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Graphic Novels or Novel Graphics?

The Evolution of an Iconoclastic Genre

Since their inception comic books have creatively explored the relationship of text and image. The advent in the 1970s of a new subgenre, the graphic novel, guaranteed the continued vitality of the genre and simultaneously expanded its audience. Graphic novels have developed innovative, thought-provoking, and entertaining new relationships between texts and images that have made them especially attractive to readers who are increasingly oriented to images. In this essay I would like to investigate the history, evolution and current popularity of the graphic novel, a genre that represents the creative interplay between text and image *par excellence*.

Sequences of pictures, often with accompanying texts, used to relate a story or an event in history have been dated by some critics as far back as ancient Egypt. In *The Rough Guide to Graphic Novels*, Danny Fingeroth carves out a brief history as follows:

The paintings in ancient Egyptian tombs record events through a combination of sequential drawings and hieroglyphic lettering. . . . A monumental example of sequential art from the Roman period is Trajan's Column, completed in AD 113. Its spiraling carvings tell the story of the emperor Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars. . . . Similar narrative friezes are found on ancient Greek and Roman temples, as well as early Church buildings. Sequential art can also be seen in medieval tapestries, the most famous of which is the Bayeux Tapestry, recording the Norman invasion of Britain in 1066. (11)

In Europe and the United States, where the graphic novel has especially flourished, comics, cartoons, or graphic stories have been around for several centuries, beginning with broadsheets published in England in the seventeenth century, some observing public executions, others intended as either personal or political satire. Gradually individual cartoon cells were strung together to make comic strips that told a more detailed story, and then these strips were collected into more complex and sustained narratives that have commonly been referred to as comic books.¹

Comic books, which have a seventy-year history in the US, introduced a new subgenre in the late 1970s: the graphic novel. Its name has been contested: graphic novel, sequential art, *bande dessinée*, picture novella, picto-fiction, illustories, and

adult comics. Other terms have also been suggested: “One editorial collective, Canadian publishing house Drawn & Quarterly proposed ‘graphica’ for this ‘whole new art movement’ in a Manifesto” (Campbell 169). “Graphica” of course, has its limitations (sounds too much like erotica, is an unidentifiable new word, etc.) but it was the best option” (Le Duc 7). Despite extensive discussion and multiple new proposed terms, graphic novel still appears to be the most commonly used term. As a genre, the graphic novel is (usually) not graphic in any sexual sense of the term and may well consist of a short story or novella rather than a novel *per se*. It also may not even be fictional, so the term “graphic novel” is further called into question. Definitions vary widely, but common characteristics include multilayered narrative, a black/white format (reminiscent of the dramatic and effective use of chiaroscuro technique in films of the ’20s), [auto]biography or auto/biographical elements, and serial publication. Often they treat serious topics or are aimed at an adult audience and present a socio-political critique. It is important to note that in certain eras and locations publicly exercised social criticism has been known to have dangerous consequences.

The tradition of social critique via cartoons, rather than being a contemporary phenomenon only, actually dates back several centuries. In discussing the shift from execution broadsheets to sheets involving humor, Roger Sabin notes: “One important aspect of this shift towards humour was that the subversive power of pictorial satire was felt for the first time. Occasionally, things could get dangerous, as artists used the sheets to say things about royalty and politicians that they knew they could not get away with in the written word. As a result, the history of this period is peppered with stories of cartoonists being imprisoned, attacked or even assassinated for going too far” (12). It might not be out of place to think of the role of the cartoonist as that of the court jester, who under the guise of entertainment, could exercise sharp social critique. The possible dire repercussions of such social criticism can be found in the case of the Danish journalist-cartoonist, Kurt Westergaard, who, in 2005, incurred the wrath of many Muslims (and numerous fatwas) by portraying Mohammed in what was considered an unflattering, even sacrilegious, manner (with a bomb in his turban).

