Karin Kukkonen discusses space, time, and causality. She focuses on such issues as the portrayal of the body in the graphic novel and how it interacts with the reader’s view of his or her own body and thus with his or her psychology, and how the use of time and space in the graphic novel impacts the reader’s own perspectives on time and space. To make her points, she draws on examples from Winsor McCay’s *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend* and *Desolation Jones* by Warren Ellis, J.H. Williams and José Villarrubia.

Jan-Noël Thon’s essay about “Who’s Telling the Tale” applies Gérard Genette’s theories about narration to a discussion of the complexities of graphic narration, including the narrative influence of the several people who are usually involved in the construction of a graphic novel as opposed to a prose work, which is usually the product of a single author. He bases his discussion on examples from Craig Thompson’s *Habibi*, Gaiman’s *Sandman*, and Moore’s *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* in his attempt to arrive at a suitable method of analysis for the varieties of narration in graphic narrative as opposed to other media.

The essay by Kai Mikkonen concludes this section with its discussion of “Subjectivity and Style in Graphic Narratives.” Mikkonen focuses on the impact on the reader of narrative perspective and graphic style. He discusses, for instance, the difference between what a character sees and what the reader is allowed to see, in order to analyze the ways in which such perspectives ultimately influence the reader’s understanding of the story. His examples include European works such as Finnish cartoonist Tommi Musturi’s *Walking with Samuel* and Italian Francesco Alati’s *Ada*.

In Part II, “Graphic Narrative Beyond the ‘Single Work,’” the emphasis is less on general theory than on specific subgenres of the comics, including non-fiction and superhero titles.

Nancy Pedri’s “Graphic Memoir: Neither Fact nor Fiction” asks the interesting question of whether the fact/fiction balance is the same in graphic narratives as in prose texts. She looks at Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*, Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, Marisa Acocella Marchetto’s *Cancer Vixen*, Brian Fies’ *Mom’s Cancer*, and David Beauchard’s *Epileptic* in order to conclude that, even while they are bound by the same requirement of factuality as prose autobiographies, these recent graphic autobiographies openly acknowledge their partial fictionality, a fictionality that is perhaps made more likely because of their use of images as well as words. She finds that because of their
open acknowledgement of this partial fictionality, these recent graphic autobiographies seem more convincing to the reader than most autobiographies written only in prose.

Daniel Stein's essay on superhero comics focuses on Batman in order to show how fanzines, readers' letters and authors' and editors' responses, and biographies of the authors/artists, within the comics themselves, add to the reading experience because they amount to an ongoing dialogue between reader and creator which in turn may even influence future episodes. This is a very interesting aspect of comics production not often discussed.

The essay by Gabriele Rippl and Lukas Etter uses Moore's V for Vendetta and Bechdel's Are You My Mother? in an attempt to define "media" and the relationship between the graphic novel and other media, elaborating on McCloud's word/image classification while doing so. They bring a new way of looking at the narratology of the graphic novel by locating it in the broader media landscape.

Greg Smith's essay is devoted to a comparison of the comics and film, two visual media that would seem to have many intersections. While that is true, Smith points out that comics remain a reading experience, and therefore retain their own special impact. A comparison between film and sequential art, particularly early American comics such as Hogan's Alley and Krazy Kat, enables a more complete understanding of the importance of sequential art's use of window, frame, and panel, and how the comics have been influenced by the cinema.

Part III focuses on the history of the graphic novel and the importance of different formats, such as the comic strip, the comic book, and the extended book or album, for the development of the graphic novel genre.

Jared Gardner details the development of the American comic strip from the cartoon, stressing the demands of its serial publication and the comic strip's competition with painting, film and radio in particular. He relies on Gilles Deleuze's and Walter Benjamin's theories, and brings the history of the comic up to its most recent development, the webcomic. Pascal Lefèvre's essay brings us into the world of Flemish comics, and particularly Willi Vandersteen's Suske en Wiske strips from the 1950s and 1960s. He demonstrates the importance of a particular format by showing how the Belgian system of regularly collecting comic strips into albums influences the creators of comic strips as soon as they begin creating a particular series. Deliberately confronting the academic neglect of adventure stories, he shows how the practice of collecting serial comics into albums led to the invention of the humorous adventure story, a new subgenre.

