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Bande Dessinée Récit de Voyage: Shifting History, Semiotics, Authorship, and Representation in Autobiographical Francophone Comics Travel Narratives

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*BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE: SHIFTING HISTORY, SEMIOTICS,
AUTHORSHIP, AND REPRESENTATION IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRANCOPHONE
COMICS TRAVEL NARRATIVES*

A Dissertation

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CORPUS.....	6
CHAPTER 1 - DEFINING THE <i>BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE</i> , OR THE EVOLVING HISTORY OF TRAVEL LITERATURE IN THE <i>BANDE DESSINÉE</i>	12
CHAPTER 2 - SEMIOTICS AND <i>LA BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE</i>	69
CHAPTER 3 - AUTHORSHIP, AUTHENTICITY, SUBJECTIVITY AND <i>LA BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE AUTOBIOGRAPHIQUE</i>	106
CHAPTER 4 - REPRESENTATION IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL <i>BDRV</i>	168
CONCLUSION.....	236
WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED.....	239
APPENDIX 1.....	253
APPENDIX 2.....	254
VITA.....	255

ABSTRACT

This work classifies and critiques several aspects of Francophone travel narratives in the comics medium according to four parameters. First, this analysis identifies a history of the usage of 'travel' as a theme, as an integral character, and as a narrative construct. Second, this project addresses the history of semiotic approaches to Francophone comics to the present day as well as demonstrates a few semiotic approaches that have had considerable attention as well as some that critics have not as yet exploited sufficiently. I use the poetic term of 'allusion' in comics travel narratives in the creation of another semiotic layer that has received very little attention by critics. While it is commonly asserted that images in sequence (as seen in comics generally) combine to establish a unified interpretation of a work as a whole, my notion of *Allusive Arthrology* specifically addresses the potential of comics to engage with previously published works on the textual and visual levels in what may be understood as an extended framework of meaning-generation. Third, I examine authorship, with a particular focus on individual versus multiple authors and how those modes influence subjectivity and authenticity in autobiographical and biographical comics travel narratives. This treatment entails the identification of several mechanisms, namely conversational substitution and anthropomorphism, which influence plausibility, as all representational works possess at least some level of subjective motivation. Finally, this work addresses the representation of two major characters in autobiographical comics travel narratives - author and landscape. The author typically represents him/herself more than any other character in the

autobiographical travel narrative, whereas, generally, landscape holds a subordinate position; nevertheless, landscape plays a major role as both a space and a character. In the final chapter of this project, I examine *author* and *landscape* side-by-side, as well as landscape as a space and a character. I have found in this sub-genre of *bande dessinée* that there exists a direct correlation in the relationship between landscape usage and the assertion of a political statement.

INTRODUCTION

Travel, in the sense that we understand it today, is an extremely young phenomenon. Relatively not long ago, physical displacement from one part of the world into another meant, for most, a permanent change of residency. It also meant having to adapt to both the land and the people in the new location. Today, on the other hand, such displacement occurs in a matter of hours; there is no need to permanently relocate, and the duration of one's stay in a given territory may depend solely on one's bank account or simply on the number of vacation days the boss allows you to take. Nevertheless, many people still travel the old-fashioned way - vicariously.

Likewise, comics as a literary and entertainment phenomenon, is an extremely young art form. A little more than one hundred years ago the speech balloon was invented; however, now you would be hard-pressed to find a comic that did not contain a single speech balloon. Historically, comics were always marketed to children, and only in the last fifty years or so has it become a standard practice to shift that target market to adults. Regardless of who is reading a comic or why they are reading a comic, it is not the reader's perspective that dictates the direction of the adventure - the comics author(s) guide(s) the reader visually and verbally through a world entirely different (perhaps) than the one the reader inhabits. The guides take the reader on a journey through their imaginations (both the author's and the reader's imagination) into places that may otherwise be inaccessible.

Both travel in the present-day sense and mass-produced comics are less than two hundred years old each. Both are products of the industrial revolution. Both

are constantly evolving into new, more efficient forms. Moreover, both have blended into something that the literary universe has only recently begun to discover - the comics travel narrative.

The comics travel narrative has its roots in several genres. As I describe the roots of this genre in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, it is my aim to show a distinct evolution of several forms of expression into what has been identified as *la bande dessinée récit de voyage* (comics travel narrative).¹ Chapter 1 is essentially a history of the genre within the medium. Like most text-based works, *la bande dessinée récit de voyage* can be easily divided up into fiction or non-fiction. There are numerous fictive comics travel narratives, whereas non-fiction comics travel narratives are rather rare. By 'non-fiction' I imply that the stories told are true, reliable accounts of people who traveled to places other than their native land and experienced another culture, another environment, and another way of living, then transmitted their experience into comics form. For the purposes of this essay I have limited the scope of my study to a selection of biographical and autobiographical travel narratives in the comics medium from the French and Francophone traditions, as the French tradition in comics has the longest history of travel narratives in the medium.

Chapter 2 treats a very technical aspect of the comics form as it relates to the *bande dessinée récit de voyage* genre. Semiotics, that is, the study of signs, takes our

¹ To date I have found only one academic study in which this specific term is used; In his article, "Le récit de voyage en bande dessinée, entre autobiographie et reportage," David Vrydaghs examines journalistic autobiographical travel narratives. This article can be read in *Textyles, Revue des lettres belges de langue française*, in an edition entitled *La Bande dessinée contemporaine*, No. 36-37, S.l.d. Björn-Olav Dozo et Fabrice Preyat (Bruxelles: 2010), 139-148.

attention as we explore strategies in text-image presentation that create meaning for a reader. It is rather obvious that comics constitutes a hybrid form that combines text and image (typically, although not exclusively). As such, an examination of texts (along the lines of poetics, literary devices, narration) and images (icons, recognizable characters, landscapes, narrational images) as well as their presentation in sequence figure substantially in this portion of my study. Having a historical perspective of comics travel literature and having previously examined the nature of stereotypes in comics, I suppose it was only logical that I move into a more detailed scrutiny of the formal constraints of the comics medium. I quickly discovered through my research that I was more prone to examining narrative mechanisms at work in a hybrid narrative construct, a sort of blend of narratology and semiotics. While narrative is certainly at the forefront of a comics artist's mind, it is undeniable that his narrative must incorporate images replete with signs, symbols, codes, i.e. everything necessary for the transmission of a visual message, as well as a textual one. The semiotic approaches of Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, Benoît Peeters and Thierry Groensteen, amongst others, most certainly filled part of this crucial gap of theoretical models for me, and my own addition to the body of knowledge in that domain will be found in chapter 2.

In Chapter 3, the discussion lends itself to aspects of authorship, authenticity, and subjectivity. Since we are dealing with biographical and autobiographical material specifically, a large portion of this essay considers authorial modes, such as individual versus multiple authorship, plausibility, and subjectivity. To a certain degree, each of these modes limit the author in what he, she, or they can produce in

terms of a *bande dessinée récit de voyage*. In this study, I was not particularly drawn to fiction in the comics form, as the events and personages in such works do not necessarily have real-world referents. The idea that an author would assert the veracity of his or her work, the 'truth' of the account, intrigues me, as the very nature of the drawn image transforms the original into a plasticized representation. This notion of 'truth' interests me, particularly the problems in assigning 'truth' to drawn images. In comics, such a one-to-one association is never explicitly necessary to narrative cohesion; however, it certainly can govern the reception of a work, especially if the content is of a sensitive nature. Thus, I was compelled to explore the position of the author that diegetically and extra-diegetically announces his or her identity as being the same as the narrator and the protagonist within his, her, or their work.

For Chapter 4, I have chosen to revisit a topic that I have always been curious about - the subject of representation. In my master's essay I attempted to show a historically linear relationship between the representation of Near-Eastern peoples in the Franco-Belgian comics tradition and the evolution of certain stereotypes commonly associated with those peoples. My corpus for that essay was broad and generic, covering a large and varying degree of different comics styles and genres, including humor, fiction, non-fiction, surrealism, journalism, historical, biographical, autobiographical, *et cetera*... The historical periods figuring in the works from that corpus ranged from the late 1800s to 2009. In retrospect, I acknowledge the fact that I undertook an incredibly broad array of works and reduced them in order to assert generalizations about them. This study, on the other hand, is designed to

address a much more limited array of works in the field of Francophone comics, and I do not purport specifically to address the subject of stereotype. Here, I am primarily concerned with the genre of comics travel literature and the formal constraints that are employed by a few leading authors and artists (and one minor one) in the industry to represent themselves, others, and the landscapes that they incorporate in their works, namely Guy Delisle, Emmanuel Guibert, and Marie-Jo Parbot – who publishes under the name 'Roannie'). Of course, I am still moved by representational images, no matter their content. Rather than concern myself specifically with more studies of stereotypes, as I did for my Master's thesis, here I undertake a dual study that treats self-representations and landscapes. In the autobiographical *bande dessinée récit de voyage* the reader becomes aware of the author/narrator/protagonist's abundant self-representations. Indeed, the author/narrator/protagonist is the most represented subject in the genre. My concern is the manner in which the comics writer/artist juxtaposes the author/narrator/protagonist to the culture he or she visits. In addition, landscape is often such a large component of a work in this genre that it often shapes the personages in the narrative, their interactions with each other, as well as the author/narrator/protagonist's understanding of the culture visited. In chapter 4, I propose a treatment of the author/narrator/protagonist as a self-represented *other*, willingly placing him or herself in the vulnerable position of the outsider, coupled with a dual treatment of landscape as both a diegetic space and as an instrumental character that directs the interpretation of a given work.

CORPUS

My corpus treats several works in the Francophone *bande dessinée* tradition, most of which are relatively new, and the authors of these works vary from somewhat recognizable in literary circles to virtually unknown. Since most academicians rarely, if ever, undertake comics as a study, I am quite confident that the majority of these works will be unknown to my readers. It behooves us, especially those unfamiliar with these works, therefore, to describe the works as thoroughly, yet briefly, as possible so as to arrive at a working frame of reference. A more detailed description of their content will be given at the time of analysis, so as to isolate specific portions of their work. I also mention a large number of works that do not necessarily fit within the scope of this essay, but, for the sake of comparison or for lack of an example specific to the primary genre analyzed here, were necessary or at least beneficial to the overall discussion. The comics works discussed in this essay are as follows:

Guy Delisle's four major works of comics travel narratives, *Shenzhen* (2000), *Pyongyang* (2003), *Chroniques Birmanes* (2007), and *Chroniques de Jérusalem* (2011) are some of the most widely read albums in the industry. Delisle worked in animation before making the transition into comics. In the first two works, Delisle travels to China and North Korea to oversee the production of some unnamed animated television series. He travels alone, lives in a hotel room for the duration of his stay, and, during his one-year and three-month visits, respectively, has the opportunity to explore areas of each country that most Western audiences would never see otherwise. In *Shenzhen*, Delisle finds himself difficultly navigating the

Chinese social and political climate. His Western heritage (born Canadian, fluent in both French and English) make assimilation difficult, as he cannot blend in with the Chinese people on account of his appearance (this is also a factor in *Pyongyang* and *Chroniques Birmanes*). In *Pyongyang*, Delisle is forced into a segregated environment. During his term as animation director in North Korea, he is constantly accompanied by one or more escorts, has no contact whatsoever with civilians, and resides in the only building in which non-North Koreans may stay during their visits. The account is, to this day, considered one of the only valid accounts of daily life in North Korea, as the totalitarian state is relatively off limits to outside influences. In *Chroniques Birmanes*, Delisle and his wife, Nadège (an administrator for *Médecins Sans Frontières*) along with their child, Louis, spend a year in Burma. Delisle basically spends the year as a babysitter, and during his free time, explores the culture of this South Asian dictatorship while concurrently working on various comics projects. His observations range from the ultra-mundane to political and social concerns that Western audiences might find unusual or extreme. In *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, Delisle, now with two children and his wife, live for a year in East Jerusalem in a Palestinian neighborhood, while Nadège works in the Gaza Strip during a time of somewhat intense military action. Delisle, explores Jerusalem and its outskirts, and devotes a great amount of his creative energy to both the Israel/Palestine conflict and the eccentricities that are part and parcel of living in one of the most hotly contested regions of the world. Other works by Delisle that we discuss include; one of his earliest works, *Aline et les autres*, a wordless series of one to four-page strips that surrealistically treat the conditions of twenty-six women

organized by alphabetical order, *Louis au ski*, a children's book about Delisle's son's first skiing trip; *Minile et ses anges*, a children's book commissioned by a Burmese hospital that has for its purpose an amusing way to remind HIV positive children to take their medicine; and *Le guide du mauvais père*, Delisle's most recent endeavor in which he presents anecdotal strips that depict him, in gest, as a somewhat amoral father figure.

Emmanuel Guibert is one of France's most well-recognized comics authors. The works we discuss here are biographical/autobiographical treatments of his friends, Alan Cope and Didier Lefèvre. Both his friends acted as co-authors of these works, as their collected stories using their own words, and their personal photographs, figure prominently as crucial aspects of their narratives. *La Guerre d'Alan* and *L'Enfance d'Alan* respectively treat the World War 2 experiences and the childhood experiences of Alan Cope. *La Guerre d'Alan* is not your typical Hollywood war story. Alan Cope experienced virtually no fighting; rather, he found himself befriending civilians, exploring the countryside, and enjoying the travels that war afforded him. *L'Enfance d'Alan* is not a *récit de voyage*, but rather a coming of age story. The reader explores Cope's childhood in Southern California, and the events that eventually led to the death of his mother and his drafting into the military. Guibert's other friend, Didier Lefèvre, participated in the creation of *Le Photographe*, a three-part series that depicts Lefèvre's work as a photojournalist in Afghanistan in 1986, at the height of its Russian occupation, where his task is to document the work of a small group of doctors - *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders) - for a period of approximately three and a half months. The group enters

Afghanistan illegally on foot via Pakistan, then travels over fifteen mountain passes to reach a remote village in which they will establish a permanent hospital. Lefèvre returns to Pakistan once the mission is complete; however, he does so without the *Médecins Sans Frontières* group in an attempt to push himself professionally as a photographer. The experience of reading the work, in the words of the English edition's translator, Alexis Siegel, is humbling. *Le Photographe* is a combination of comics, photographs, and contact sheets, wherein Guibert uses the comics medium to fill in the narrative gaps left by instances in which Lefèvre did not (or could not) take pictures. Using Lefèvre's testimony as well as those of the doctors that became friends with Didier during the mission, Guibert weaves together one of the most compelling and timely stories of travel and exploration, passion for one's work, and perseverance ever told in comics form.

Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse* is perhaps the most curious of the works we discuss in this study, for it is at once an account of renegade journalism combined with an unabashedly propagandistic narrative. Marie-Jo Parbot, pen-name Roannie, decides, upon retirement from her practice as a pediatrician, that she will devote her efforts to the Palestinian cause in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The series consists of four books: (1) *Palestine, la découverte*; (2) *Les Palestiniens, peuple invisible?*; (3) *Les Israéliens*; and (4) *Gaza, carnet de non-voyage*. Each book finds Roannie becoming more and more involved in her pacifistic activism, culminating in her participation aboard the Freedom Flotilla 2, in which she and a group of activists attempt to break the Israeli naval blockade of the Gaza Strip in the Summer of 2011. Her work has a motivated documentary feel to it. Moreover, her approach to

writing de-emphasizes her personage in favor of the Palestinians whom she depicts almost uniquely as victims and the Israelis whom she depicts almost uniquely as aggressors. Nevertheless, Roannie presents the Holy Land as a complex environment.

Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* is one of the most widely read comics in the world. Although not specifically a travel narrative, the work treats Satrapi's childhood and her extended stay in Austria during a very socially and politically turbulent era in Iran's history. Satrapi's story is more accessible as an autobiography that features travel, and is more focused on the evolution of the protagonist's personality. Even though travel is not the crux of the narrative, Satrapi finds herself permanently altered by her experiences during her travels as an Iranian expatriate. In this dissertation, I use an instance in *Persepolis* as an example of a unique method of poeticizing a single image.

The four authors and their works that I briefly mention here figure more prominently than the rest. I make reference to many other authors and works, including Joann Sfar and his *Le chat du rabbin* and *Missionnaire*, Benoît Peeters and François Schuiten's *Les Cités obscures*, Hergé's *Les Aventures de Tintin*, Cosey's *Le Voyage en Italie*, Hugo Pratt's *La balade de la mer salée*, Manu Larcenet's *Presque*, and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, just to name a few. The context I provide in the dissertation for these works should be sufficient for their intended purposes. The four that I described above, however, necessitate a more detailed context because I insist upon their narrative structures substantially.

My overall goal here is to identify and elaborate on trends and practices in a very new form of comic. In doing so I hope to broaden the discussion surrounding the literariness of the comics medium. In my estimation it is one that should be separate and distinct from other literary forms, both in production and criticism.

CHAPTER 1 - DEFINING THE *BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE*, OR THE EVOLVING HISTORY OF TRAVEL LITERATURE IN THE *BANDE DESSINÉE*

Defining the parameters of the *bande dessinée récit de voyage*

Definitions of 'comics' or *bande dessinée* are abundant in both dictionaries and critical inquiries. However, as of yet, few earnest attempts have been made to account for the distinctions between varying types of *bande dessinée*. Ranging from journalistic, autobiographical, biographical, pedagogical, memoirs, and travel, these distinctions merit consideration. I intend to establish a suitable understanding of the *bande dessinée récit de voyage*, or comics travel narrative, based on historical perspectives and in terms of function – that is, the manner in which elements of *récits de voyage*, or travel narratives, are incorporated into a *bande dessinée* format or vice versa. Therefore, here I will endeavor to highlight attempts at defining the terms *bande dessinée* and *récit de voyage* separately. In order to understand the fusion of the terms we must first understand them in isolation.