In recent years, the graphic novel format has also been used by some authors to confront traumatic experiences, the most notable early example being Art Spiegelman’s two volumes of *Maus* (1986, 1991). In addition, using the *Classics Illustrated* model, graphic novels have also been employed to introduce new audiences to classic literary texts. Works such as Kafka’s *The Trial* (Chantal Montellier and David Zane Mairowitz, 2008), Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* (Stanislas Brezet, 2003), Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (Nancy Butler and Hugo Petrus, 2009), or Dumas’s *The Count of Monte Cristo* (Mitsu Yamamoto and Pablo Marcos Studio, 1992) have been creatively re-envisioned in graphic novel form as have parodies of

literary works such as *Gemma Boverly* (Posy Simmonds, 1999) and *Alice in Sunderland* (Bryan Talbot, 2007). As R. Crumb's much maligned illustration of the biblical book of Genesis (*The Book of Genesis Illustrated*, 2009) testifies, even sacred texts have been reworked by cartoonists. In a parallel development to the illustration of classic works, numerous [auto]biographical and historically-based texts have been created by professional cartoonists and increasingly by teams of writers and cartoonists.

As the title of this essay suggests, the relationship of word and text in graphic novels has been and will inevitably continue to be in flux. In general though, texts have increasingly gained space and complexity in relation to images, and graphic novels often concretize literary ambiguity. But there are exceptions to this rule, particularly the employment of the *absence* of text to heighten graphic impact. The term graphic novel "signifies a movement rather than a form" (Eddie Campbell, cited in Fingerroth 6), and such novels are inherently iconoclastic, being "marked by the exploration of innovative stylistic features, i.e. non-conventional formats and monochromatic techniques." Graphic novels are also an international phenomenon, as my examples from the US, France, Germany, Lebanon, Israel, and Malaysia will demonstrate.

Art Spiegelman's first volume of *Maus* was published serially from 1981 to 1986 in *Raw*, an alternative comic book anthology co-edited with his wife Françoise Mouly. *Maus* was a watershed publication for the graphic novel. It was well received by the public (albeit not so initially by critics) and considerably raised the visibility of the genre. Exhibiting many of the characteristics that came to be hallmarks of the graphic novel, *Maus* became a paradigmatic work. It inaugurated a number of characteristics that have become standard to the genre: a frame/tale construction which includes a multilayered narrative; black and white drawings (despite the conflicting and continuing tradition of colored book covers or dust jackets); animal symbolism and anthropomorphization (talking animals);² and (auto) biographical elements, including metatextual representations of the artist in the narrative. Like other graphic novels to follow, *Maus* presented a serious, rather than comic or supernatural, subject matter: in this case, a confrontation with the Holocaust and the protagonist's fraught relationship with his father.³ Like later graphic novels, *Maus* also was published serially, with the intent, however, from the beginning for eventual collection into and publication as a volume. Spiegelman included mixed media, particularly the use of photographs in addition to the drawn cartoon cells. He began the narrative *in medias res*, with corresponding flashbacks, and offered a linguistic but primarily visual wittiness and ludic irreverence reminiscent of *Tristram Shandy* or perhaps the more genre-appropriate *Mad* magazine. To this list one might add what Stephen Weiner in *Faster than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel*, describes as "sophisticated, rich, visionary storytelling" (38).

Perhaps the sophistication and richness Weiner cites are based in part on the meta-textual elements, already visible in the first volume of *Maus*, but that particularly come to the fore in volume two. In this regard, one might cite as an example those frames where Spiegelman represents himself sitting at his desk musing on how to proceed with both the project and his relationship with his father, and he depicts himself not as a mouse, but rather as a human wearing a mouse mask—a fine, but significant distinction. Spiegelman has said that he created *Maus* to “sort out and put into linear form, the chaos of my own personal history” (cited in Weiner 37). This comment refers to the autobiographical element so common to many new wave graphic novels, as well as to the confrontation with a traumatic event. Spiegelman’s comment also raises the issue of an important distinction in the creative process. Professional graphic artists choose the medium available to them based on their particular skill set, whereas other creators of graphic novels, who are not artists, must collaborate with a graphic illustrator. This latter group may have had numerous art forms available to them for treating a topic, but for a variety of reasons—that would differ from those of professional graphic illustrators—have opted for the graphic novel genre. Alissa Torres, who falls into the second category, is the author of *American Widow* (2008), which deals with her husband’s death in the World Trade Center on 9/11. She has commented on the visual nature of 9/11: “We were constantly bombarded by the same images over and over: the burning towers. And I was bombarding myself with images of my husband. That’s all I had . . . 9/11 was such a graphic event. Just writing about it wasn’t enough. I needed to take control of the images” (Torres, Interview 2D). Torres had kept a journal (“purging my emotions onto the page”) and had written essays on 9/11, but she said that she wanted the book to do more, including the posing of questions, so she sought out a graphic artist. Both Spiegelman and Torres use the graphic novel format to help shape narratives (giving them linearity), separate various narrative strands (both begin *in medias res* and use flashbacks), and untangle emotions. These traits are characteristic of many other graphic novels as well.

