce Goggin and Dan A. Hassler-Forest, McFarland, 2010, pp. 42-55.

Yezbick, Daniel F. "Ridiculous Rebellion: George L. Carlson and the Recovery of *Jingle Jangle Comics*. *The Rise and Reason of Comics and Graphic Literature* edited by Joyce Goggin and Dan A. Hassler-Forest, McFarland, 2010, pp. 25-41.

Zorbaugh, Harvey. "What Adults Think of Comics as Reading For Children." *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 23.4, 1 December 1949, jstor.org/stable/2264558