What is a *bande dessinée*? – Groensteen vs. McCloud

Bande dessinée (which is literally translated from French as "the drawn strip") is a somewhat outdated term that has survived the expanding trends of graphic narration, much in the same way that the term "funnies" once referred to the comics strips in newspapers but was later broadened to encompass all or most

enunciation of narration in the graphic medium.² The medium derives much from the timeless tradition of art in the narrative image, and examples of narrative art, including sequential images, abound in the annals of recorded history. However, images have most often served to enhance the performance of words or text rather than propose an independent narrative. Nearly every narrative image in existence before Töpffer's first *histoire en estampes* lacked the freedom to tell a story without being bound to some pre-existing text. Thierry Groensteen notes this historical consideration, stating,

Depuis les mauncrits illuminés jusqu'à la colonne Vendôme (conçue sur le modèle de la colonne Trajane), en passant par la tapisserie de Bayeux, la châsse de Sainte-Ursule, de Memling, ou le cycle de Marie de Médicis par Rubens, les récits en images n'avaient jamais fait autre chose que d'illustrer des histoires déjà connues et mémorables: épisodes mythiques, pages d'histoire, hauts faits d'armes, vies de saints ou autres scènes tirées des Écritures. Ils servaient des fins, telles que la glorification, la mémorisation, l'édification du peuple, la propagande. En aucun cas, ils ne relevaient de ce que nous nommons le divertissement.³

² The meaning of the term 'comics' has historically shifted from generation to generation and with developments of new forms of comics. Bart Beaty's note at the end of his translation of Thierry Groensteen's article "The Impossible Definition" reads: "The situation that [Groensteen] describes finds an analogue in the English language. The term 'comics' originates in the early twentieth century as a description of daily or weekly strips in newspapers, the majority of which were humorous, and is akin to 'funnies.' The term has outlived its original meaning and is now used to encompass the entire range of expression in the medium. A cognitive dissonance can occur in instances where the term 'comics' is used to describe works that take part in a variety of genres, such as tragedy, romance, or the epic. Similarly, the term 'comic book' seems to refer to a collection of funny stories, but in fact describes all types of publications containing comics, most often in magazine, rather than book format." See Thierry Groensteen's, "The Impossible Definition," Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen, in *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 131.

³ Thierry Groensteen, *La bande dessinée; son histoire et ses maîtres* (Paris: SkiraFlammarion, la cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image, 2009), 16. (My transl. – "Since the time of illuminated manuscripts until the Vendôme column (after the Trajan's column model), including the Bayeux Tapestry, the Saint Ursula Shrine, from Memling, or Rubens' Marie de Medici Cycle, pictorial narratives have never done anything other than illustrate already well-known and memorable stories: mythic episodes, pages of history, remarkable success stories, the lives of the saints, or other scenes pulled from Scripture. They served a purpose, such as glorification, memorization, edification of the people, and propaganda. In no case did they display the qualities of what we would deem 'entertainment'.")

In this excerpt Groensteen argues that Töpffer changed the roles that traditionally governed texts and images. Instead of two separate mediums, one of which retained the majority of power to advance a narrative and the other simply illustrating that narrative progress, Töpffer perceived texts and images in his work as indivisible, an understanding that he illustrates with an ease of narrative technique that ranges from page layout, tempo variations from page-to-page and frame-to-frame, as well as structured rhymes and comic repetition in his drawings, to name a few. Töpffer stated this clearly in his "*Notice sur L'Histoire de Mr. Jabot*" where he wrote,

Ce petit livre est d'une nature mixte. Il se compose d'une série de desseins autographiés au trait. Chacun de ces desseins est accompagné d'une ou deux lignes de texte. Les desseins, sans ce texte, n'auraient qu'une signification obscure; le texte, sans les desseins, ne signifierait rien. Le tout ensemble forme une sorte de roman d'autant plus original, qu'il ne ressemble pas mieux à un roman qu'à autre chose.⁴

Although his innovative marrying of text and image would become known the world over the following century, Töpffer's *invention* of the *bande dessinée* can not be understood properly outside of the context of the invention of a variety of new printing techniques. While the Gutenberg press proved capable of disseminating mass quantities of printed text, it was the invention of the lithographic print technique that propelled the invention of comics. The "invention" of comics, as a sequential, mass-produced art, is in fact a sub-chapter in the invention of the lithograph, and as such cannot be separated from the history of the industrial

⁴ See Thierry Groensteen, Benoît Peeters, et Rodolphe Topffer, *L'Invention de la Bande Dessinée* (Paris: Collection Savoir: Sur l'art. Hermann Éditeurs des sciences et des arts, 1994), 161. (My transl. - "This little book is of a mixed nature. It is composed of a series of line drawings. Each of these drawings is accompanied by one or two lines of text. Without the text, the drawings would only have an obscure signification; without the drawings, the text would mean nothing. Together they form a sort of original twist on the novel, for it resembles a novel more than anything else.")

revolution. It is this historical point that seems to divide some comics theorists and critics about the origins of comics. Critics like Scott McCloud suggest that Egyptian paintings can be considered comics, so long as they follow his definition ("Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer"),⁵ other historians like Thierry Groensteen place Rodolphe Töpffer as the first to create comics, arguing that the industrial revolution (and Töpffer) begat comics. Since the industrial revolution, advancements in printing technology have spurred the comics industry, evolving it into what we now have in the form of entirely digital comics, capable of dissemination to any point in the world with a working Internet connection.⁶

If we use McCloud's concept, which insists that "no schools of art are banished by [his] definition, no philosophies, no movements, no ways of seeing are out of bounds" ⁷, we must necessarily ignore technological advancement as a catalyst for invention. Suggesting that anything which simply follows McCloud's self-serving definition of comics is to undermine history altogether.⁸ The development of various print techniques, in some cases, the assembly line-like organization of comics production, and the rapidity with which a printing press could publish massive amounts of material, not to mention digital editing

⁵ See Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics, The Invisible Art* (New York: First HarperPerennial Edition, 1994), 9.

⁶ For a further discussion on the future of comics see the second half of Chapter four of Thierry Groensteen's *Bande dessinée et narration (Le système de la bande dessinée 2)*. Coll. dirigé par Anne Hénault (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, "Formes Sémiotiques", 2009), 67-82.

⁷ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 22.

⁸ McCloud's definition is "self-serving" because it incorporates his belief that the history of the comics medium should coincide with the history of graphic representation in general, placing the crucial aspects that led to the development of the comics medium as secondary in importance.

techniques and the advancements in art tools available to the comics producer, all these and more contributed to the expansion and proliferation of the medium. But comics could never have become a mass medium until after the capacity to distribute printed images to the masses was fully realized. As for Töpffer's first printed works, Groensteen found the printed number to oscillate between three and eight hundred copies for *L'Histoire de Mr. Jabot*, and around twenty thousand for *L'Histoire de M. Cryptogame*. Shortly thereafter, over 400,000 copies of *Max und Moritz* were distributed around Europe and the world.⁹ The speed with which dissemination occurred, the ability to cross cultural, geographical, political, and social boundaries is something that no stone carvings, Egyptian paintings, or Norman Tapestries could offer to an observer's bank of experience (until, of course, they could be photographed and printed). In this regard, Töpffer seems to have had the luck of history on his side to such an extent that he can defend the claim of being the inventor of the *bande dessinée*. However, now that print and digital technology have given us the capacity to proliferate images in sequence that pre-date the industrial revolution, those ancient narrative sequences *have become*, in effect, something akin to comics. Yet, to call these works comics at this point in history denies their history, and by analogy it would be something like claiming that the writings of Montesquieu and De Tocqueville were the foundation upon which the United States Constitution was drafted. Although these two thinkers and their writings had a great influence on the writers of the United States Constitution, they were no more than influences.

⁹ Groensteen, *La bande dessinée, son histoire et ses maîtres*, 16.

Groensteen finds McCloud's definition lacking for another reason, however, as he states in *Bande dessinée et narration*:

Pourtant, la définition que McCloud donne de la bande dessinée [...] ne fait pas expressément référence à l'idée de narration. Tout dépend de la signification donnée au concept de séquence. À cet égard, le point de vue de McCloud n'est pas très explicite; cependant, le fait qu'il admette la «solution de continuité» comme l'un des types d'enchaînements possibles témoigne en faveur d'une conception élargie de la notion de séquence. Mon propre concept de *solidarité iconique* se tient, lui, expressément en deçà de toute considération sur la «vocation narrative» de la bande dessinée.¹⁰

In his critique of McCloud, Groensteen does not see a deliberate attempt at the inclusion of the idea of narration. I, on the other hand, believe that McCloud's definition rests solely on the inclusion of narration; even the lightest perusal of *Understanding Comics, the Invisible Art*, demonstrates as much. In chapter three McCloud discusses comics panels as being an art of intervals, "[...] fracture[ing] both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments [...that we as readers...] mentally construct [as] a continuous unified reality."¹¹ What Groensteen seems to suggest is that without the presence of the term 'narration' mentioned specifically in the definition, the definition cannot stand. In his *Système de la bande dessinée*, Groensteen states,

La bande dessinée repose, quant à elle, sur un dispositif qui ne connaît pas d'usage familier. On ne constate pas que tout un chacun s'exprime

¹⁰ Groensteen, *Bande dessinée et narration*, 17. (Transl. - "And yet, the definition of comics offered by McCloud (...) makes no specific reference to the idea of narration. Everything depends on what is meant by the concept of sequence. In this respect, McCloud's stance lacks precision; however the fact that he includes the "non-sequitur" as one of the possible types of transition implies that he may have a wider conception of the notion of sequence. My own concept, *iconic solidarity*, intentionally stops short of considering whether comics have any 'narrative purpose.' " See Thierry Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*, trans. Ann Miller (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 17. *Iconic Solidarity* (paraphr.) is the relationship of the content from panel to panel that makes a comic readable and intelligible as a unified graphic system.

¹¹ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 67.

par ce moyen - même si la pratique de la bande dessinée est, techniquement et financièrement parlant, à la portée de tous, comme le confirme l'aptitude des enfants à s'y adonner. On ne peut donc lui comparer que d'autres formes de création [...] participant toutes de plein droit aux domaines de l'art ou de la fiction. Puisque la bande dessinée n'est pas fondée sur un usage particulier d'une langue, il n'y a pas lieu de la définir en termes de diction. Mais elle ne se confond pas non plus avec une des formes de la fiction, puisqu'il existe des bande dessinées pédagogiques ou politiques, et, occasionnellement, des BD-reportages où domine le souci d'informer, de témoigner. [...] Cette plasticité de tous ordres et des narrations autres que fictionnelles, démontre qu'avant d'être un art, elle est bel et bien un langage. [...] La solidarité iconique n'est que la condition nécessaire pour qu'un message visuel puisse, en première approximation, être assimilé à une bande dessinée. En tant qu'objet physique, toute bande dessinée peut en effet être décrite comme une collection d'icônes séparées et solidaires. Si l'on considère telle ou telle production, on s'aperçoit vite que les bandes dessinées font naturellement davantage que satisfaire à cette condition minimale, mais aussi que toutes n'obéissent pas aux mêmes desseins et ne mobilisent pas les mêmes mécanismes. Toute généralisation théorique est donc guettée par le piège du dogmatisme. Loin de vouloir défendre une école, une époque ou un courant contre d'autres, ou encore prescrire de quelconques recettes, je veux m'efforcer de prendre acte de la diversité des bandes dessinées et épargner à ma réflexion tout caractère normatif.¹²

¹² See Thierry Groensteen, *Le système de la bande dessinée*, Coll. dirigé par Anne Hénault (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, Formes Sémiotiques, 1999), 23-5. "Comics rest on a device that is not known from familiar usage. It is not noted that everything can be expressed by this means – even if the practice of comics is, technically and financially speaking, available to everyone, as is confirmed by the aptitude of those children who devote themselves to it. One cannot help but compare it with other forms of creation [...] that participate with complete rights in the domain of art or fiction. The comics are not based on a particular usage of language, there is no place to define them in terms of diction. But neither are they bound exclusively with fictional forms, since there are examples of publicity or propagandistic comics, political and pedagogical comics, and, occasionally, comics journalism, where the concern is to inform or to testify. [...] This plasticity of comics, which allows them to put in place messages of every order and narrations other than the fictional, demonstrates that before being an art, comics are well and truly a language. [...] Iconic solidarity is the only necessary condition so that visual messages can, in first approximation, be assimilated within a comic. As a physical object, every comic can be described as a collection of separate icons and interdependent images. If one considers any given production, one quickly notices that comics that satisfy this minimal condition are naturally longer, but also that they do not all obey the same intentions and do not mobilize the same mechanisms. All theoretical generalizations are cognizant of the trap of dogmatism. Far from wanting to defend a school of thought, an era or a standard against others, or again to prescribe any recipes, I want to force myself to note the diversity of *all forms* of comics and spare my reflections from any normative character." From Groensteen, "The Impossible Definition," 129-130.

Here, Groensteen elaborates on his notion of iconic solidarity, or « *les images qui, participant d'une suite, présentent la double caractéristique d'être séparées (cette précision pour écarter les images uniques enfermées en leur sein une profusion de motifs ou d'anecdotes) et d'être plastiquement et sémantiquement surdéterminées par le fait même de coexistence in praesentia* », ¹³ but relegates it to the most obvious level of immediate interpretation. He pushes McCloud's understanding a bit further by stating that it is the diversity of forms that makes iconic solidarity important for comics studies. Moreover, in his *Bande dessinée et narration* Groensteen attempts to illustrate how McCloud's definition falters even on the subject of the simple observation of iconic solidarity, using the example of Daniel Blancou's strip "*Papa*," a strip that juxtaposes three images which do not seemingly retain any iconic solidarity. Unfortunately for Groensteen, this example appears to better illustrate McCloud's logic in describing the "non-sequitur" panel transition.¹⁴ The three Blancou panels, force the reader to interpret them as a whole, and with the pre-defining title "*Papa*," insist that the reader is primarily responsible for the advancement of some suitable narrative. Groensteen briefly interprets "*Papa*" after an introduction to it, but, in a rather ironic fashion. Groensteen's attempted refutation of McCloud's definition winds up serving to illustrate it. Before having read Groensteen's interpretation I myself studied Blancou's strip for a time,

¹³ "[...] interdependent images that, participating in a series, present the double characteristic of being separated – this specification dismisses unique enclosed images within a profusion of patterns or anecdotes – and which are plastically and semantically overdetermined by the fact of their coexistence *in praesentia*." Groensteen, "The Impossible Definition," 128.

¹⁴ According to McCloud, the 'non-sequitur' panel transition in comics "offers no logical relationship between panels whatsoever [...]," a notion that he rather quickly refutes by adding that it is arguable whether such a transition can exist at all since "[b]y creating a sequence with two or more images, we are endowing them with a single, overriding identity, and forcing the viewer to consider them as a whole." McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 73.

attempting to understand, if at all, what it could mean given that the three panels hardly share a common line. My own interpretation differed distinctly from Groensteen's. I found Blancou's strip to provide enough information to adequately guarantee the possibility for a narrative, however obfuscated by the lack of iconic solidarity (see Fig. 1).¹⁵ Groensteen offers two interpretations, paraphrased here: (1) a child either brought tadpoles home or examined them so that, years later, as an artist, the child produced a large canvas inspired by them or (2) an indecisive man has perhaps stated to his partner that he is thinking about buying the painting, and his partner has replied: « *Tu ne vas pas ramener ça à la maison* »?! Groensteen's explanation for these is rather muddled in my opinion, and a more sound interpretation is easily extractable. The first two strips are a flashback, represented



Fig. 1 – Daniel Blancou's strip, "Papa."

by squiggly-lined panels. By my reckoning, Groensteen is right to believe that a child is examining tadpoles in the first panel, but he is wrong to assume that the indecisive man in the third panel is anyone other than the father of that child. The temporal displacement from the second to third panel is long enough that the father

¹⁵ See Groensteen, *Bande dessinée et narration*, 17-18.

has now grown bald, and his child, presumably a female based on the length of the second personage's hair in the third panel, has grown into an adult. The child, vividly remembering the moment when her father sardonically brushed off her fixation on tadpoles, does indeed create a canvas based on that form, while the father, incapable of recalling such a minor detail from his child's life, is puzzled by the painting, unable to make the connection. The frustrated artist leaves her father scratching his head in bewilderment. I want to re-emphasize that, in the interest of comparison, I made this conclusion before reading Groensteen's interpretations.

Returning to McCloud's notion of *narration* and *sequential art*, had Groensteen dug a little deeper into McCloud's influences, namely, Will Eisner, the first person that McCloud cites in his search for a definition of comics, Groensteen would have easily linked narration and sequential art as inseparable. In Eisner's landmark publication *Comics and Sequential Art*, the first sentence of the author's "Forward" links *narration* and *sequential art*: "This work is intended to consider and examine the unique aesthetics of Sequential Art as a means of expression, a distinct discipline, an art and a literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to *narrate* a story or dramatize an idea." ¹⁶

Theoretically, the notion of iconic solidarity, or coexisting plastically and semantically linked images presented together in a series, is necessary to the formulation of a narrative, a point that Groensteen does well in describing. Comics as a narrative system is (primarily) dependent on that notion. Most comics follow this principle where the visual narrative is linked together using an established

¹⁶ My emphasis. See Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (New Jersey: Poorhouse Press, 2006, 1985), 5.

iconic repertoire, thus "assimilat[ing the narrative] within [the] comic [form]." ¹⁷ In the case of *bande dessinée récits de voyage*, iconic solidarity appears to be the foremost rule of maintaining narrative cohesion, as I have yet to find the travel narrative presented simultaneously as text and image (comics) that does not follow this pattern.