Graphic novels have played an iconoclastic role since their inception. But this iconoclasm has not occurred merely in terms of thematic content; it has also concerned the nature of the art itself. Numerous critics link comics with film, highlighting the similarities between the two genres. Both forms employ sequences of pictures to unfold the narrative; the main difference is that the images move more quickly in film. But, sequential art also expresses time and can control tempo (like long or short camera shots) through repetition or the relationship of large and small images. It conveys emotion, similar to cinematic close-up shots through absence and the size of both text and images; it conveys voice-overs or does the work of establishing shots via text boxes. Sequential art represents dialogue through speech bubbles and creates movements like cinematic pan or tracking shots by

breaking the boundaries between comic cells either with figures that transgress the frames, or through a complete lack of framing, or even with speech bubbles and other texts that flow across cells. Like films, sequential art can also represent flashbacks. It makes linkages and commentary, like cinema, through the use of montage—the juxtaposition of (perhaps unrelated or even conflicting) images. Commenting on the mechanics of graphic novels, Roger Sabin has written: “comics are a language: they combine to constitute a weave of writing and art which has its own syntax, grammar and conventions, and which can communicate ideas in a totally unique fashion. They point, for example, to the way in which words and images can be juxtaposed to generate a mood; to how the amount of time that is allowed to elapse between images can be used for dramatic effect; to the way that cinematic cutting can be used for extra movement; and to the fact that, ultimately, there is no limit to what a comic can do other than that imposed by a creator’s imagination” (Sabin 6–7).

Let us now turn our attention to some examples of the graphic novel that make explicit their subversive and iconoclastic function. Just as the early film at the turn of the century poached topics from classical literary works in order to gain legitimacy with a public, that looked askance at this apparently unwholesome new form of public entertainment, so the graphic novel has turned to classic authors and works as a source of both *Stoff* and respectability. I mention here just a few examples from an ever-growing list of publications. Kafka’s *The Trial* was made into an English-language graphic novel in 2008 by a writer and an illustrator both working in France. It was published by Sterling of New York and London, a publishing house active in the production of graphic novels. This classic text now lists three “authors” whose names, Kafka—Montellier—Mairowitz, appear across the bottom of the cover in equally large typeface. The cover already engages in interpretation by featuring the face of a young man who could be the protagonist Joseph K or, based on known photographs, could be Kafka himself. The background of vertical black and white stripes could reference the bars of a prison or a jail suit and allude to Joseph K’s sense of entrapment. The young man on the cover fixes the reader with a compelling stare that already invites engagement. Two motifs contextualize the narrative: Joseph K’s thirtieth and thirty-first birthdays as well as skeletons, which foreshadow his execution on the final page.

Several works by Proust including *À la recherche du temps perdu*, have also been given graphic treatments. In the case of Proust, however, the graphics provide less extraneous commentary to the text than in the Kafka novella. Rather, in Proust, the graphics appear to serve a more illustrative purpose in relation to the text. The graphic version of Jane Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice* (2009) also emphasizes illustration, but uses graphics in particularly innovative ways. Like Spiegelman’s *Maus*,

Pride & Prejudice was serialized in five parts. Each serialization was bound with a cover that parodied popular adolescent girls' magazines and exhibited a marked preference for alliteration. Issue one, for example, boasts the following texts: "Who is Mr. Darcy?," "Bingleys Bring Bling to Britain," "17 Secrets About Summer Dresses," "How to Cure your Boy-Crazy Sisters!," and "Lizzy on Love, Loss, and Living." Several of these content "advertisements" might prove especially amusing to those familiar with Jane Austen's original text, especially the tongue-in-cheek advice on what to do with boy-crazy sisters. Like the Proust graphic adaptations, but unusual for graphic novels as a whole, this version of *Pride & Prejudice* is in color. The colors are, however, muted and consist mainly of earth tones; the effect is almost that of sepia photos. The figures are neither photographic nor cartoon-style but something in between. The representations of the Bennett sisters are vaguely reminiscent of the images in the newspaper comics of Brenda Starr, the reporter. Also unique to this comic book is the fact that it belongs to the Marvel comics Illustrated line, a new "bandwagon" effort by the venerable comic book company to adapt classic books to the graphic novel format. The adapter, Nancy Butler, proposed to the series editor that Marvel capitalize on a neglected demographic: young females. She wrote the following about being offered the adaptation job:

The first thing I did was go back to the canon; I reread *Pride and Prejudice* for the umpteenth time, but with new eyes. I needed to take this paragon of parlor talk, this ode to witty banter and insightful prose, and reduce it to captions and dialogue balloons. Without losing the flavor or texture. At first I tried modernizing the language and softening the social commentary, but in the end, it was Austen's own words and sharp-eyed observations that won the day. You don't update a classic; you give it free rein. (Austen Introduction, n.p.)

Butler's *Pride and Prejudice* exemplifies how a novel's wit and humor can successfully carry over in graphic adaptations.

A final example of a classic text that has been made into a graphic novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas, brings new dimensions to our discussion. Like Austen's novel, this text also belongs to a great-books-style series, in this instance, the "Great Illustrated Classics" collection published by Baronet books in New York. But this graphic novel adaptation clearly targets a different audience. Its type is set at about a 16 point if not larger; the paper is of a very low quality; and the format is small in comparison to other graphic novels (5.5" x 8"). The black and white images are also not as highly detailed as in most other works. Moreover, an unusual relationship exists between text and image. The text is found on the left-hand page and a corresponding illustration on the right-hand page. In the strictest sense then, this is not a graphic novel, in that there are no image cells. But if not as

a graphic novel, how should it be described? This unusual one-to-one relationship of text and image invites further reflection on both the definition and the potential parameters of the graphic novel genre.

As a variation on the adaptation of classic novels, one also finds cases where a graphic novel has been based on a classic film. An example for this somewhat unusual variant would be Jon Muth's *M* (1990 serialization, 2008 book), based on Fritz Lang's famous *film noir* of the same name.⁴ Muth's painterly style of blurred photo-realistic illustrations and use of mostly black and sepia tones with little other color is unique. In the Afterword, he describes his unusual approach to the individual images: "All of the scenes in *M* were enacted by people in character. I cast friends, family, and strangers, gathered clothes and props, and decided where each scene would be shot. Most of the book was photographed in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I grew up. It resembles a German city in its architecture and in its faces. After directing and photographing a scene, I would make my drawings from the photographs" (192). Adam Kempenaar has written that Muth's "stunning adaptation of *M* captures the essence of the original's bravura visual style and illuminates Lang's razor-sharp exploration of human frailty, compelling the reader to confront his or her own personal views of morality and justice" (8). Muth's work is more graphic in a violent and sexual way than Lang's film. For example he shows us "the ghosts of Beckert's past victims" complete with dripping blood and slit throats (Kempenaar 9). One might legitimately ask why anyone would want to make a graphic novel of a film that is considered a classic in its own right? Jon Muth addresses the question in his afterword when he comments: "Morality is a constant process in each of us. Dramatizing that process is what all great fiction does and that is what attracted me to doing *M* as a graphic novel" (191).

As a parallel to the somewhat unexpected graphic treatment of a classic film, there has also been the graphic reworking of a sacred text—by the noted and provocative cartoonist R. Crumb. *The Book of Genesis Illustrated*, on which he worked for five years and which appeared in 2009, has, not surprisingly, come under attack from certain quarters. The artist has disingenuously feigned ignorance, claiming: "If people of faith say what I've done is blasphemous or profane, I'd shrug my shoulders and say, 'I just illustrated what is there,' . . . 'I'm not ridiculing it, just illustrating the exact words that are there'" (Fowler 1F). But that, of course, is precisely the problem: the various, repetitive versions of the creation story, all the tedious "begats"—all the "blemishes" are apparent. The potentially subversive agenda of the project begins already on the dust jacket, which contains ambiguous and suggestive language such as "Adult Supervision Recommended for Minors," "All 50 Chapters" (as if some are usually omitted), and "The First Book of the Bible Graphically Depicted! Nothing Left Out!" Crumb himself said at a press conference in Paris, "(It's about) ruling elites victimizing people in sadistic ways, which is human beings at

their nastiest. . . . They have power over others, and they derive pleasure from inflicting pain on other humans. That's about as nasty as people get" (Fowler 1F). It is clear from these various cues that this adaptation was not just a straightforward illustration job for Crumb but rather a graphic project that provided ample room for socio-political critique.