After a detailed discussion of the terminology revolving around "graphic novel," Christina Meyer focuses on Mike Carey and Peter Gross's The Unwritten and compares it to the serialized novels of the nineteenth century. Like Stein, she points out the role that developments, fan letters, and appendices play in the reader's ongoing engagement with the series. She also points to the self-conscious element in the text and images of The Unwritten, and how there is an ongoing discussion of what the graphic novel is and can be within The Unwritten itself. For her, The Unwritten is largely a story about the way stories are told and entangled in other stories and in literary history.

Henry Jenkins' essay shows how Spiegelman's In the Shadow of No Towers, about the events of 9/11, was influenced by earlier comics, which offer Spiegelman a language through which he can voice his own uncertainties about the future and his feeling that history repeats itself. Jenkins divides earlier comics into the archival (whose images are remembered), the ephemeral (whose images are forgotten), and the residual (which contain aspects of the past which we would like to forget). According to Jenkins, all of these elements of the older comics are invoked in Spiegelman's book, and increase its historical impact.

The fourth part of the volume, "Graphic Narrative across Cultures," as its title suggests, deals with Anglo-American comics, European comics, and Japanese comics, all of which have some basic commonalities despite their differences.

Julia Round discusses the convergences between American and British graphic novels as seen particularly in the work of Moore, and also in that of Gaiman, Ellis, and Grant Morrison. She finds that these and other British graphic novelists often revitalize American inventions, such as the superhero, and that in their work British doubt and pessimism are combined with American confidence. Coming together, these contrasting attitudes almost create a new subgenre.

Jan Baetens and Steven Sudiacourt discuss the ways in which new technology, new cultural influences, and new distribution channels have continually
affected the comics, starting with the innovative printing methods that
influenced the work of Rudolph Töpffer, and moving on to the technologi-
cal and other influences that impacted the unique styles of Wilhelm Busch
and Hergé. They also take into account the developing influence of libraries,
bookshops, schools, and different publishing possibilities, including pub-
lishing cooperatives, on the comics. They point out that with the advent of
webcomics, present-day graphic novels are turning away from the physical
book, thus revealing yet another technological influence that has resulted in
the creation of new styles and formats.

Jacqueline Berndt analyzes Shigeru Mizuki’s NonNonBa, showing how
manga often utilize a non-Western style of plotting and other techniques,
and she defends manga against those who would impose Western methods
of comprehension on them and therefore find them lacking. She also dis-
cusses the relationship between manga and gaming, another recent visual
medium that is beginning to attract academic attention.

In the collection’s fittingly final essay, Monika Schmitz-Emans praises the
acceptance of the graphic novel as a literary form, tries to find a common
language for Eastern and Western forms of comics, and, following Johann
Wolfgang von Goethe’s idea of world-literature, sees the graphic novel lead-
ing the way in the creation of a truly international literature.

This excellent collection, which is useful, full of new ideas, and well-
edited, could have been improved in two small ways. First, a short glossary
of terms would have been helpful because specialized terms such as “dia-
getic” and “storyworld” that are perhaps common in the field of narratology,
are usually not defined in the essays themselves, and can prove a barrier
to the non-narratologist. Second, the volume lacks a section giving a short
biography for each essay writer. Such biographies are a common feature in
most essay collections and—like the author/artist biographies sometimes
included in graphic novels themselves—allow the reader to understand each
writer’s essay in the context of his or her other work and even in the field as
a whole. Indeed, following the insights of both Stein’s and Meyer’s essays
in this collection, it could be said that such biographies constitute part of
the special narratological experience of reading a collection as opposed to
a monograph.

A final, and much more important, fault of this volume than the two small
matters mentioned earlier was not in the purview of the editors or essay
writers, but of the publisher. Even Amazon’s somewhat reduced price of $133
is a huge sum for a single volume of this size, and would make a large and
indeed unjustifiable dent in most academic departments’ library budgets,
not to mention in the budgets of individual scholars who would like to buy
it for their own collections. That is a pity, because owing to its price, this
important and stimulating book is likely to get much less circulation than
it deserves.

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