More than merely a chance happening at the mercy of technological advancement, Töpffer's invention was literary in nature, incorporating the cues of visual linguistics in order to create a hybrid language. The visual language he assembled derives from the lines of human movement, something that Western text, in its abstract nature, does not attempt to capture. I indicate the term "Western text" here in order to avoid grouping all written texts together. For example, certain Chinese ideograms, such as the symbol for the word pronounced "gong" (力), signifying "work," imply abstract movement derived from the human form. With a little imagination, the reader can see a rickshaw, with a man pulling it (from right to left), with the lowest descending strokes being the legs of the rickshaw driver moving so fast that they blur before the observer. While Western text may not mimetically capture the physical form of that which it describes, it may do so phonetically and during the utterance of the word. Let us use the word 'snake.' Imagine a rattlesnake before it strikes. A lengthening of the [s] will mimic the sound of the creature hissing, the [ne] sound that follows forces the jaw to roll forward, separating the bottom and top teeth, like the revealing of fangs, while the fricative stop [k] recalls the sound of the snake's strike thudding against its target, and the

¹⁷ As stated in Groensteen, "The Impossible Definition," 130.

mouth, ending the strike, closes the teeth back together. The small remainder puff of air recalls the last breath a person might take when suffering from a fatal snakebite. Plato discussed this notion thoroughly in his dialogue entitled *Cratylus*, in which three personages discuss the origins of language and why the names of things, including the names of the gods, are accurate in their meaning and appropriate for their associated thing or person. Töppfer's own ability to observe the unique nature of his creation made him the first critical theorist of the new language as well as its inventor. It is from that seminal statement in his "*Notice sur L'Histoire de Mr. Jabot*" that authoritative comics historians have derived their arguments for a definition, and while many definitions have been proposed, no all-encompassing, adequate, or entirely irrefutable definition has been produced.

As a unique written and drawn language, *comics* resist a single definition. Moreover, "defining" comics is generally an exercise in textual language more than it is one of a visual nature, as rarely does a traditional *definition* appear in a form that incorporates mediums other than text. The first problem we encounter when attempting to define comics, is that by reducing comics into a textual definition, we necessarily remove a portion of its fundamental makeup.¹⁸ Words may describe a scene from a painting, but they cannot capture the nuanced interpretations of an artist's brushstroke, such as with the artist Frank Frazetta and his many iconic

¹⁸ Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* was a pioneer of theoretical work about comics because it was written as a comic. I believe McCloud attempted to address this fundamental problem of defining comics by using the comics form to define *comics* functionally.

sword and sorcery paintings.¹⁹ The second problem with defining *comics* can only be likened unto trying to define an accent, or a manner of speaking. As an ensemble,



Fig. 2 – Frank Frazetta's "Conan the Destroyer." Frazetta's paintings have been regularly featured on the covers of Robert E. Howard's series of *Conan* sword and sorcery adventure stories since the mid-1960s.

a single work of comics is an expression of the medium in isolation, much in the way an Anglophone may use the base system of English to express himself, while his delivery as a Louisianian, Londoner, Australian, or Irishman, for example, is entirely unique. Each work of comics has an individuality that can be measured by the authors' ability and experience in expressing himself in the form. The only absolutes in *comics*, it seems to me, are: (1) they must contain images; and (2) there must be some established narrative order.

¹⁹ Frank Frazetta worked in the American comics industry in the 1940s through the 1990s. His work is some of the most recognizable in the world (See Fig. 2).

What is Travel Literature (*récit de voyage*)?

The term 'travel literature' is complex and nuanced. It is typically referred to as a theme of literature, rather than being an exclusive genre. Here I will attempt to present an abbreviated version of the history of travel literature and describe the various approaches to the subject as they have evolved. I will discuss this history and the approaches that led to its current state, keeping in mind that, I believe, comics incorporates all of them, and expands the nuanced nature of the term 'travel literature' through the inclusion of image-wrought sequential narratives.

Before composing this dissertation, my understanding of 'travel literature' did not adequately distinguish between 'travel literature' and 'travel *in* literature'. The ambiguousness of the genre and of travel within a genre became apparent over time. The former is a genre in and of itself, where 'the voyage' or 'travelling' is a/the primary focus of the narrative. Under this designation, 'the voyage' acts as a sort of personage that either sets up a climactic shift or at least alters the protagonist's course of action or way of thinking.²⁰ The latter is indicative of a thematic element within a narrative, wherein 'travel' is not a primary concern to the narrative. Under this designation, the signification of 'the voyage' is truncated and, in turn, the affect it has on the narrative and the personages appears abbreviated. The two are not necessarily substantially dissimilar, however, the emphasis given to each should not be confused as identical. This distinction will be highlighted when applied in my analysis below.

²⁰ This is, by no means, an exhaustive list of the possible usages of 'travel' in travel literature.

A History of Travel Literature

Peter Hulme's introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, provides a convincing summary of the various stages of evolution in travel literature. Citing the approaches he outlines is most fitting to our purposes here, as it should illuminate how critics have examined travel *in* literature, thus informing us more specifically on (the absence of) a clear definition of travel literature and how these approaches are used in the *bande dessinée*.

Hulme identifies at least eleven shifts in the history of travel writing over the course of literary history. The first, which I shall call "the ancient period," begins at a time that precedes Homer's *Odyssey* by a thousand years and extends to the point of Hulme's second shift, the "biblical and classical" period. This second category takes us from the earliest writings of the Bible up to the "medieval" period of Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and their contemporary Christopher Columbus, when travel became a more available and reasonable means of displacement through technological advancements in seafaring and navigation. During the sixteenth century, Hulme notes that "political and commercial sponsors" (third shift) commissioned reports and maps of foreign lands, which, once coupled with the curiosity of the public, attracted an increased attention to the subject of travel. Soon after the first reports from travelers came back to Europe, publishers' rivalries developed into somewhat of a business environment for the travel writer. As the accounts mounted, certain competing prominent editors like Richard Hakluyt and, later, Samuel Purchas, argued for a history of travel based on "eyewitness accounts" (fourth shift). This requisite often remained inconsistently applied to works of

travel literature; nonetheless the trend towards observation and experience to uproot the authority of the ancients was firmly planted at this time.²¹

Hulme identifies the "philosopher," or philosophical approaches to travel writing, as the fifth shift. Like the third and fourth shifts, the fifth shift takes place during the sixteenth century as well. Authors like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who rarely traveled but relied on the astute observations of writers like Montesquieu, Diderot, and Buffon, inserted themselves into the equation. Within this era, various interested parties, from scientists to philosophers, from sponsors to politicians, "issued instructions to travelers about how to observe and how to write down their observations, and the history of such instructions runs unbroken into the early twentieth century and the foundations for anthropology."²² Here, Hulme separates the fifth shift into two parts. The first part identifies those writers who followed the instructions of the interested parties that commissioned their work, while the second, and perhaps more prominently represented, were works by those authors that ignored those instructions. This dichotomy in the marketplace created the two "modes" of travel writing, to use Hulme's term, *forgery*, and *parody*. It also spawned a great deal of "prose fiction" (sixth shift), which relied heavily on the use of travel as a theme but did not attempt to be factual, and rather proposed *plausibility*, by which Don Quixote and Robinson Crusoe became household names. Hulme notes that "[t]he relationship between the genres remains close and often troubling. Many readers still hope for a literal truthfulness from the travel writing

²¹ Here I have freely paraphrased Peter Hulme's "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge University Press: 2002), 4-5.

²² *Ibid.*, 4-5.

that they would not expect to find in the novel, though each form has long drawn on the conventions of the other [...]" ²³, a subject that gained significant attention with the rise of tourism (seventh shift) in the nineteenth century. Tourism was often distinguished from travel in the "modern period" (eighth shift) of travel literature,²⁴ a period that begins in the nineteenth century when literary writers themselves, such as Flaubert, Trollope, Stendhal, and Dickens, wrote about their travels. While explorers like Dutchman Wilhem Barenste had searched for a northern passage to Asia via the pole in 1595, a resurgence in polar exploration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the publication of journals documenting the polar travels, further reinforced public appreciation of travel narratives, marking a determined shift towards the literariness of travel writing.²⁵

Perhaps the most important recent shift in travel writing has been the arrival in the late 1970s of "postcolonial" studies (ninth shift). This shift forced writers and critics to revisit works that involved the relationships of power and culture in colonial discourses. Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* figures prominently as the first critical advancement of postcolonial theory, yet Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia* is mentioned as "contributing an early postcolonial speculation on the origin of Shakespeare's character Caliban, from *the Tempest*." ²⁶ This *critical* shift in examining travel literature involuntarily produced offshoots of re-examination and

²³ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁴ Here I use the term "modern" in the same manner as Hulme, who cites Baudelaire's 1863 essay, "*Peintre de la vie moderne*" in which he "ties the term to notions of movement and individuality." *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵ By using the term 'literariness,' I am supporting the view that the practice of journal writing developed from a rudimentary framework into a more stylized form. If we include the *bande dessinée* as an integral part of the history of journal writing, there can be no question as to its evolutionary stylization.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

production in the "feminist" impulse splitting approaches between masculine and feminine travel writers and critics, and introducing the subjects of sexuality and gender into the discourse of travel. "Journalists," invested in their credibility, also played a formidable role, and criticism of their works often arouses suspicions as to the veracity of the claims they make, given that they work for companies or agencies tied to national institutions that could serve to politicize certain details of their observations. The feminist and journalist movement constitutes the tenth shift. The final shift in Hulme's history is the recent rare phenomenon of "formal experimentalism." Like the post-colonial novel, authors "write back" using literary texts as a sort of argument for one representation of life during a certain period of time in a certain locale, responding with a different perspective (narrator or a character as a narrator that differs from the foregoing literary text) that alters the static representation of the first.²⁷

As we shall see shortly, comics creators who are actively pursuing travel themes are applying many of the above approaches in their works, in effect resisting any single categorization. Many of the *bande dessinée récits de voyage* seem to demonstrate Hulme's ninth and tenth shifts (postcolonial, feminist and journalistic) in travel literature history, such as Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse*. Guibert, Lefèvre, and Lemercier's work in *Le Photographe* appears to be a combination of the fifth (philosopher/commissioned work), ninth, tenth, and eleventh (formal experimentalism) shifts at once, while Guy Delisle's 'travelogues' contain elements

²⁷ For further elaboration on this topic see the heading, *infra.*, **Ann Miller and Intertextuality**, 75.

that combine the eighth (tourism), tenth (journalism), and eleventh (formal experimentalism) shifts.

I would like to mention a few ignored categories in Hulme's establishment of a history of travel literature. Nothing is mentioned of the poets or playwrights who wrote of their travels in their medium. What of their influences? Furthermore, why is Edward Saïd's criticism counted among these categories when poetry and theatre are not? Again, in the biblical shift he only mentions the Christian tradition of travel writing, citing the 'pilgrimage' as central to the Christian ethos, neglecting the Jewish, Muslim, and other traditions. Note that the categories are limited to Anglophone perspectives, indicating a geographic circumscription. Other traditions merit observation, particularly those of Buddhist and Islamic traditions, as confrontations between religions and cultures make up some of the most interesting subjects of study in the genre. For instance, second century Chinese envoy, Zhang Qian, traveled extensively through central Asia and brought back the first reliable accounts of the region to the court during the Han dynasty. Likewise, al-Biruni's eleventh century account of his extended stay in India as an official in the court of a Turkish conqueror would certainly add depth to Hulme's categories. Apart from this, I cannot stress my insistence that comics travel literature is now as important to the genre of travel literature as any of the former purely textual examples and has been for well over a decade. The inclusion of hand-drawn images or texts which incorporate photographic images in narrative is not merely a superficial shift. The

sequential narrative image is a linguistic addition to a textual system that does not have the capacity to contain all representative meaning.²⁸

I would like to remark briefly on the existence of *A Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*. When I think of any general topic of literary research, I can almost always find a *Cambridge Companion* to that topic. The articles and referenced works in these *Companions* are of a high quality and always very useful to any study. However, when Cambridge publishes one of these volumes, I am often given the impression that whatever subject has been treated in a *Companion* has been exhaustively treated. In spite of this aspiration to an exhaustive treatment, throughout the *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, the *bande dessinée récit de voyage* simply does not figure in any way. At the time of publication (2002), there were several important works of travel literature in the *bande dessinée* medium, including autobiographical journalistic works like Joe Sacco's *Palestine* and *Safe Area Gorazde*, Guy Delisle's *Shenzhen*, and two volumes of collected travel comics by members of the publishing house *L'Association* that treat individual experiences of the contributing authors in Egypt and Mexico, not to mention the plethora of works treating travel in fiction, like Hugo Pratt's *Corto Maltese* series, Hergé's *Les Aventures de Tintin*, and Schuiten and Peeters' *Les cités obscures*, just to name a few. My purpose in stating this clear disparity between the comics medium and the uniquely

²⁸ No system of expression is perfectly equipped to contain all representative meaning, as each system appeals to different aspects of human senses. They vary by degrees. For instance, a fixed image cannot very well capture the sound of a gong; such an experience is probably better represented as a textual description. Likewise, textual description of a person enjoying the smell of a blooming lemon tree may not be as efficient as an image depicting a person's expression of satisfaction at smelling the tree. Each has shortcomings, and each have advantages.

text-based medium is that the comics form is not even considered in purportedly canonical collections that treat the same subjects.

What Hulme and the other writers included in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* fail to address as a whole is best summarized in an article by Olivier Lubrich, in which he defines the classical autobiographical travel report as being structured along four variables: "An identifiable subject (1) travels to foreign countries (2), and offers his readers at home (3) a written report of his experience (4)".²⁹ Lubrich's parameters for his own analysis of Alexander von Humboldt's *Relation historique du Voyage aux Régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent, Fait en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, et 1804* show the ways in which each of these four variables are obscured linguistically, narratively, typographically, and even pictorially. Lubrich demonstrates that by changing the narrative voice, obscuring the identity of the author or the reader by addressing various readers, and obfuscating interpretation by manipulating typographical case, the travel report takes on dimensions that defy singular categorization. He argues that the hybridity of the text continually disorients readers who seek to classify it along the lines of post-colonial literature or post-modern, favoring the concept that the text must be approached from many simultaneous viewpoints rather than from a homogenous centralist monologue.³⁰

Lubrich, perhaps unknowingly, unifies the many approaches to travel writing, not as a collective of different perspectives, but rather as an amalgam of

²⁹ See Olivier Lubrich, "Alexander von Humboldt: Revolutionizing Travel Literature," in *Monatshefte*, vol. 96, No. 3, Fall (University of Wisconsin Press: 2004), 360.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 380.

complementary perspectives. It is from this multi-faceted perspective that I seek to engage a current strand of *bande dessinée récit de voyage* - the autobiography in *bande dessinée récit de voyage*. The selections I have made for this corpus resist categorization because they draw from a variety of approaches and, therefore, must be considered from their combination. Moreover, the format of the *bande dessinée* invites an entirely new layer of interpretation, and as a consequence, a new layer of reader disorientation; a disorientation that is created primarily through omission.

Travel Literature and Journal Writing

As stated earlier, *travel literature* resists a single, all-encompassing definition. While the term implies the recounting of some voyage, we must confront the notion of the real and the imaginary in *travel literature*. Very often these lines are blurred while the author's authoritative voice remains in tact. Depending on the author and his conception of his work, an example of *travel literature* must abide by, at the very least, the following three rudimentary requirements: (1) it must recount a voyage (2) to a reader and (3) it must contain some established narrative order.³¹ Of course, there are many different genres of *travel literature* within this simple framework. These three rules do not exclude imaginary accounts of fictional or non-

³¹ My own definition purposely excludes consideration for an identifiable subject (by 'identifiable subject' I imply a personage, at the bare minimum anthropic, appearing to possess a consciousness, who may or may not have a speaking role). The reasons for this are as follows: the subject of a travel narrative does not necessarily have to be identifiable in order for a voyage to be depicted visually or through a narrative *in comics* or in any other pictorial medium. Moreover, a lack of an identifiable subject can serve to situate a reader more handily within the framework of the narrative, if the environment and its inhabitants interact with that reader. In a pictorial narrative where the pictures do the narrating rather than the text, much in the way that Marie-Françoise Plissart and Benoît Peeters' *Droit de regard* operates in the *photo-roman* medium, all possible narrative voices as valid (see Fig. 3).

fictional people, places, or events, but do exclude works that take the form of a day-to-day or week-to-week style of journal, wherein the writings are dated and a cohesive, overall narrative is de-emphasized or non-existent.³²

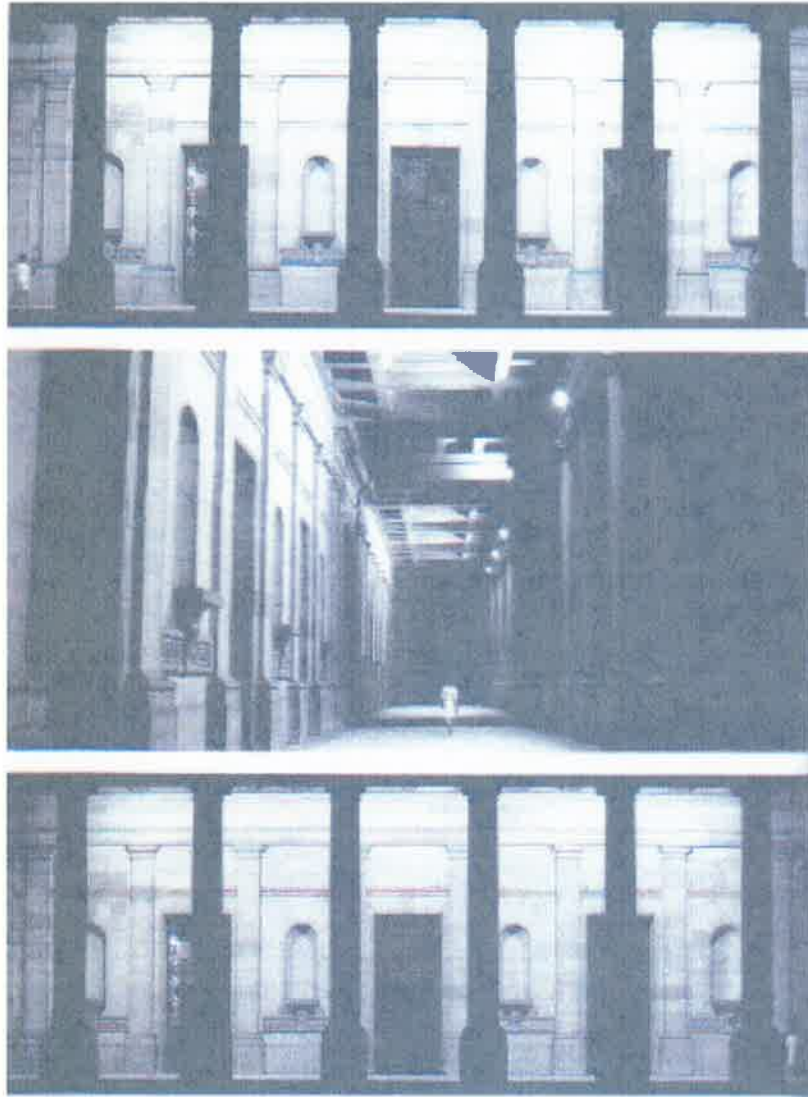


Fig. 3 - An example of narration in Plissart and Peeters' *Droit de regards*.