Several recent works borrow from Spiegelman's *Maus* as a template for illustrating auto/biographical elements, historical events, and the confrontation of traumatic experience. The aforementioned *American Widow* (2008) by Alissa Torres is a case in point. As noted earlier, Torres deals with her husband's death on 9/11 and her first year without him. Through the use of flashbacks, it also reflects on their courtship and marriage.⁵ *American Widow* is an example of a collaborative effort between writer and illustrator. It thus stands in contrast to Spiegelman's *Maus* or Marjane Satrapi's well-known *Persepolis* (book 2005, animated film 2007), which constitute *auteur* works in which the story line, the actual narrative, the lettering, and the graphics are all products of a single "author." *American Widow* is largely black and white, but, in an unusual variation, it makes use of a pale aqua wash, and several pages near the end of the book display red roses. Torres and her graphic artist Sungyoon Choi also incorporate mixed media in the form of photographs, for example, of an evidence bag and a letter from the White House. Like *Maus*, this novel also presents a photograph of a deceased loved one—in this case two pages of color photographs of Torres's husband near the end of the book.

Another salient example of the aforementioned themes pioneered by Spiegelman (autobiography, history, and traumatic events) can be found in Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*, a collaborative work that centers on an Israeli veteran's haunted recollections of the Lebanon War and the massacres at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Like *Maus* and *American Widow*, *Waltz with Bashir* has a frame/tale construction; the current-day episodes are largely indicated by white margins and the flashback events by black margins as well as sepia tints. Also like *American Widow*, the conclusion features two pages of actual photographs—in this case, of the massacres. An interesting aspect of this work is that, like Jon Muth's *M*, it derives from an earlier film, an animated documentary of the same title made by Folman, a Tel Aviv-based film director.⁶ Similarly, the animated film version of *Persepolis* (2007), appearing two years after the graphic novel was published, offers yet another example of the close ties between the graphic novel and film. As in *Waltz with Bashir*, Satrapi's *Persepolis* exhibits a social critique similar to that found in both *Maus* and *American Widow*. The impact of such works is intensified by a process of defamiliarization. John Anderson wrote in a review of the film version of *Waltz with Bashir*:

As a filmgoing culture, our relationship to the animated movie is like our relationship to recess and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. . . . regardless of how

grim a cartoon, it's somehow still umbilically connected to the brighter side of childhood. Our hard-wired inference is innocence. Which is why the animated Israeli documentary 'Waltz with Bashir,' a movie about memory, is as devious and subversive as it is brilliant and nightmarish. It's a psychopathic teddy bear. It's a shiny red lunchbox filled with plastic explosives. (Anderson C1)

Perhaps the most radical and innovative example of a mixed media graphic novel to date is *I live here* by Mia Kirshner, et al.⁷ In terms of its layout, it is utterly unique. The exterior packaging has been designed to resemble a broken box containing four books. Of all the works discussed here, *I live here* is the most sharply political and makes the greatest use of mixed media.⁸ As a collaborative effort, it is without parallel, involving numerous writers and artists, including the well-known graphic journalist and author of the graphic novel *Palestine*, Joe Sacco. *I live here* is autobiographical to the extent that Kirshner includes excerpts from her journals and biographical in its representation of the stories of people living in four different troubled spots of the world: Ingushetia (the war in Chechnya), Burma, Ciudad Juarez, and Malawi. Kirshner's work points to the possibilities of the genre; it suggests new formats and new types of collaboration for future graphic artists. It also engages the reader immediately in re-creating the works themselves since one must decide which of the four books to extract first and in which order to read them. The inside of the "box" also contains textual material, drawing one's eye away from the books. As the books are removed from the box, additional texts become visible. The covers of the four books look like school composition notebooks and personal diaries. They have been distressed to reflect, perhaps, the disturbing nature of their contents and the distressed nature of the lives reflected in the notebooks. Two of the volumes look as though they have had needlework sewn onto them. They are particularly unusual because of the location of this patchwork, but also because of its menacing imagery. Thus the box itself and the four books' covers already begin the work of communicating distress, a process that continues with urgency on the pages within.

The phenomenal growth of graphic novels—a veritable tsunami—in the past decade, but particularly in the past five years, would indicate that the genre is here to stay. It would seem to attest to fundamental changes, at least in western cultures: first, an increasingly visual orientation due to the internet and second, the increasing interpenetration of popular culture and high culture. Due to its cooptation and replacement of traditional purely "textual" literature for the younger generation and its increasing sophistication and stylistic innovation, we ignore the graphic novel at our own peril (if we hope to avoid an insurmountable generational divide) and at the risk of our intellectual impoverishment. Peter Schjeldahl,

in a 2005 essay on the graphic novel, summarized the genre's cultural position succinctly and inimitably:

A certain theoretical frenzy about comics today is understandable, as it has been in other art forms in periods of their rapid development—think of the debates about painting that roiled Renaissance Italy. But such intellectual arousal rarely precedes creative glory. On the contrary, it commonly indicates that an artistic breakthrough, having been made and recognized, is over, and that a process of increasingly strained emulation and diminishing returns has set in. . . . Accordingly, there may never be another graphic novel as good as “Jimmy Corrigan,” even by [Chris] Ware himself—whose current serial in the *Times Magazine*, though tangy, bespeaks a style on cruise control. But if the major discoveries of the graphic novel's new world of the imagination have already been accomplished, its colonizing of the territory, like its threat to foot traffic in bookstore aisles, has only just begun. (6)

Of course Schjeldahl, writing in 2005, could not have known *I live here* by Mia Kirshner, et al., which breaks almost all previously known graphic novel conventions and indicates a bold new, innovative future for the genre.

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NOTES

- 1 For a succinct and authoritative history of the comic genre, see Roger Sabin's *Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels*, especially the introduction (“Not Quite Art”) and chapters 1 (“The Pioneers”) and 7 (“A New Mainstream”). See also Danny Fingeroth's *The Rough Guide to Graphic Novels*, chapters 1 and 2, and Stephen Weiner's *Faster Than a Speeding Bullet: The Rise of the Graphic Novel*, chapters 1–7.
- 2 For another example of talking animals in a graphic novel, see *Pride of Baghdad* (by Brian Vaughn and Niko Henrichon, 2006) about the fate of lions that escaped from the Baghdad zoo during the invasion of the city.
- 3 For a more recent graphic treatment of the Holocaust, that also explores the generation gap (but, in this case, a fictionalized amalgamation of stories), see *The Search* (by Eric Heuvel, et al. 2007). The characters' tall, slender bodies and their oval faces call to mind the Franco-Belgian *bande dessinée* tradition, especially of Hergé's *Tintin*. For more on the *bande dessinée*, see Michael Picone.
- 4 Muth, a painter, adapted Lang's *M* in 1990 into a four-issue comic book series. Due to the increased popularity of the graphic novel in general, these four issues were subsequently gathered into a single volume and published in 2008.
- 5 For a completely different graphic response to the events of September 11, 2001, see *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation* (2006) by Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colón, which uses the graphic format in an attempt to make the lengthy and somewhat daunting *The 9/11*

Commission Report accessible to more people. This work is not, technically, a graphic novel.

- 6 *Waltz with Bashir* has been called a “memoir, a history lesson, a combat picture, a piece of investigative journalism and an altogether amazing film” (Scott C1).
- 7 Art Spiegelman’s response to 9/11 *In the Shadow of No Towers* is also innovative (it is designed to be read vertically and consists of 42 oversized pages on heavy cardstock), but not to the same extent as the Kirshner work.
- 8 Most graphic novels that deal with historical events provide socio-political critique. See, for example, *Incognegro* (2008) by Mat Johnson and Warren Pleece about a black man who “passed” in white society during segregation in the US, or Ari Folman’s *Waltz with Bashir* about the attacks on the Lebanese refugee camps Sabra and Shatila in 1982. See also Joe Sacco’s critiques: *Palestine* (2001) and *Safe Area Goražde* (2000).

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