The date-log style of journal writing, in my opinion, cannot be received as literature simply because the narrative is not expressly controlled by the author; the events that are captured in a journal depend upon the events that occur and which

³² Over the course of this study we will re-examine and more precisely define *travel literature*.

are simply recorded. Such a written effort, although noteworthy in its own right, lacks the most fundamental aspect of literariness; a true *narrative structure* must exist in order for a work to be deemed *literature*. For instance, Antoine de Bougainville's account of his voyage to the Polynesian islands is not literature. It is merely an account of his proceedings that were documented in his journal. Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, on the other hand, should be considered literature. Diderot takes Bougainville's journal as a foregoing structure and uses it to formulate a narrative of the voyage, basing his own writing on Bougainville's first-person account. The narrative is controlled, deliberate, and structured. It is not fiction – it is structured around an autobiographical account. Likewise, Guy Delisle performs this type of re-writing of his own journals, creating a finished product that has the appearance of a date-log style journal, even though the narrative is structured.

I propose that a work of travel literature is simply that – the purposeful recounting of travel in an author-controlled narrative form. Nevertheless, I must postpone detailed analysis of fictive travel literature in my study, not to neglect the influence that these works have had on the genre, but because the subject areas I wish to explore are more in tune with autobiographical and biographical accounts. Although I have excluded explicit analysis of fictive *bande dessinée récit de voyage* I will make reference to them from time to time, as the applications found in both fiction and non-fiction, in many cases, overlap. The fiction that will figure in my analysis here, while taking a backseat to the autobiographical accounts, will be François Schuiten and Benoît Peeters' *Les Cités Obscures* and Joann Sfar's *Le Chat du*

Rabbin. The autobiographical or biographical accounts we shall examine will be Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre, and Frédéric Lemerrier's *Le Photographe*, Emmanuel Guibert's *La Guerre d'Alan* and *L'Enfance d'Alan*, Guy Delisle's *Shenzhen*, *Pyongyang*, *Chroniques Birmanes*, and *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse*, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*.

Synthesis and Scope of this Study

Bande dessinée récit de voyage is fairly easy to understand from this perspective. It is simply any mass-produced, author-controlled narrative that is composed of images recounting some voyage, fictional or non-fictional.

In order to maintain some cohesion within the selected corpus of this study, I will limit myself to detailed examinations of Francophone *bande dessinée récits de voyage autobiographiques*. Although I will mention narratives that are fictional, those fictional narratives will be ones that deal directly with controversial subjects in social or political history. Part of my focus in this study is the non-fictional and fictional treatment of war-torn regions, with a strong focus on the Near and Middle East. Roannie and Oko's militant posturing in regards to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in *L'intruse*, as well as Guy Delisle more subtle portrayal of the same in *Chroniques de Jérusalem* indicate a far more pressing ethical question, to be revealed over the course of this dissertation, regarding the future of the *bande dessinée* medium. Of course, I am implying that politics are involved in the process of writing and creating an autobiographical *bande dessinée récit de voyage*, as the activity of depicting one's travels to other lands occupied by other peoples is one of inherent

comparison, contrast, and, in the end, judgment: I argue that indeed these comics are necessarily political.

Regarding the veracity of narrative representation in the *bande dessinée récit de voyage*, this is a three-fold study: (1) I intend to show, through historical accounts of the *bande dessinée* that prior to the creation of *bandes dessinées* for adults, travel literature in the *bande dessinée* was restricted to fictional accounts of travel to real foreign lands and peoples. This will be demonstrated shortly below; (2) Publications aimed at adult readership have drastically shifted in tone and treatment of foreign lands and peoples since the rise and fall of *L'Association* and its predecessors. A certain culturally sensitive component has emerged in some works, and yet there is still a political incorrectness to be found in these autobiographical *bandes dessinées récits de voyages*; (3) The *bande dessinée récit de voyage* that appears non-fictional in fact distorts a reader's perception in favor of the political ideals of the author(s) or publisher(s). It is no secret that media can be manipulated without end. I intend to demonstrate the degree to which this can be done through an extension of Groensteen's concept of 'iconic solidarity'. Iconic solidarity, in my view, extends beyond the pages of a comic book when the images depicted have a real, tangible referent, and this creates the illusion that the stories depicted are foolproof, verifiable, and one hundred percent accurate. I argue that the veracity of their accounts is only measurable in terms of degree, and in some cases *plausibility*.³³ While I do refer to nineteenth and twentieth century examples of

³³ *Infra.*, 171.

*BDRV*³⁴, my concentration will be the changes from era to era with a specific focus on the examples I have chosen from the twenty-first century. The following brief history of travel literature in the *BD* marketplace is intended to contextualize the works selected for analysis.

A Brief History of Travel Literature in the *bande dessinée* During the Nineteenth Century

Rodolphe Töpffer

In a 1998 article entitled "De l'origine et de la diversification des genres" Thierry Groensteen identifies three major themes in the *bande dessinée*; "*le Voyage, le Merveilleux, et la Bêtise*" – travel, the fantastic, and stupidity.³⁵ All three harken back to Rodolphe Töpffer's first works. We shall examine the manner in which Töpffer first exploited *travel* in his 1840 publication *Voyages et aventures du Docteur Festus*, the first example of *BDRV*, whose 1996 edition published by Seuil, give a succinct description of this work:

Le docteur Festus [...] entreprend un "grand voyage d'instruction" à dos de mulet ; il ne s'éloignera guère de sa commune, mais empruntera les moyens de transport les plus variés, dont le commun dénominateur est de l'empêcher de rien voir. En effet, il voyage successivement sous sa monture (la selle ayant tourné), dans une malle, dans une meule de foin, au sein d'un arbre creux monté sur quatre roues, dans un sac de blé transporté à dos d'âne, enfin à

³⁴ From this point forward the acronym *BDRV* will be used as needed to refer to the term *bande dessinée récit de voyage*, and likewise, *BD* will refer to *bande dessinée*.

³⁵ See Thierry Groensteen, "De l'origine et de la diversification des genres," in *La bande dessinée en France* (Paris: Centre national de la bande dessinée et de l'image, Angoulême - Association pour la Diffusion de la Pensée française, janvier 1998), 15-29. The article is most easily accessible via the URL: <http://www.editionsdelan2.com/groensteen/spip.php?article9>.

l'intérieur d'un télescope géant. Se réveillant chez lui après un évanouissement, il croit avoir rêvé toute cette folle équipée.³⁶

With this humorous narrative sequence, Töpffer created a formula that would be replicated over and over again, what Groensteen calls "*le voyage cocasse*." Virtually every *BD* author until the time of Hergé would follow this pattern to a great extent: Gustave Doré, Cham, Gabriel Liquier, Léonce Petit, and Christophe (Georges Colomb) all borrowed and commercially exploited the humorous notion of the bumbling traveler.

What is remarkable about Töpffer's use of travel, and what distinguishes him from the other nineteenth century *BD* authors is his narrative intuition. Töpffer creates metaphors that apply outwardly to the reader and the experience of reading a text which he describes as « *une histoire en estampes* ». Using Docteur Festus as a metaphor for the reader and the narrative as a metaphor for the act of reading of a book, Töpffer suggests that reading *Voyages et aventures du Docteur Festus* is like experiencing a dream. The reader is temporarily taken out of the world he inhabits and transported to another world that he neither physically sees nor experiences but to which he can still relate. When the reader navigates through this world, he does so blindly, being guided by the author's imagination. Much in the way a reader is guided by his subconscious in a dream state, the reader is led by images that come to him in sequence, not physical experiences. In a state of restricted physical

³⁶ "Doctor Festus undertakes a great instructional voyage on the back of a mule; he will barely leave his village but will take the most varied means of transportation, which all have the obstruction of his vision in common. Effectively, he travels on the underside of his mount (the saddle having slipped), in a trunk, in a haystack, in a tree trunk on wheels, in a sack of wheat on the back of a mule, and finally inside a giant telescope. Waking up in his home after fainting, he believes he had dreamed the whole ordeal." – my transl. See Rodolphe Töpffer, *Voyages et aventures du Docteur Festus* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), préface.

movement, the reader's travel is virtual, as he reads the narrative from a fixed position, much in the same way he would dream. The images arrive to the reader/dreamer and form some meaning, whether logical or absurd. If Docteur Festus' « *grand voyage d'instruction* » is meant to teach him (or the reader) anything, following this metaphor, it is that the experience of reading is a guided, imaginative slight of hand by the author, entirely manipulated. Believing he dreamed the whole debacle, Docteur Festus simply traveled in his mind, and the experience of reading about his travels is reduced to an imaginary happening, the recognition of a dream, and the recognition of a fictional narrative in images.

Nadar and Christophe

Often cited as the first to publish a weekly comic strip, the work of Félix Tournachon (known by his pseudonym, Nadar) holds a political importance to this study. His satiric *Vie publique et privée de Mossieu Réac* stands as the first blatantly politicized example of *bande dessinée*. Unlike Töpffer, Nadar worked for a time as a caricaturist. The editor Jules Hetzel hired him with the express intent of ridiculing Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte in graphic form. *La Revue comique à l'usage des gens sérieux* was founded in 1848 and within one year Hetzel became the first comic strip publisher to be censored and driven out of business by French government officials. It was during this time that Nadar created and expanded upon the character Mossieu Réac, who, as an enduring unpleasant feature of human nature, and at every turn throughout history, has played a decisive role in manipulating the political forum using hypocritical, underhanded, and immature schemes. His antics

include sowing discord for political and personal gain, lying in order to advance in public status, and using institutions in order to project his ideologies on a largely ignorant society.

For the purposes of this essay, it is important to cite Nadar as the first to serialize the political *BD*. The importance of *Mossieu Réac* is that the *BD* form shows preponderance towards political commentary and activist posturing at a very early stage in history. It would not be until the early twentieth century with Hergé's *Tintin au pays des Soviets* that the theme of travel literature and political activism would thoroughly unite.

Georges Colomb, known by his pseudonym, Christophe, advanced the theme of travel literature using the weekly *Le Petit Français illustré*, a humoristic publication directed at France's youth. The first of his three major works, *La Famille Fenouillard*, published between 1889 and 1893 recounts the Fenouillard family's trip around the world, notably their misadventures at the World's Fair, in New York, in Japan and in the Polynesian Islands. In each instance of their travels, whether by boat, train, horse, or on foot, the family encounters some catastrophe, usually resulting in the loss of Mr. Fenouillard's hat, but never his umbrella. At each setback the family does not react with indignity, maintaining their good bourgeois character, much in the way Töpffer's *Docteur Festus* seems to disregard his misadventures. The second of Christophe's works, *Vie et mésaventures du Savant Cosinus* (1893-1899), involves a cousin of the Fenouillard family, Zephyrin-Brioché Cosinus, who decides to follow the example of the Fenouillards and travel around the world, with his pug as his sole companion. The voyage begins in Paris and, through a series of

anecdotal stumbles, never manages to go further. The third, *Le Sapeur Camember* (1890-1896), treats the subject of a soldier at the end of the Second Empire.³⁷

Besides continuing the use of 'travel' as a general theme, Christophe would use the content of his third to showcase his linguistic humor. The character Camember, analphabet that he is, cannot help but constantly employ malapropism after malapropism, for example "*dors en avant*" for '*dorénavant*,' "*entre insectes*" for '*intrinsèque*,' "*le colonel est crevé*" for '*le colonel écrivait*,' and "*pur uhlan*" for '*purulent*,' to name a few.³⁸

Francis Lacassin, coiner of the term *9th Art*, states that;

À Töpffer, [Christophe] a emprunté le thème dynamique de Fenouillard et Cosinus: le voyage. Il en a demandé le décor aux œuvres de Jules Verne («Le tour du monde en 80 jours») ou à la parodie réalisée par Albert Robida en 1879, avec les «Voyages extraordinaires de Saturnin Farandoul dans tous les mondes connus et inconnus de M. Jules Verne». ³⁹

Christophe is, thus, a remarkable figure in the history of the *bande dessinée* for the simple fact that he recognized the potential of creating something new with something old, in effect, recycling themes, character types, and gags. Moreover, Christophe would become a primary influence in the work of Belgium's most famous comics creator, Hergé, notably in terms of page and frame format.

³⁷ Although it was serialized before *Vie et mésaventures du Savant Cosinus*, I place *Le Sapeur Camember* as the third in the series because its content is so dissimilar to Christophe's other works.

³⁸ *Dors en avant* - 'Sleeps first' vs. *dorénavant* - 'from now on', *entre insectes* - 'between insects' vs. *intrinsèque* - 'intrinsic', *le colonel est crevé* - 'the colonel is bushed' vs. *le colonel écrivait* - 'the colonel wrote,' and *pur uhlan* - 'pure mercenary' vs. *purulent* - 'suppurating.' (my translations).

³⁹ See Francis Lacassin, *Pour un 9^e art; la bande dessinée* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 10/18, 1971), 75. (my transl. - "Christophe borrowed the dynamic theme of Fenouillard and Cosinus from Töpffer - the voyage. He used decor from the works of Jules Verne (*Around the World in 80 Days*) or from the parody created by Albert Robida in 1879, with *The Extraordinary Voyages of Saturnin Farandoul in all the Known and Unknown Worlds of Mr. Jules Verne*.")

The Twentieth Century and Travel Literature in the *bande dessinée* Hergé's (Georges Rémi) *Les aventures de Tintin*

By far, the most important comic series in the twentieth century is *Les aventures de Tintin*. Much like Christophe, Georges Rémi, better known by his pen name, Hergé, recognized the importance of making something new with something old, and, like Christophe, he adopted the theme of travel for his most famous series, created a canine companion for his protagonist, and intertwined linguistic word games into his work with remarkable variety. Although Hergé would not cite Christophe as a primary influence, Benoît Peeters remarks in his meticulous biography of Hergé that the precursor to *Tintin*, Hergé's Belgian boy scout *Totor*, published between 1926 and 1929 by *Le Boy-Scout Belge*, was;

[t]echniquement [...] loin de la formule qui fera triompher *Les Aventures de Tintin*. Pour l'essentiel, *Totor* n'est pas une bande dessinée au sens moderne du terme, mais un texte illustré sur le modèle des albums de Christophe. L'influence de *La Famille Fenouillard* et du *Sapeur Camember* est manifeste: les images sont presque toutes de format carré; le texte est composé typographiquement et nettement détaché des dessins, comme chez lui; et surtout le ton pince-sans-rire porte sa marque.⁴⁰

Continuing in the same vein Peeters notes,

Quant à savoir pourquoi *Les Aventures de Tintin* se présentent d'emblée comme une bande dessinée au sens moderne du terme, alors que *Totor* tenait encore du récit illustré, c'est une question plus complexe. Indéniablement, l'influence de Christophe fut longtemps

⁴⁰ See Benoît Peeters, *Hergé, fils de Tintin* (Flammarion, Coll. Grandes biographies: 2002), 49-50. Transl.- "Technically (...) a long way from the formula that would be so successful for *The Adventures of Tintin*. For one thing, *Totor* is not a comic strip in the modern sense of the term but an illustrated text on the model of Christophe's books. The influence of *La Famille Fenouillard* (The Fenouillard Family) and *Sapeur Camember* (Saper Camember) is obvious; the images are almost all square-shaped; the text is composed typographically and completely separate from the drawings, as in Christophe's work, and, above all, the dry tone bears his stamp." See, Benoît Peeters, *Hergé, Son of Tintin*, trans. Tina A. Kover (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press: 2012), 23.

forte, avant que Hergé ne se rende compte que ce système narratif – séparant le texte et les dessins – ne pouvait pas lui convenir.⁴¹

In evolving from a Christophe-style narrative, adopting ballooned text and a certain freedom in caricaturized personages, after the styles of George McManus (*Bringing up Father*, 1913) and Alain Saint-Ogan (*Zig et Puce*, 1925) Hergé, under the guidance of Abbot Norbert Wallez, would send a new character, Tintin, reporter, and his trusty dog Milou, to communist Russia for an adventure and a foreign affairs story about the plight of the Russian people. For this work, debuting in 1929, Hergé used one source for information regarding the current state of Russian affairs; *Moscou sans voiles* by Joseph Douillet, former Belgian diplomat to Russia.⁴² Douillet's account condemned the Bolsheviks and accused them of starving their people, strong-arming those that didn't vote for the correct candidate, and deceiving foreign visitors by giving them guided tours of staged locations to make the USSR seem paradisiacal, accusations that Hergé freely inserted in his work.⁴³ While *Tintin aux pays des Soviets* contains only a few instances of political commentary, Hergé's remarks projected him and his work into the realm of politics, however inspired by Douillet and Wallez's direction, as a sort of travel agent.

More than merely a political commentary, *Les Aventures de Tintin* was conceived as a series of travels. Benoît Peeters notes precisely this:

Tintin s'en va: c'est son premier geste, son acte de naissance. [...] Longtemps Tintin sera le départ incarné. «Où aller?», se demande-t-il

⁴¹ See Peeters, *Hergé, Fils de Tintin*, 67. ("As to understanding why *The Adventures of Tintin* was presented immediately as a comic strip in the modern sense of the term, while *Totor* remained an illustrated story, that is a more complicated question. Christophe's influence was undeniably strong and lasted until Hergé realized that this narrative style - which separated the text and the drawings - would not work for him." See Peeters, *Hergé, Son of Tintin*, 38.

⁴² See Joseph Douillet, *Moscou sans voiles* (Editions Spes) 1928.

⁴³ See Michael Farr, *Tintin, the Complete Companion* (San Francisco Last Gasp, 2002), 14.

en 1930, face à un gigantesque globe terrestre, sur une couverture du Petit Vingtième. C'est la grande question de ses débuts, le choix fondamental qu'il doit poser, lui qui tire sa substance des contrées qu'il traverse.⁴⁴

While Hergé would refer to Tintin's first two adventures as "youthful transgressions," *Tintin aux Pays des Soviets* and *Tintin au Congo* gave Hergé a medium through which to travel. According to Peeters' biography of Hergé, *Tintin au Congo* had only one source as well; *Le Musée du Congo* (now known as the *Musée royale de l'Afrique centrale*) in Tervuren, Belgium, just a few kilometers from Brussels. The contents of the displays Hergé used for his work were of an exceedingly stereotyped nature, having been extracted by colonialists for display. In intergenerational terms, *Tintin au Congo* was a great success, and it had the added benefit of being published the same year as a colonial exhibit in Paris ushered in millions to see the mysteries of Africa.⁴⁵ Hergé, for his part, worked with the material that was most readily available to him. Of course, *Tintin au Congo* has become one of the most controversial comics ever published because of the manner in which Congolese people were represented. Published complaints against *Tintin au Congo*, however, did not emerge until the nineteen-sixties, and then only after a damning statement in *Le Canard Enchaîné* warning parents to prohibit their children from any exposure to Hergé's art.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See Peeters, *Hergé, Fils de Tintin*, 64-65. ("Tintin leaves. This is his first act, his birth act. [...] For a long time Tintin would be departure incarnate. "Où aller (Where should I go)?" he would ask himself in 1930, facing a gigantic globe of the earth, on a cover of *Le Petit Vingtième*. This is the great question of his early days, the fundamental choice he must make, this youth who draws his very substance from the lands through which he travels." See Peeters, *Hergé, Son of Tintin*, 36.

⁴⁵ See Peeters, *Hergé, Fils de Tintin*, 79.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 432.

Well before the critique that *Tintin au pays des Soviets* and *Tintin au Congo* would endure, Hergé was meticulously collecting documents, images, and histories of the countries to which Tintin would eventually travel. By his fifth attempt at a Tintin adventure, Hergé created his masterpiece, *Le Lotus Bleu*. This work traced Tintin's exploits in Japanese-occupied China, and, amongst other things, flatly accused the Japanese government of sabotaging a railway in order to excuse their planned invasion of Manchuria. Although Hergé did not mention the specific railway, his depiction of a Japanese-owned railroad being destroyed by Japanese military personnel was in direct reference to the Nanking Incident of September 18, 1931. Several hundred miles north of the location indicated in *Le Lotus Bleu*, a railroad owned by the Japanese company South Manchuria Railway was destroyed at a time when Russia, China and Japan were competing for control of the trade routes.⁴⁷ Despite the inaccuracy of this detail, Hergé's depiction of Japanese diplomats walking out of an assembly of the League of Nations would receive a formal complaint from the president of the Sino-Belgian Friendship Association, accusing Hergé and his *Le Lotus Bleu* of being an anti-Japanese political pamphlet of sorts.⁴⁸ When the publishers of *Le Petit Vingtième* defended Hergé publicly, the formal complaint fell flat, however Hergé would alter later editions of *Le Lotus Bleu*

⁴⁷ Several Japanese colonies would flourish Along this route, and Japanese military personnel would eventually overwhelm the route during the Nanking Massacre of 1937, which resulted in the slaughter of over 200,000 Chinese. See Jean-Michel Coblence and Tchang Yefei, *Tchang!* (Belgique: Éditions Moulinsart, 2003), 97.

⁴⁸ On 24 February 1933 Japanese diplomats walked out of an assembly of the League of Nations after the League adopted a report that cited Japanese aggression in Manchuria as not legitimately considered as self-defense. On March 27 of the same year Japan announced its withdrawal from the League. See the United States Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, D.C. 1983, 1943), 3-8.

by changing the Chinese characters found in the original publication on page 17 that read "Boycott Japanese merchandise" so as to appear politically unmotivated.⁴⁹

With *Le Lotus Bleu*, Hergé expanded the capacity of the *BD* format to depict historical events, and he even did so in a rather contemporary fashion, making no attempt whatsoever to mask his alliance with Chinese culture through the intermediary of his friend and colleague Tchang Tchong-Chen, to whom he was introduced by Abbot Norbert Wallez in 1931. Not only was Hergé depicting real events in his *BD*, his depictions were having a marked influence in the public sphere. With a stroke of his pen, Hergé found that he had the power to both inspire and incite, a recognition that, along with formulation of an assisting team of artists to help him produce his series, would slow the production of every *Aventure de Tintin* that followed *Le Lotus Bleu*, as Hergé became increasingly aware of his series' social import. He documented his sources with the greatest acuity, all the while less directly alluding to global events, in order to remain free from as much further criticism as possible. Yet he had already opened Pandora's box – at least in terms of the capacity for the future of the *bande dessinée*. With Hergé came an understanding that both true events and one's own political preferences could be adapted to fit in the framework of a comic book.

Besides Hergé's resounding influence over the historical direction of the *bande dessinée* several important factors led to a transitional phase within the *BD* industry. World War II and the Nazi invasions of France and Belgium limited art

⁴⁹ For more concerning Hergé's reworking of later editions I suggest Pierre Assouline's, *Hergé: the Man Who Created Tintin*, Translated by Charles Ruas (New York: Oxford University Press), 2009, and Michael Farr's *Tintin: the Complete Companion*.

and publication supplies and held considerable sway over the content of most comics journals published at that time. A number of publications were forced to cease production, most notably perhaps *Spirou*, whose administration refused to accept German control and was subsequently shut down in 1943.⁵⁰ The occupation was accompanied by the imposition of censorship at all levels of media, including *bande dessinée*. After the war, censorship of *bandes dessinées* continued to limit the amount of imported material permitted in publication as well as banning anything in comics aimed at children and adolescents that presented morally harmful material in a positive light.⁵¹ With morality as a major player in the publication process, ideology-based *bande dessinée* flourished, like France's *Coeurs Vaillants* (Catholic) and *Vaillant* (Communist) and the re-launching of Belgium's *Spirou* and Hergé's own spin-off magazine *Tintin*. In 1959, however, René Goscinny, Albert Uderzo and Jean-Michel Charlier, created *Pilote* magazine, as a gesture of revolt against the *bande dessinée* industry, rejecting both moral and formal limits imposed on representational art in the comics, and the dynamic trio, dissatisfied with publisher abuses and artistic limitations, became the catalyst for the social acceptability of adult readership in the comics in France and Europe.⁵²

⁵⁰ Laurence Grove's *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context* gives an excellent summary of the comics journals and their political affiliations before, during, and after the war. See Chapter 6 of his book, entitled, "The Twentieth Century: Rise and Fall of the BD," 129-141.

⁵¹ The articles published in Thierry Groensteen, *On tue à chaque page!: la loi de 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse* (Paris: Éditions du Temps, 1999) provide the most succinct and detailed background on the era of censorship in European comics. See especially, "La loi du 16 juillet 1949 et la liberté d'expression," 7-14, by Patrick Wachsmann for a succinct introduction to post-war censorship in Europe and France, and Jean-Matthieu Méon's "L'installation de la commission de surveillance et de contrôle, les commissaires et la mise en forme de leur institution (1950-1965)," 105-116, for a survey of how censorship was accomplished at the institutional level.

⁵² Patrick Gaumer's introduction and first chapter of *Les années Pilote, 1959-1989* (France: Dargaud), 1996, contains a very concise history of the foundation of this monumental magazine in comics history.

A Transitional Phase for Readership in the *bande dessinée*

Bart Beaty's *Unpopular Culture; Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s* provides an explanation of the transitional period of post-World War II comic book production in Europe. In his study he notes that the two supremely defining comics magazine publications for the Francophone world came from Belgium. Works like André Franquin's *Gaston*, and Goscinny and Morris' *Lucky Luke*, to name a few, bolstered *Spirou* against its main competitor, *Tintin* (the magazine). Beaty discusses the normative business model that came from this competition, stating:

The success of the postwar Belgian comics [...] consolidate[ed] the industry in French-speaking nations and established a business model that continues in somewhat altered form to this day. The postwar mass-market model of comics production [...] s[ought] to sell the same material to an audience twice. Stories were serialized in magazines, of which *Tintin* and *Spirou* were only the most popular, over the course of weeks or months, with new installments appearing a few pages at a time. This had a significant impact on the development of narrative structures, requiring frequent cliffhangers in adventure stories or self-contained gag sequences in comedies [...] only the most popular series from these magazines were collected in forty-six-page hardcover books, called albums, with the intention of reselling an endurable copy of the material to an audience that had already read and enjoyed it. The large scale that is required for newsstand and bookstore distribution [...] favoured large publishing houses. These houses could afford staff to conduct readership surveys so that editors could make informed decisions about audience preferences. The process of producing magazines was a constant effort to please the largest possible readership and to convert magazine readers into book buyers when the opportunity arose.⁵³

⁵³ See Bart Beaty, *Unpopular Culture; Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 22-23. Without getting too bogged down in details concerning which publishing house was parent to which magazine, suffice it to say that Dargaud was parent to *Pilote*, Lombard to *Tintin*, Dupuis to *Spirou*, Les Humanoïdes Associés to *Métal Hurlant*, and Casterman to *À suivre*. For a more thorough history of the publishing houses and the magazines they used as testing grounds for the book-form publications I suggest Bart Beaty's first chapter in *Unpopular Culture* and two sections of Thierry Groensteen's *La bande dessinée, son histoire et ses maîtres*, entitled "L'âge adulte" and "Tradition et innovation."

The goal of the large publishing houses was to capitalize on the success of those comics that proved themselves valuable in the magazine testing grounds. This model was the basis for all comic book album production until the 1990s. The Belgian influence on the French comics industry was not only in graphic content, humor, and narrative; rather, it encompassed the entire mode of production. The French comics industry, based primarily on Belgium's successful example, grew in a similar manner. Breakaways from the traditional Belgian model only began in earnest with the establishment of *Pilote* in 1959. Although financially disastrous at its debut, *Pilote* was a resounding success. After a very brief attempt at managing the initial decline, *Pilote* was purchased by Georges Dargaud for a single, symbolic French franc.⁵⁴ With Goscinny in charge of art and content, the magazine flourished, and competed so well with its Belgian competitors that the *Lucky Luke* series was eventually transferred from *Spirou* to *Pilote*. The most notorious among *Pilote*'s publications is unquestionably the highly celebrated *Astérix le Gaulois*, which, after *Pilote*'s rocky start, and with the support of new characters, such as Charlier and Jean "Moebius" Giraud's *Lieutenant Blueberry*, made *Pilote* and its creators an enormous success.

Pilote's success was still not enough for certain champions of freedom of expression in the *bande dessinée* industry. While Goscinny attempted to make adult readership more acceptable in publishing and more adult-themed content, the aesthetic style of *Pilote* remained cartoonish and childish, and Goscinny admittedly never wanted to abandon his youth readership. The artists and writers that *Pilote*

⁵⁴ For the most complete history of *Pilote* see Patrick Gaumer, *Les années Pilote, 1959-1989* (France: Dargaud, 1996).

had published, on the other hand, sought different goals. Some of the artists and writers like Nikita Mandryka, Claire Bretécher, and Gotlib were not satisfied with *Pilote's* restrictive nature. Based on the example provided by the American Underground Comix movement, the trio formed the first French artist-published monthly magazine expressly for adults called *L'Écho des Savanes* (the words "*réserve aux adultes*" were printed on the cover).⁵⁵ This publication had as an immediate result the spawning of more monthly magazines in revolt against the restrictive practices at *Pilote*, including *Tousse Bourin*, *Mormoil*, and *Métal Hurlant*. Concerned with the public image of the *bande dessinée* in the press, authors/artists Jean Giraud (a.k.a. "Moebius") and Philippe Druillet along with writer/scenarist Jean-Pierre Dionnet (all three had been featured previously in *Pilote*) and businessman Bernard Farkas formed a new publishing house in 1974 – *Les Humanoïdes Associés*. The group serialized a monthly science-fiction journal called *Métal Hurlant* which showcased a visually shocking side of the *bande dessinée*, but, as a secondary result, aided in the discovery of some of the *bande dessinée* industry's greatest talents, including François Schuiten, amongst many others.

While *Pilote* and *Métal Hurlant* became major successes alongside predecessors like *Spirou* and *Tintin*, the artists whose works populated its pages would become major contributors to the world of comics in the present era.⁵⁶ From

⁵⁵ *L'Echo des Savanes* was first published in 1972. Its mention here, along with *Tousse Bourin* (1975) and *Mormoil* (1974), is simply to show where *Métal Hurlant* derived its influence as a breakaway publication. Another noteworthy publishing house emerged in 1972 – Futuropolis. Founded by Étienne Robial and Florence Cestac, this publishing house would be the forerunner of the transformational small-press L'Association in 1990.

⁵⁶ That is, as a single, unified story collected and bound in a single volume (or as a collection of volumes), not divided up over a period of time in monthly publications or featured as a work-in-progress alongside other works-in-progress.

a practical standpoint, the institution of the monthly 'revue' in comics ended in the late 1980s when *Pilote* and *Métal Hurlant* published their last issues. The last surviving monthly publication, however, was *À suivre*, whose last effort was in December of 1997.⁵⁷

By the time Hergé had submitted his fourth *Aventure de Tintin (Les Cigares du pharoan)* Casterman had taken over subsequent publications of the *Tintin* albums. Casterman, a Belgian publishing company whose history dates back to 1776, had always published high quality books (in terms of binding, paper, ink, etc.) that targeted the religious population (namely Catholic) and the youth; therefore, Hergé's *Tintin* series was a natural acquisition, especially considering Georges Rémi's affiliation with the Catholic Church and Norbert Wallez. Even with the resounding success of the *Tintin* series the Casterman group did not attempt to publish any more comic book titles in their catalogue until 1965 (*Alix* by Jacques Martin and *Petzi* by Vilhelm and Carla Hansen). In the late 1970s Casterman decided to pursue the adult market in comics, in part as an effort to assert the literary validity of the comics format, in part as a response to the aging of their formerly young readers, using the monthly magazine format. In February of 1978 the first editorial clarion about *À suivre*, a new division of Casterman devoted to adult readership in the comics, read: « *Avec toute sa densité romanesque, (À suivre) sera l'irruption sauvage de la bande dessinée dans la littérature* ». ⁵⁸ Based on the model

⁵⁷ The lengthy survival of *À suivre*, according to Groensteen, is due to « *l'abandon progressif de la ligne éditorial initiale [...]* » and resulted in the publication dying off in a relative indifference with a massive debt. See Groensteen, *La bande dessinée, son histoire et ses maîtres*, 142.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 138. (my transl. - "With all its romanesque density, *À suivre* will be the savage irruption of comics in literature.")

provided by Hugo Pratt's *La Ballade de la mer salée*, the black and white format of *À suivre* generally boasted twice as many pages as its predecessors and favored the drawn novel over sci-fi or children's publications.⁵⁹ Under the direction of Jean-Paul Mougin, *À suivre* meant to legitimize the *bande dessinée* in terms of literary quality, publishing stories for adults that were not lewd or crass, but more mature in theme. Benoît Peeters and François Schuiten's *Les Cités obscures* is arguably the most important series' to come from this Casterman venture. *Les Cités obscures* is the longest running series from the *À suivre* publications and consistently has new additions to its body of work.

As mentioned above, *À suivre* officially ended publication in 1997. The monthly comics magazine was replaced by the full-book format, the first of which was Swiss-born Bernard Cosendai's (a.k.a. "Cosey") *Le voyage en Italie*. Cosey, whose work debuted in *Le Soir Jeunesse* in 1971, published the series *Jonathan* in *Tintin* magazine between 1975 and 1982.⁶⁰ After publishing a few other series in *Tintin*, Cosey published the first comic book in Dupuis' "aire-libre" collection (headed by Jean Van Hamme) in 1986, *Le Voyage en Italie*. *Le Voyage en Italie* not only constitutes one of the first albums conceived of as an album and not as a serialized, on-going work in progress, it is also the first adult-themed album of

⁵⁹ Previous monthly comics publications had forty-four or forty-six pages, while *À suivre* had anywhere from eighty to one-hundred pages. Pratt's album, which proved the viability of a graphic novel format exceeding the standard page-count format, was first published in the Italian monthly *Il Sergente Kirk* between 1967 and 1969, and the *Corto Maltese* series has been collected and published by Casterman. *La Ballade de la mer salée* is considered by many to be the first "graphic novel," pre-dating Will Eisner's *Contract with God* by nearly a decade.

⁶⁰ Hergé created *Le Soir Jeunesse* in October of 1940 after *Le Petit Vingtième* closed operations during the German occupation of Belgium. He serialized *Les Aventures de Tintin* in *Le Soir Jeunesse* between 1940 and 1944.

travel literature not published first in a magazine.⁶¹ Around this time, these new conceptions of authorship and publication methods altered the landscape of the *bande dessinée* industry.

The Artist-driven Publishing House *L'Association* and Representing "Reality" in the Graphic Form

The 1970s and 1980s *bande dessinée* industry was structured in such a way as to follow Pierre Bourdieu's heteronomous principle of the marketplace. Bordieu's heteronomous principle states that the marketplace and financial sales determine the value of a cultural product, in contrast to the autonomous principle, which refers to "the prestige that is accorded to artists by other artists."⁶² These two opposing forces, *sales* and *prestige*, check and balance each other in determinations of what cultural products may be deemed valuable or not valuable by a given society. Bordieu asserts,

Heteronomy arises from *demand*, which may take the form of personal *commission* [...] or of the sanction of an autonomous *market*, which may be *anticipated* or *ignored*. Within this logic, the *relationship to the audience*, and, more exactly, economic or political interest in the sense of interest in success in and in the related economic or political profit, constitute one of the bases for evaluating the producers and their products.⁶³

In the 1990s the *bande dessinée* industry shifted more in favor of the autonomous principle, and this shift has been traced back to the publishing house *Futuropolis*. Created in 1972 by comic book storeowner Étienne Robial, *Futuropolis* favored the

⁶¹ Cosey's *Le voyage en Italie* is neither biographical nor autobiographical, and therefore will not receive any further mention here.

⁶² Beaty, *Unpopular Culture*, 20

⁶³ See Pierre Bordieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randall Johnson (Columbia University Press: 1993), 45-46.

non-traditional artist and his work, rightly asserting that the comics artist was, in fact, an *artist* and deserved the respect attained by artists in other more traditional mediums. Robial frequently highlighted the author of a work rather than the title of the work, attempting to legitimize the artist further. Selling primarily to comic book specialty stores, Robial targeted a segment of the population that sought works of thoughtful artistry. He promoted well-established artists such as Jacques Tardi and Mœbius as well as a plethora of new artists like Edmond Baudoin, Jean-Claude Denis, and Jean-Christophe Menu, amongst others. Jean-Christophe Menu, creator of the French fanzine *Le Lynx à tifs*, would unite David B., Stanislas, Mattt Konture, Patrice Killoffer, Lewis Trondheim, and Mokeït to form another comics publishing house set up like a cooperative - *L'Association à la Pulpe* (which would be shortened to '*L'Association*' before its first publication).⁶⁴ Beaty describes the organization most succinctly;

As an artist-run cooperative to which individual patrons could subscribe, *L'Association* adopted a policy of paying artists royalties of 10 per cent of the cover price of their books, nothing for contributions to their anthology (*Lapin*), and 'the common labour, like the manual assemblage of limited edition albums, are remunerated in the form of a meal in a restaurant to be consumed on that same day.'⁶⁵

Distancing themselves entirely from the prevailing comics industry practices of the time, *L'Association* released a notice to all bookstores that sold their works, stating,

⁶⁴ The name '*L'Association à la Pulpe*' may be interpreted in a variety of ways. It may imply getting to the pulp (to the heart) of what *bande dessinée* was meant to be – a literary form of art. It may also underscore a relationship with *le roman noir*, in that the protagonists in works published under this banner are portrayed as perpetrators or victims of corruption in an already corrupt system. Typically, everyone depicted in these works finds themselves doomed to a losing scenario. Through radical publication practices, as well as an emphasis on publications that had a serious tone, *L'Association* sought to legitimize the *bande dessinée vis-à-vis* other literary forms. Eventually *L'Association* grew so successful that it could no longer adhere to the autonomous principle and many of the most prominent artists left the publishing house.

⁶⁵ Beaty, *Unpopular Culture*, 29.

"Nous sommes avant tout des auteurs, et nous envisageons l'Édition comme une création supplémentaire. Nous ne sommes donc pas vraiment des professionnels de la gestion et des relations commerciales," as well as an editorial by Menu, stating,

Notre engagement de longue date dans la défense de l'expression d'une Haute idée de la Bande Dessinée ne pouvait attendre plus longtemps, ce second souffle. *L'Association* sera la nouvelle structure indépendante au sein de laquelle se poursuivra désormais cette aventure. Une structure dont les principes de base seront: *Intégrité* et *Long Terme*.⁶⁶

L'Association soon became the fashionable trend of the Francophone comics industry, as autobiographical comics and other works based on representing reality, not sugarcoating it, attracted a vast adult audience worldwide.⁶⁷ The most successful of these efforts was (and still is) Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, published between 2000 and 2003. Other publishers, *Égo comme X* and *Cornelius* in particular, focused closely on expanding the autobiographical tradition in comics, with authors

⁶⁶ "Avis important aux libraires et aux particuliers" and "Editorial" from *L'Association Bulletin*, Janvier 1991 (no publisher information). (My transl. - "We are all, first and foremost, authors, and we envision Publishing as a supplementary creation. Thus, we are not really professionals in commercial relations or administration," [...] "Our long-term commitment to the defense of a High idea of expression in Comics could not wait any longer, this second breath. *L'Association* will be the new independent structure at the heart of which this adventure will forevermore be pursued. A structure based on the principles of *Integrity* and *Long Duration*.")

⁶⁷ "Despite their solidarity with the small press in general, by the end of 1994 even *L'Association* was forced reluctantly to admit, 'Finally, in short, everything is damned well beginning to resemble a real publishing house.' In that year the group hired its first full-time employee to deal with the office and expanded the print runs of their books from one thousand to two thousand copies. In 1995, works by some of their artists were translated into German and Finnish. By this time, it was suggested by one of the subscribers that the very identity of the organization was threatened by its success, which was, at best, relative. The publisher was clearly growing rapidly. Revenues for 1995 (1,200,000FF) were more than double those of 1994. In 1996, revenues rose 66 per cent to more than 2 million FF. In 1997 the group recorded a profit of 183,000FF. By this point, all signs pointed to the fact that that *L'Association* had fully emerged as a genuinely flourishing agent in the French comic book industry. The group had passed five hundred subscribers in 1995 and doubled that number by the end of 1996. By 2002, they had a number of large-scale financial successes, including the four volumes of Marjane Satrapi's autobiography *Persepolis*, which had sold more than 100,000 copies, including 30,000 copies of the fourth volume within a month of its publication. Nonetheless, it must be borne in mind that this success was still limited and that the publisher continued to operate with less than a half-dozen employees." See Beaty, *Unpopular Culture*, 31-32.

like Fabrice Neaud's long-running diary of personal short stories *Journal*, while major publishing houses, convinced of the economic viability of the comic book form, were quick to exploit the new direction of this form. This emphasis on representing the real in Francophone comics presented a new horizon for readers who had been primarily inundated with humoristic, sci-fi, heroic, or fantasy themed works from the preceding generations. Real events, real travels, in addition to fictional or by proxy of newspaper, emphasizing the experiences of the author received an attention that they never had before.

In 1998 *L'Association* began sending artists and writers (thirteen in total) to various cities and regions in three locations (Egypt in 1998, Mexico in 2000, and India in 2006) to create short, journalistic and/or impression-based accounts of their experiences. These stories tend to display some common stereotypes of these peoples that are sometimes at odds with the reality these authors discover during their travels, and at other times not at all, somewhat in the vein of journalism and tourism. These works provide unique commentaries and reports that are overlooked within the mainstream journalistic efforts in newspapers in Europe and America.

In 2000, *L'Association* published the first of two (to date) autobiographical *BDRV* by French-Canadian Guy Delisle entitled *Shenzhen*, in which Delisle recounts his year as an animation director in the Chinese city for which the work is titled. His efforts reveal much more than a mere stereotyped image of the people. In reading the work we observe Delisle's interaction with the Chinese social and political climate, and learn of the difficulties in adapting to this environment as an outsider.

Delisle's second *BDRV, Pyongyang* (2003), is an account from the inside of North Korea (again with Delisle as an animation director), a work that is still considered one of the only reliable accounts of the small dictatorship. Delisle's style is perhaps the most intriguing aspect of his work. While simple in appearance, the cartooning style masks the serious nature of the subjects he treats. All of his travels are real, but when reduced in Delisle's style the message becomes abstracted and lightened to a certain degree. We will examine his work thoroughly in the coming chapters. These narrative trends toward genuine accounts based in the real world serve as undercurrents to the new practices in the *bande dessinée* industry in France.

Artists of "*La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée*," or Artist-centric Publication Practices

In 2002, *Radio Télévision Belge Francophone* (RTBF) cultural journalist Hugues Dayez published a collection of interviews of Francophone comics writers and artists entitled *La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée*. Dayez situates the interviewees (Christophe Blain, Blutch (Christian Hincker), David B., Nicolas de Crécy, Philippe Dupuy, Charles Berberian, Emmanuel Guibert, Pascale Rabaté, and Joann Sfar) as key creators in a new movement for the comics industry.⁶⁸ Unlike previous generations of European comics authors, "members" of the *Nouvelle Bande Dessinée* do not ascribe to the practice of working with one publisher at a time, nor do they publish works that are homogeneous in theme and audience (such as a detective series might be). Using both small press publishers to publish more avant-garde

⁶⁸ One author that Dayez fails to mention as taking part in this new direction for the *bande dessinée* is Lewis Trondheim, who has published an enormous amount of work with both major and small publishers, and has recently directed a collection of comics publications with *Delcourt* called '*Shampooing*'.

works, or alternative works that would appeal to small press audiences, and large publishing houses for more traditional works, like a children's series, the new *bande dessinée* author is less likely to possess the same ideological background as those who initiated the rise of the small press in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁶⁹ For instance, Joann Sfar goes back and forth between *L'Association*, *Dargaud*, *Dupuis*, and *Delcourt* most often in the publication of his work, and while Sfar attempts to involve a high degree of quality in his storytelling for all his works, the ones he publishes with *L'Association*, *Dargaud* and *Delcourt* (namely, *le chat du rabbin* and his various *Carnets* series, published first by *L'Association* and now by *Delcourt*) on which he works entirely alone most pronouncedly underscore his diverse authorship.⁷⁰ *Le chat du rabbin* (here considered, in part, a work of fictive travel literature) is a fine example of a well-arranged open-ended narrative with a focus on religion that serves as a philosophic springboard. This construct allows his characters to denounce most forms of discrimination, amongst other things, and promote the general ideal of mutual respect as a common and worthy aspiration for which to strive. His *Carnets*, on the other hand, depict a very different storyteller. In each of his *Carnets*, Sfar depicts himself as one might in a personal journal, sometimes giving detailed information about some banality he experienced and at other times delving into an impression of a people or place he is visiting. The degree of difference between these two works (*Le chat du rabbin* and the *Carnets* series) is

⁶⁹ In their respective histories of the *bande dessinée* Bart Beaty, in *Unpopular Culture*, and Thierry Groensteen, in *La bande dessinée, son histoire et ses maîtres*, both assert as much and provide a far greater explanation of the dynamics involved than is necessary here. See Beaty, *Unpopular Culture*, 171-204, and Groensteen, *La bande dessinée, son histoire et ses maîtres*, 157-184.

⁷⁰ The word 'carnet' means "notebook."

at once startling and enlightening. The first is based on his religious upbringing as a Sephardic Jew, while the other testifies of his self-proclaimed atheism; the former, an ideal, the latter, his impression of reality. In reading his *Carnets* we learn that Sfar is not a highly structured author/artist in his day-to-day life, but rather a very active meanderer who simply has a passion for drawing and storytelling. According to Dayez' interview with Sfar, he uses his *Carnets* to establish graphic concepts that might be later used in his storytelling. In a 2001 interview with Thierry Belleford of *BD Paradisio*, Sfar claims, in discussing what his characters are and where they come from, that

Pour moi, on a des petites voix dans la tête qui parlent en permanence. Il y en a qui disent des conneries, il y en a d'autres qui disent des choses intéressantes. Et quand on cultive ces petites voix, on en a de plus en plus. Moi je me suis mis à essayer de leur trouver des visages. Je me dis 'Tiens, ça c'est la voix qui ressemble à ça...ça c'est la voix qui ressemble à ça...' et au bout d'un moment, ces voix-là, quand on ne les fait pas parler régulièrement, elles ne sont pas contentes.⁷¹

His characters are his muses, and his *Carnets* contain the impressions he has of them manifested graphically. Continuing with his discussion of how he develops a character's depth in a narrative, in the Dayez interview Sfar stated that, « [...] *quand un de mes personnages ouvre une porte, je ne me demande pas dans quel style référentiel je vais la dessiner, mais si c'est une porte ancienne ou moderne, et si le type*

⁷¹ See Thierry Bellefroid, "Interview de Joann Sfar," transcribed by Catherine Henry (BD Paradisio, 2001), www.bdparadisio.com/Intervw/sfar/intsfar.htm. (My transl. - "For me, there are little voices inside my head that constantly speak. Some are full of crap, while others have interesting things to say. And when I cultivate these voices, they become more and more numerous. I try to find their faces. I say to myself, 'Hold on, that voice looks like this...this voice looks like that,' and after a while, if you don't make these voices speak regularly, they aren't happy.")

qui l'ouvre est costaud ou pas ». ⁷² By focusing on his impressions of the details surrounding his character, Sfar creates environments with which his characters interact. His characters develop as a result of those interactions. Nevertheless, it must be stated that Sfar's *Carnets* are not an attempt at explicitly representing reality. In his interview with Dayez, Sfar attests that in his *Carnets*, « *Je n'y raconte pas ma vie, mais j'y dessine ce que je vois* ». ⁷³

Sfar's *Le chat du rabbin* is, in part, an example of fictive travel literature, in which the voyage plays a central role in the narrative he constructs. His several protagonists travel from Algeria to France and back, and then from Algeria to several Saharan and sub-Saharan African nations. Their travels put them in contact with a variety of cultural, national, religious and linguistic identities. These identities, along with the personalities of his protagonists, make for some caustic encounters. The personal sensitivities of his characters are offended at times, and while the narrative is fictive, Sfar draws from his experience and the experiences of his father to construct a sense of verisimilitude in his characters and their actions, some of which are based on stereotypes, and others which challenge stereotypes. Sfar's *Carnets*, on the other hand, despite their inclusion of a travel element, cannot be considered examples of travel literature because they are not constructed in narrative terms. Rather, the *Carnets* are closer to a personal journal, which, as

⁷² See Hugues Dayez, "Sfar le conteur intarissable," in *La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée* (Belgique: 2002), 181. (my transl. - "[...] when one of my characters opens a door, I don't ask myself in which referential style I'm going to draw the door, but rather if that door is ancient or modern, and if the guy who opens it is a brawny guy or not.")

⁷³ Dayez, "Sfar le conteur intarissable," 198. (my transl. - "I don't tell my life in them, rather I draw what I see in them.")

stated above, cannot be considered literary, but may provide insight into Sfar's processes of character and narrative creation.

Emmanuel Guibert is another important artist/author featured in Dayez' *La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée*. Having worked with Joann Sfar on three significant works - *La fille du professeur* (Dupuis, 1997), *Sardine de l'espace* (2000-present, published first by Bayard Presse, then by Dargaud), and *Les olives noires* (2001-2003, Dupuis) - as well as other solo and duo projects, Guibert performs the duties of scenarist and artist as both an individual author and working in tandem with others. Guibert's two most important works, for our purposes here, *La Guerre d'Alan*, which now has an accompanying prequel entitled *L'Enfance d'Alan*, and *Le Photographe*, are biographical/autobiographical treatments of two of his friends, respectively, an American World War II veteran named Alan Ingram Cope, and a photographer who was his neighbor as a youth, Didier Lefèvre.

La Guerre d'Alan is a dual travel narrative in which the reader confronts American expatriate Alan Cope's rather insignificant participation in the United States Army and his military travels in Europe during World War II. Since Guibert uses Cope's own words to narrate, the reader travels through Guibert's representations of Cope's fleeting memory and his post-war disillusionment with the United States and its military. *Le Photographe* is written very much in the same style, sometimes using Didier Lefèvre's own words, journals, and photographs of his first photographic mission to document the work of *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) in Afghanistan during the Russian occupation of 1986. Lefèvre's photographs are interwoven into the narrative, with Guibert's drawings filling in the spaces where no

photographs were taken, providing a further layer of graphic enunciation and corroborating testimony. While *La Guerre d'Alan* is essentially a work created from a single source (Alan himself), *le Photographe* depends on many interviews, journals and photographs, and according to Guibert, much of the dialogue is invented.⁷⁴ A companion to *Le Photographe* entitled *Conversations avec le Photographe*, published in Dupuis' "aire libre" collection, was released after the three volumes of *Le Photographe* were already published. *Conversations* is simply that – Guibert's transcriptions of recorded conversations with Didier Lefèvre. They cover a broad spectrum of topics from the relevant voyage to Afghanistan to theories of art and photography. Some of these dialogues raise questions concerning the politics of photography and representation in general, and how the two can be used to manipulate public opinion. It is along this line of questioning that I wish to examine Guibert's work and the work of the other authors and artists discussed in this study.

Although not explicitly a figure in Dayez' list of representatives in *La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée*, Guy Delisle certainly practices a method of production that resembles the practices of those Dayez identified. Delisle's two most recent autobiographical *BDRV* works, *Chroniques Birmanes* and *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, shift from the open style that marked his first two works to a style more reminiscent of a travelogue (see Fig. 4). While highly accessible, Delisle's work challenges the

⁷⁴ "Alan used to play out the dialogues, which helped me in the passages of 'direct speech.' I always quote him, quoting others, in my balloons. There's more direct speech in *The Photographer* because I interviewed a lot of people in preparing for the book and asked them to play out the dialogues with me, assuming the part of the person they had been 20 years earlier. And I invented a lot of the dialogue in it. Alan, on the contrary, was my only source of information for the telling of his story – at least for the first two volumes – and I remained very faithful, almost as if stuck to his words." See Matthias Wivel, "The Emmanuel Guibert Interview," in *The Comics Journal*, no. 297, April (Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2009), 103.

formal boundaries of what is considered a travelogue and travel literature, usually chronologically ordered, sometimes with precise dates, and yet replete with a

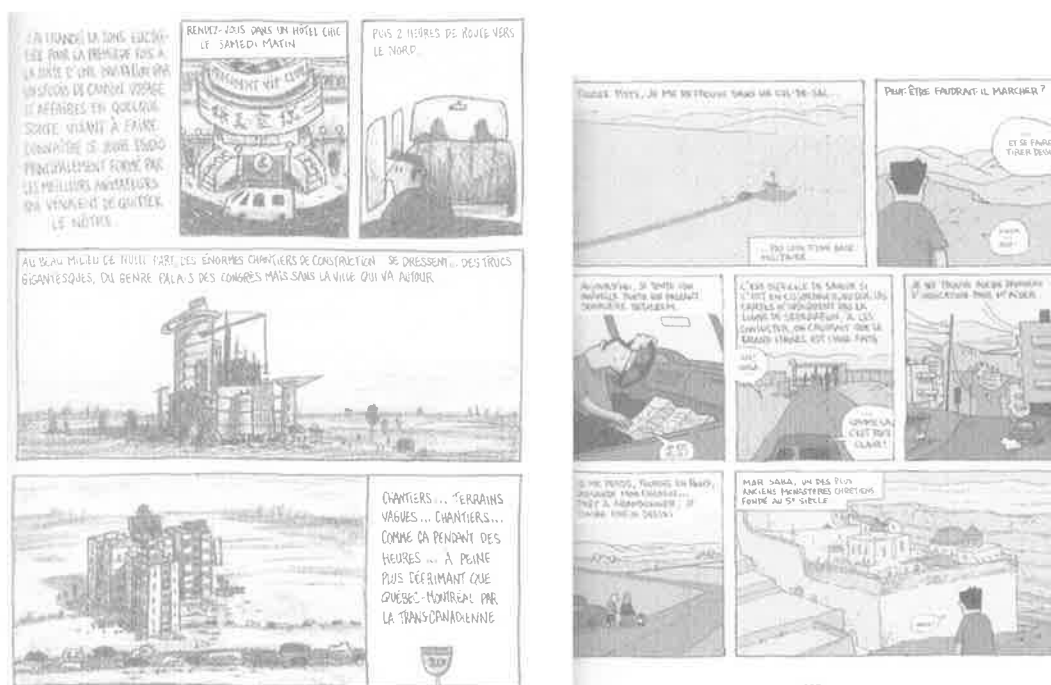


Fig. 4 - Side-by-side comparison of Delisle's graphic style from *Shenzhen* (2000) and *Chroniques de Jérusalem* (2011).

variety of nonchalant anecdotes, wordless strip-like comics and full-page spreads that could be removed easily or placed elsewhere, potentially altering a reader's perception of a signification.⁷⁵ For example, in *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, Delisle devotes a full page to three wordless sequences in which he goes sight-seeing with his family to famous landmarks on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Delisle distinguishes these scenes from the rest of his work by applying different colors to the panels. These scenes, if removed from the location in which they are found,

⁷⁵ Despite the label, Delisle's 'travelogues' form a loose narrative between each other as well as within each individual work. Moreover, Delisle elaborates on certain themes like an experienced comedian, as he will nonchalantly open a theme, meander around a series of unrelated other themes, and then revert back to the first theme as though it were a punch line. Delisle's works are what I consider 'loose travelogues,' as their dates are approximated and the construction of a deliberate narrative is clearly observable.

could be replaced almost anywhere in the narrative, with the exception of between syntagmatically linked panels that abide by Groensteen's notion of *restricted arthrology*,⁷⁶ without disrupting the narration. In another instance, a two-panel page is given to the Wailing Wall (one panel consumes one-third of the page, the other panel consumes the rest). The chapter in which Delisle places this scene is replete with images of the Wall of Separation. Had Delisle not placed his depiction of the Wailing Wall in this same chapter, the juxtaposition of these two walls might be lost to the reader, and possibilities for interpretation of these syntagmatic links altered, even obscured to the point of non-recognition.⁷⁷ Again, Delisle's writing is described by Dick Tomasovic as, "stammering,"⁷⁸ in that it uses short segments of

⁷⁶ See *infra*, 73.

⁷⁷ See Guy Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem* (Paris: Delcourt, Shampooing, 2011), 184.

⁷⁸ « Il arrive en effet, parfois, rarement à vrai dire, que sur une image le regard ne trébuche point, mais qu'il vienne à buter. Oui, le regard bute, c'est-à-dire qu'il se bloque, qu'il se fige, qu'il se pétrifie si l'on veut, lui qui est habituellement si mobile, devant un obstacle visuel qui retient son attention tout en se laissant difficilement dépasser. Le regard bute, s'arrête, s'étend, oscille peut-être, mais ne fuit plus, veut se perdre mais la matière même visuelle l'en empêche. Ce cas de figure semble d'autant plus exceptionnel en bande dessinée que les qualités séquentielles de l'art graphique en question invitent généralement au dépassement de l'image pour retrouver la suivante dans un laps de temps plus ou moins court. Ainsi, même si le regard est amené à buter, il s'agit plutôt d'une forme de bégaiement, qui lui ferait possiblement répéter son trajet avant de l'abandonner aussitôt pour s'engouffrer vers ce qui l'attend (car, par définition, une image de bande dessinée attend – elle est là, elle a signifié sa présence lors de l'appréhension de la page par simultanéité, et elle attend enfin que le regard la prenne plus en considération, qu'il s'attarde tout en la traversant avant de l'oublier, au moins pour un temps). Le régime du regardeur auquel invite [Delisle] est donc tout sauf commun ». See Dick Tomasovic's, "Le regard interdit," in *L'Association, une utopie éditoriale et esthétique*, s.l.d. Erwin Dejasse, Tanguy Habrand et Gert Meesters (Belgique: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2011), 207. (my transl. -

"Sometimes, albeit rarely, it comes to pass that one's gaze does not in the least stumble over an image. Yes, the gaze stumbles, that is to say, it gets stuck, it freezes, it petrifies if you will, the gaze which is normally so mobile, before a visual obstacle that captures its attention all the while letting itself get overlooked. The gaze trips, stretches, oscillates maybe, but does not flee, wants to advance, but the visual material blocks it from doing so. This strange phenomenon seems as exceptional in comics as the sequential qualities of the graphic art in question generally invite the reader to, more or less, rush through to the next image in a short period of time. Thus, even if the gaze is lead to stumble, it acts more like a form of stammering, one that would make it possible to repeat its route before immediately abandoning it to rush towards that which awaits it (for, by definition, a comics image waits - it is there, it made its presence known during the apprehension of the page by simultaneity, and, finally, it waits so that the gaze will take it into consideration, that it may pause while passing through it before forgetting it, at least for a time). That which Delisle invites his readers to sample is, by all means, anything other than commonplace.")

wordless images to create dramatic pauses, guiding the reader's eye visually yet forcing the reader to search for a signification in the combination of preceding or succeeding frames, thus challenging the standard practices of *bande dessinée* writing in which the drawn frames conform to symmetrical effect that make possible the least perturbing reading of a work.⁷⁹ The manner of ways in which he uses this technique, and most certainly the content of his wordless frames, in conjunction with the highly political nature of his subject matter, makes interpretation at once problematic and polarizing.

Rounding off our discussion of the direction in which the *bande dessinée* has veered in the genre of travel literature, we shall breech another work concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict. The author Roannie (pen-name for Marie Jo Parbot) and her commissioned artist Oko, have created a four-volume work that addresses the injustices of Jewish settlements and policies in and around Jerusalem, entitled, *L'Intruse*. Their effort is militantly in favor of the Palestinian cause. The fourth book of the series culminates with an episode which describes an attempt to enter Israel illegally by boat in order to protest the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Roannie verbalizes her disapproval of Israel's actions while depicting herself, at least in part, as somewhat non-partisan in her protestation for peace. Her work includes several techniques that correspond to current practices in avant-garde *BDRV* production. She uses the same "stammer" technique that Delisle uses - riffing, meandering, and finally delivering the punch-line. She incorporates photographs,

⁷⁹ According to Benoît Peeters, comic strips in France conformed to a "waffle" grid, in response to commercial constraints imposed by editors. See Benoît Peeters, *Lire la bande dessinée* (Bruxelles: Casterman, Champs-Flammarion, 1998), 52-56.

television images, and drawings from photographs in her narratives and employs data extracted from official Israeli government sources, giving her work an air of authority (see Fig. 5). As a retired pediatrician, Parbot (Roannie)'s self-insertion



Fig. 5 - Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse* incorporates photographs traced/drawn. On the left, an image used in *L'Intruse - tome 4, Gaza, carnet de non-voyage* and its photographic counterpart published by AFP (taken from <http://gulfnews.com/news/region/palestinian-territories/israeli-warships-storm-freedom-flotilla-1.634798>). Note the addition of a second rifle in the drawing.

into the Israel-Palestine conflict, and her purposeful agitation of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), will provide an appropriate backdrop against which to compare Delisle's work surveying the same location.

Summation

In searching for a definition of the *bande dessinée récit de voyage* it became evident that there is no rule stating specifically of what a *BDRV* should be composed. Humor, political satire, pure fiction, science fiction, mixed media, reportage, travelogue, even propaganda; the *récit de voyage* is a part of the history of an ever-changing *bande dessinée* medium. In which direction is it evolving? What does this shifting terrain signify for the literary community at large? Technological advancement will undoubtedly play a role in the proliferation of the medium, but

these questions cannot be properly answered without examining the shifting natures of narration, authorship, and representation through a semiotic prism. The following chapters delve into aspects of the changing visual narrative structure of the *BDRV*, on the level of narration and structural strategies, the relationships that authors have to their works respective of their content, and their representation of themselves and their subjects with a tertiary emphasis on linear temporality.

CHAPTER 2 - SEMIOTICS AND *LA BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE*

In this chapter I intend to expand the theoretical understanding that has heretofore been applied to semiotic studies of the *bande dessinée*. In order to arrive at a point in which I can address an expanded notion of semiotics studies as it applies to *bande dessinée* I must first address the history of semiological studies in the Francophone tradition of the comics medium. This will be briefly described in the following section. I will then address the semiotic studies of leading European theorist and critic of *bande dessinée* worldwide, Thierry Groensteen. His work is the most detailed and succinct concerning the study of signs and how they relate to the signification within a given *bande dessinée*. After examining Groensteen's theories and explanations, I shall then explore Ann Miller's concept and application of *intertextuality* in her semiotic approach to reading *bande dessinée*. These examinations lead to the formulation of what I designate as 'Allusive Arthrology' (borrowing the term *arthrologie* from Groensteen's *Système de la bande dessinée*), which I will both explain and demonstrate.

A Brief History of Francophone Semiotic Studies of the *bande dessinée* Medium

'Semiology' is a term coined by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916 that is generally understood as the scientific study of signs. Saussure approached semiotics from a linguistic stand-point, moreover, he believed that all language was encoded within a system of signs, and that the system of signs in language naturally extended to other encoded systems. For our purposes, the most important aspect of

Saussure's semiological approach derives primarily from his recognition that meaning is created from the differences between signifiers rather than from the relationship between signifiers and reality.

Saussure's theory and practice were taken up by the French theorist Roland Barthes and applied to cultural studies. Barthes demonstrated that meaning could be derived from everyday objects, such as the clothes a person wears, to events like the choreographed wrestling matches on television (*Mythologies*, 1957), and even food. Some of his later works would treat the photographic image, such as *Rhétorique de l'image* (1964), *Système de la mode* (1967) and *La chambre claire* (1980), from which we derive Barthes' important contribution to our present study concerning the functions of texts and images united, both in isolation and in a sequence. Barthes' words concerning comics, in particular, have been cited by numerous comics critics as foundational in the development of a critical system designed specially to treat hybrid text and image works.⁸⁰ While Barthes describes the photograph as appearing to be a "*un message sans code*," there is no question that photographs are coded structures by their very nature.⁸¹ The framing of a photograph, the composition, the exposure, i.e. anything that can be manipulated by the photographer and thereby affect the production of the image, is an encoded

⁸⁰ « *[Dans la bande dessinée] la parole [...] et l'image sont dans un rapport complémentaire; les paroles sont alors des fragments d'un syntagme plus général, au même titre que les images, et l'unité du message se fait à un niveau supérieur: celui de l'histoire, de l'anecdote, de la diégèse (ce qui confirme bien que la diégèse doit être traitée comme un système autonome)* ». See Roland Barthes, "*Rhétorique de l'image*," in *Communications* 4 (1964), 45. Transl. - "[In comics] text [...] and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis (which is ample confirmation that the diegesis must be treated as an autonomous system)." See Roland Barthes', "*Rhetoric of the Image*," in *Image, Music, Text*, transl. Stephen Heath (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1977), 41.

⁸¹ See Barthes, "*Rhétorique de l'image*," 46.

structure (one that we will treat in detail during our analysis of Emmanuel Guibert's *Le Photographe*).

Barthes' primary focus in semiotics studies was fashion. While he did not specifically treat comics in his semiotic studies, his work inspired his successors. In the late 1970s Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle and Alain Rey each published works treating semiotics in comics. In the 1980s, under the direction of Barthes, Benoît Peeters' decoded Hergé's Castafiore character from his *Tintin* series in *Lire Tintin, Les Bijoux ravis*.⁸² Pascal Lefèvre and Jan Baetens made contributions to semiotics studies in the 1990s. Fresnault-Deruelle's major contributions (applied here) are predominantly his analyses of the principles of repetition in narration. In his *Hergé ou le secret de l'image*, Fresnault-Deruelle suggests that repetition of drawn elements underscores the narrative process.⁸³ Repetition not only draws attention to the narrative process, it is used to create links between panels. Ann Miller calls these links "syntagmatic links," and she states that "Narrative progression depends [...] on the conservation of certain elements and the modification of others: *bande dessinée* is an art of both iteration and transformation."⁸⁴ Iteration occurs in the writing (or, for the *bande dessinée*, drawing and writing) of an image in a certain way. Repetition of the first image in subsequent panels, whether altered slightly, greatly, or not at all, contributes to the narrative transformation of that image and, in turn, creates meaning through sequence. In some way, most every image on a

⁸² The version of Peeters' work mentioned here, *Lire Tintin, Les Bijoux ravis*, is the 2007 reprint of an earlier version, entitled, *Les Bijoux ravis, une lecture moderne de Tintin* (Bruxelles: Editions Magic Strip, 1984), and is the one that Ann Miller has used in her analysis in *Reading Bande Dessinée*.

⁸³ See Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, *Hergé ou le secret de l'image* (Belgique: Tournai, Éditions Moulinsart, 1999), 49.

⁸⁴ See Ann Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007), 88.

given *bande dessinée* page contains some degree of this principle of repetition, and this repetition may occur in a number of different ways. Benoît Peeters' semiological approach to understanding of the *bande dessinée* is one of practical application, as he has contributed to *bande dessinée* iteration as a writer for François Schuiten and others. He also has added to the body of historical knowledge surrounding Belgium's most famous *bande dessinée* personality, Hergé, with his massive volumes; *Le Monde d'Hergé*, a biography of Hergé (*Hergé, fils de Tintin*); and several other important works including *Lire la bande dessinée* and *Écrire l'image*, in which he explains the many ways he has come to understand the inner-workings of the *bande dessinée* medium. As a creative virtuoso, the insight we derive from Peeters' texts primarily consists of both first-hand knowledge as a theorist and then a creator. Jan Baetens, on the other hand, is renown for his critical work on text/image relationships in a variety of mediums, but particularly for that of the *bande dessinée*. Baetens' *Hergé écrivain* underscores the depth of Hergé's narrations and linguistic creativity.⁸⁵

Groensteen's Semiology for the *bande dessinée*

The most dominant voice in *bande dessinée* semiotics studies is unquestionably Thierry Groensteen. He has recently produced a double volume of semiotics studies of the *bande dessinée*, [*Système de la bande dessinée* and *Bande dessinée et narration* (also known as *Système de la bande dessinée 2*)] which are the

⁸⁵ I have consulted Baetens' collaborative work with Pascal Lefèvre, *Pour une lecture moderne de la bande dessinée* (Bruxelles: CBBB, 1993), for ideas on how to identify and underscore the importance of certain formal constraints in the medium; however, unless specified otherwise, all examples used here are my own.

most comprehensive analyses of formal codes and resources practiced by *BD* authors to date. In Groensteen's *Système 1* he identifies elements of the *bande dessinée* medium as a coded system governed by his general term "arthrology" (borrowed from the Greek word *arthron*, meaning *articulation*). His approach to the semiotics of comics rejects the utility of dividing comics into signifying units, as one would do for individual paintings, for example, favoring a more global proposal of analyzing works based on an interconnectedness of signs through narrative organizational strategies. In other words, the relationships between panels mean more than their individual parts. He argues, thus, for a new semiotics of comics, building upon a foundation of terminology from narratological, cinematographic, and other mixed media critical traditions, without being explicitly exclusive in his approach by ascribing to one method of analysis or another. Dividing 'arthrology' into two broad categories in what he describes as the 'spatio-topical system' of comics, Groensteen identifies (1) Restricted Arthrology ("*arthrologie restreinte*") as concerning the linear relationships between panels, and (2) General Arthrology ("*arthrologie générale*") as concerning the relationships between panels that are situated non-linearly on the page or in the work, recalling other panels via certain properties of the images. The latter is an idea that he borrows from Jan Baetens and Pascal Lefèvre termed '*renvois structurels*', a complex term which he re-baptizes

'tressage' to underline the effect of 'braiding' a narrative together.⁸⁶ Among the many aspects of comics semiology that Groensteen highlights, he concludes that the drawn image in comics is, in reality, a narrative drawing (*dessin narratif*) that obeys a precise set of laws governing its application within the narrative.⁸⁷

In *Système de la bande dessinée 2*, Groensteen shows that certain types of comics do not necessarily conform to the precise laws he outlined in his first study.⁸⁸ Not among these non-conforming comics is any mention of the *bande dessinée récit de voyage*. This is most likely because in his second book on comics' semiotics, much like his first, Groensteen's focus is not genre-specific; it predominantly treats narration, and does not undertake precise categories within the *bande dessinée* medium. Moreover, Groensteen explicitly states that he does not

⁸⁶ See Baetens and Lefèvre, *Pour une lecture moderne de la bande dessinée*, 72, and Groensteen's *Système de la bande dessinée*, 173. In my own readings of Groensteen's work I have found the use of Groensteen's coined term to be a sound means of deciphering the relationships between panels in an individual comic. However, the relationships between panels, I believe, extends beyond the bounds of a single comics work when the comics artist specifically alludes to another well-known work diegetically. In autobiographical or biographical travel narratives in comics, this occurs with some degree of frequency, and therefore, if we are to accept Groensteen's terminology then it needs to be addressed in terms of arthrology. Since Groensteen's two distinct arthrologies are limited to works within a single comic, I propose another sub-heading for spatio-topic and arthrological comparisons—Allusive Arthrology. This term will be identified in greater detail below.

⁸⁷ These laws are (1) anthropocentrism, in which the narrative drawing privileges the character represented, primarily within the frame, (2) synecdochic simplification, which describes the manner in which intelligibility from one narrative drawing to the next is dependent upon only the immediately informative elements that figure in the narrative, (3) typification, in which a character is abbreviated to only a few lines in order to assure their characterization and identification, (4) expressivity of the characters in play through physiognomic expression, and (5) rhetorical convergence, which is the combination of different parameters of the image to produce an optimal legibility. Here, I have freely paraphrased Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen's translation of Groensteen's *Système de la bande dessinée*, 161-163, using Groensteen's terminology.

⁸⁸ It must be noted that twelve years elapsed between the writing of Groensteen's first and second books. In that time, the *bande dessinée* has expanded its scope into the production of abstract comics and has even sought to expand the medium through webcomics. These shifts challenge some of the theoretical propositions Groensteen made in *Système 1*. The existence of an anthology entitled *Abstract Comics*, replete with comics devoid of narrative altogether, calls into question all definitions of comics that affirm it as essentially narrative. The webcomics shift led Groensteen to posit whether or not a shift from a paper medium to a digital medium is in fact the creation of a new medium altogether, since the process of reading such a work is not fundamentally identical. Although he amply addresses both subjects, Groensteen comes to no precise conclusions about either.

attempt to create an entire theory of autobiographical comics or reportage comics in his chapter devoted to the "question of the narrator".⁸⁹

Specifications on Groensteen's concepts of comics narration and (auto)biography

While the majority of Groensteen's work on semiology takes an inclusive tone, that is, it identifies the codes and formal structures that govern articulation throughout the *bande dessinée* medium without detailing specificities of genre or category, it is my intention here to isolate codes and formal structures that I have found to predominate the biographical and autobiographical *récit de voyage* in the comics medium. This exercise treats a number of overlapping genres that fall under this broader category (*récit de voyage*), and necessitates a division of this study into manageable parts in order to address specific questions concerning strategies for articulation.

In *Bande dessinée et narration*, Groensteen elaborates his interpretations of technical theories involving narration that affect reading and reception. Of a particular importance to this essay is how he conceives the various functions of the narrator, which he divides into three distinct parts based on the articulation of messages in a given panel. Since text and image can be treated separately, Groensteen opts to describe the functions of the text and the image as two separate

⁸⁹ « Ce n'est pas le propos de cet ouvrage d'élaborer une théorie complète du genre autobiographique dans la bande dessinée [...] La bande dessinée oblige à distinguer deux niveaux de réalisation d'un récit autobiographique [...] la structuration du récit [...] l'énonciation narrative ». From Groensteen, *Bande dessinée et narration*, 112. (Transl. - "The purpose of the present work is not to set out a comprehensive theory of the autobiographical genre in comics [...] the comics medium makes it imperative to distinguish between two levels of production of an autobiographical narrative[...] the structuring of the narrative[...]and...] narrative enunciation." See, Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*. Transl. Ann Miller, 102.)

narrators governed by an over-arching narrator who is responsible for the cohesiveness of the overall narrative. The first narrator is called the "*monstrator*" and is responsible for governing graphic narration. This is more or less limited to the graphic content within each panel. The second narrator is labeled the "*reciter*" and is responsible for textual narration. The primary difference between these two, according to Groensteen, is that the *monstrator* is incapable of depicting two human activities – speaking and thinking – of which the *reciter* is perfectly capable.

Groensteen's third narrator is the "*fundamental narrator*," responsible for the overall narrative direction of the fusion of both *monstrator* and *reciter*. This narrator controls the chains of images and speech in the comic (i.e. "layout"), as well as the articulation of these two chains at the iconic and linguistic levels. The *monstrator* and the *reciter* are merely agents of the *fundamental narrator*.

Groensteen's conception of the three narrative positions provides a general identification of how these articulations are governed. There are more considerations that must be made for the narrators in autobiographical narratives. Groensteen identifies the autobiographical narrator as a specific type of "actorialized narrator," or a narrator in a first-person narrative that is also a character involved in the story and represented in graphic form. He hypothesizes,

Il apparaît donc nécessaire de se demander si le statut de narrateur actorialisé peut être décrit dans les mêmes termes, selon que l'oeuvre ressortit à la fiction ou à l'un des genres soumis à ce que Philippe Lejeune appelle un "pacte référentiel", c'est-à-dire une relation au réel fondée sur une pétition de fiabilité, de vérité. Qu'est-ce qui, narratologiquement parlant, distingue en propre l'autobiographie (et plus généralement la littérature intime) – à laquelle j'agrège ici le reportage, puisque ce type de récit atteste que le narrateur "y était" et a participé aux faits qu'il rapporte en tant que témoin? Lejeune répond: "il faut qu'il y ait identité

de l'auteur, du narrateur et du personnage". Et de préciser que le narrateur a, par rapport au récit, une "perspective rétrospective".⁹⁰

In this case, a certain precision must be made in order to distinguish between the functions of the *fundamental narrator* and the *actorialized autobiographical narrator*. Groensteen argues that the primary distinction between these two is based on their relationship to the image - that the *fundamental narrator* does not inhabit the image while the *actorialized autobiographical narrator* does. The *monstrator's* role remains in tact, as, according to Groensteen, the "I-as-character [...]" is subject to the same process of enunciation as any other character: s/he too is a paper "puppet" whose strings are pulled by the monstrator."⁹¹ The reciter's role remains in tact as well, as a presence or non-presence, neutral or involved, reliable or not, the textual enunciation signals certain markers of style and subjectivity. Groensteen does not, however, explicitly recognize the difference in how the two are distinguished by inclusion of the referential pact.⁹²

⁹⁰ Original quote from Groensteen, *Bande dessinée et narration*, 107. ("It therefore seems necessary to ask if the status of actorialized narrator needs to be analyzed differently, depending upon whether the work comes under the heading of fiction or whether it belongs to one of the genres governed by what Philippe Lejeune calls the "referential pact," that is to say a relationship to reality founded on a contract of reliability and truth. What is, narratologically speaking, the distinguishing feature of autobiography (and the wider genre of intimate literature) – a category that I will widen by the inclusion of reportage, because this is a genre that guarantees that the narrator "was there" and that s/he took part in the events that s/he is recounting as a witness? Lejeune responds that the narrator has, in relation to the story recounted, a "retrospective viewpoint."" Groensteen, *Comics and Narration*. Transl. Ann Miller, 98.)

⁹¹ Groensteen, *Comics and narration*. Trans. Ann Miller, 99.

⁹² For the purposes of this essay, the major works in my corpus contain actorialized autobiographical narrators and should be understood as such in my analyses. Lejeune's "*pacte référentiel*" is generally included in what is known as his '*pacte autobiographique*' (see *infra.*, 103) and signifies an unwritten contract between the author and the reader in which the author gains the readers confidence by telling his first-hand account as honestly and reliably as possible.

Ann Miller and *Intertextuality*

While Groensteen's *Système de la bande dessinée* (1 & 2) may excellently describe how meaning is produced within a comic, the work ignores the existence of the very common element of allusion, which combines all the meaning production at play within a single comic and extends it to the works of previous authors. This is not in any way uncommon, as *bande dessinée* theorists have been rather quiet on the subject of allusion in the medium. Nevertheless, Ann Miller has formally mentioned its usage under different terms. In *Reading Bande Dessinée* she briefly addresses 'allusion' in comics borrowing terminology from Gérard Genette, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Brian McHale, and Frederic Jameson, positing that certain narrative approaches, particularly that of 'allusion', in *bande dessinée* are postmodernist in their approach.⁹³

In her approach, Miller proposes that allusion in comics is part of a larger diegetic category – *intertextuality*. According to Miller, the term *intertextuality* originates in concept from Roland Barthes' 1968 theory that every text can be regarded as "a multi-dimensional space, in which a variety of writings, none original, blend and clash: the text is a tissue of quotations", and its first usage was in a work entitled *Séméiotikè* by Julia Kristeva a year later.⁹⁴ Kristeva functionally defined *intertextuality* as "every text is constructed like a mosaic of quotations, every text absorbs and transforms other texts." Thusly defined, Miller then cites

⁹³ Miller notes that the term 'postmodernism' has a variety of different characterizations, but 'postmodernity' ubiquitously refers to "the second half of the twentieth century which saw the rise of consumer society and the decline of heavy industry in the West." See Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 125.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 141.

Gerard Genette's contention that the mechanisms of intertextual relations, which he re-baptizes "transtextual" relations, must be further sub-divided into two distinct categories; hypertextuality (a new text is created from an older one by imitation or



Fig. 6 - Joann Sfar's post-colonial take on Hergé's *Tintin au Congo*. Sfar's narration depicts Tintin as an overly self-confident, presumptive, conversation bully with an itchy trigger-finger.

transformation) and intertextuality (co-presence of two or more texts through allusion or quotation). Each distinction she makes through reference to a previous study accompanies examples in the comics medium that serve to illustrate her adoptions of these literary theories. For instance, 'imitation' and 'transformation' occurs when a recognizable feature of a previous work is re-worked by another author, such as when Joann Sfar creates a single page, post-modern view of *Tintin au Congo* in the last chapter of his *Le chat du rabbin* (see Fig. 6).⁹⁵ In this instance, Sfar mocks *Tintin*, essentially depicting him and his actions as condemnable, colonialist, and ignorant of nature and decency. Even his dog, Milou, is depicted as a touchy ignoramus who cannot form grammatically correct sentences. 'Transformation' can occur in a variety of ways, but has been displayed most notably in OuBaPo⁹⁶ projects where the text from an original strip has been replaced with a different text. 'Quotation' in the *bande dessinée* can appear in textual and/or pictorial form.⁹⁷

While this analytical division may work for Miller, I find it too bound to circular literary concepts. Whether or not 'allusion' is a part of a greater category or whether it stands as a category in itself is of no importance. Distinguishing adjectively between types of allusions is just as valid as creating a new term to categorize types of allusions. Therefore, while I may refer to certain allusions as an "imitation", a "quotation" or "transformation" I do not subscribe to the adoption of the concepts or terminologies specifically associated with 'intertextuality' as

⁹⁵ My example, not cited in Miller's *Reading Bande Dessinée*.

⁹⁶ "OuBaPo," *Œuvre de bande dessinée potentiel* (comics potential workshop), is a spin-off of the literary experimentation movement "OuLiPo," *Œuvre de littérature potentiel* (literary potential workshop), and is designed to encourage creators in the field to experiment with the form in order to expose new manners of harnessing greater potential of the medium.

⁹⁷ Miller, in my estimation, makes no clear distinction between what she labels "quotation" and "allusion".

outlined in Miller's work. I do agree, however, with Michael Riffaterre that 'intertextuality' is "a structured network of text-generated constraints on the reader's perceptions [and] a linguistic network connecting the existing text with other preexisting or future, potential texts" that guides reading.⁹⁸ My own understanding of the term 'intertextuality' simply proposes that a later author may enter into dialogue with a former author through allusion to the former author's work. An allusion does not alter the former author's intended meaning by absorbing and transforming a text. Texts do not transform each other, they can only transform the way in which an observer may choose to perceive those texts, if that observer chooses to be influenced by such a text. Texts do not have agency in and of themselves. However, we may see the former text in a new light when it is incorporated into a more recent text and is thereby re-interpreted.

For my purposes the proposal of an 'allusive arthrology' is far more suited to treat *BDRV* works. Allusive arthrology functions much in the way that Groensteen's restrained and general arthrologies function, however it relies on the interplay of texts, images, narration, and other structural elements from one work to another.⁹⁹ By examining the panels that contain an allusion to a prior work, a reader may infer

⁹⁸ See, Michael Riffaterre, "Intertextuality vs. Hypertextuality" (in *New Literary History*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 25th Anniversary Issue, Part 2, Autumn, 1994), 781 and 786. In this article we encounter distinctions between the two terms based on their application to computer analysis of literary texts. Riffaterre demonstrates the relative advantage of human readers over computers by defining 'hypertextuality' as a "loose web of free association" and showing how computers have not been taught how to distinguish the literary from the non-literary in a work. 'Intertextuality,' he claims, rests on the human reader's ability to filter out unimportant information. "[...Intertextuality] accounts for a reader-response narrowly controlled by the text." I do not disagree with these functional definitions, I simply think the term 'allusion' and how I use it ('allusive arthrology') is more concise and better suited to the purposes of this discussion.

⁹⁹ 'Allusion' may also function as an interplay of cross and inter-generational ideas and ideals, cross and inter-political, social, literary and art movements, and along any number of other potential categories. For more on this subject, see the section on 'Subjectivity' in Chapter 3 of this work.

a certain narrative strategy undertaken by the author that unites with, dissents from, or dialogues with a preceding work. The reader, once aware of the allusion, may then choose to pursue the allusion as an intertextual dialogue, or flatly ignore it.

The author may choose to allude to a particular work that he is trying to compare or contrast with his own via theme, character, narrative, events depicted, and setting. The manner in which the allusion may be constructed consists of elements uniquely textual, uniquely visual, or a combination of the two. The allusion may also take place within a single panel, between two linearly situated panels, between two non-linearly situated panels, over a series of panels, or pages, or can be accomplished throughout the entirety of a work, or even as a sort of preface or postface. Moreover, allusive arthrology occurs exclusively along a linear temporality, in that if an author alludes to a prior work, that prior work is never in the situation to allude to the newer work. Also, an author may allude to his own works. This self-referential allusion may serve a number of functions, which I will elaborate a little further below in my analysis of Guy Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*.

Allusive Arthrology in *BDRV*

To paraphrase Groensteen, the articulation of meaning in comics is dependent upon the interconnectivity of graphic and textual enunciations both in a linear and a general sense, the two converging under the overall direction of a single narrative. Meaning, however, is not restricted to the interplay between texts and images within a single comic. Many comics rely on the element of allusion to create

layers of meaning, just as writers in the text-based literature format did before them. Kennedy, Gioia, and Bauerlein's definition of 'allusion' is an effective means of initiating discussion:

A brief, sometimes indirect reference in a text to a person, place, thing, or prior text, be it actual or fictual. An allusion may appear in a literary work as an initial quotation, as a passing mention of a name, or as a phrase borrowed from another writer, bringing with it the meanings and implications of the original. Allusions imply a common knowledge between reader and writer and operate as a literary shorthand to enrich the meaning of a text. Usually, allusions are simple and clear, easily understood if one is familiar with the pertinent literary or historical context. The interpretative difficulty lies in determining how the material alluded to fits in here, in the new work's setting. Other times, however allusions may be dense and complex, and unraveling them is part of the interpretation of the work as a whole [...] Critics categorize allusions into many kinds, the most prominent being: (1) topical – references to specific real events and issues; (2) personal – references to circumstances in the author's life; (3) metaphorical – references to prior works that, inserted into the new work, endow the latter with another layer of significance; and (4) imitative – reference to another work by imitating its rhetoric, genre, or phrases.¹⁰⁰

In order to make this definition conform to the parameters of the comics medium it should be added that comics are to be considered "texts," and again that the "personal" allusion can refer to people other than the author himself, as Guy Delisle makes encouraging personal references to the Burmese Nobel Prize-winning political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi in his *Chroniques Birmanes*, which suggests that his work supports a distinctively anti-dictatorial viewpoint. Of course, an allusion may appear as an image that recalls a prior work. For our purposes, personal allusions will be limited here, and we shall focus on allusions that unite the work in

¹⁰⁰ See Kennedy, X.J., Dana Gioia, and Mark Bauerlein's definition of "Allusion," in *Handbook of Literary Terms; Literature, Language, Theory* (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005), 6.

question to another work of consumable media (television, literature, comics, film, et cetera).

Kennedy, Gioia, and Bauerlein do well to note that an allusion carries with it the weight of the work to which it refers to enrich the meaning of a text. They also astutely determine that it is the interpretation of the allusion that, in fact, creates the signification within the newer setting. The major categories that they identify as critical categorizations – topical, personal, metaphorical, and imitative - will inform my analyses below. In *bande dessinée récit de voyage*, particularly in examples that are autobiographical or biographical in content, all of these distinctions apply, and all create layers of meaning that extend the interpretive boundary of an individual comic to the bodies of literature, comics, television, official documents, recorded speech and song, poetry, history, i.e. whatever medium is invoked by the allusion.

Examples of Allusive Arthrology

A uniquely textual allusion in the *bande dessinée* is a rather rare occurrence, since the medium is so heavily invested in images. It is arguable whether or not it is even possible, given that an allusion to a previous work almost always depends upon the relationships of images from a new work to a prior one in *bande dessinée*. As of yet, I have not been able to identify a work in which such a pure example exists. However, Emmanuel Guibert's most recent work *L'Enfance d'Alan* contains the closest thing that I have observed to a uniquely textual allusion in the *bande dessinée*. The last two pages of the work contain no juxtaposed images, only a photocopy of the cover of a 2005 publication of Auguste Rodin's *L'Art* in the *Grasset*

et Fasquelle, Cahiers Rouge edition. The Editions Cahiers Rouge is a very inexpensive and eclectic collection of publications by mostly popular twentieth century authors, and may be considered as an object that identifies aspects of both Cope's personality and social status. It also includes Alan Cope's personal context on the left page, followed by a long quotation from the book that Alan selected on the right page concerning the temperament and experience of the artist (which Alan admittedly states he is not). Alan's words are presented alongside the above-mentioned quote thusly:

Récemment, une amie m'a donné un livre d'Auguste Rodin. Il y parle des artistes. Je crois que j'avais de quoi être un artiste, mais la vie a fait en sorte que je n'en sois pas devenu un. Je suis devenu ce que les Allemands appellent "*une personne artistique*". C'est autre chose. Je vais vous lire un passage de ce livre qui dit beaucoup et qui va loin. Monsieur Rodin y exprime le sentiment, à certaines nuances près, qui était en moi à l'âge de 11 ans. Le chapitre s'appelle: «Pour l'artiste, tout est beau dans la nature. » C'est Rodin qui parle, il parle de l'artiste. «Mais pour lui, tout est beau parce qu'il marche sans cesse dans la lumière de la vérité spirituelle. Oui, même dans la souffrance, même dans la mort d'êtres aimés et jusque dans la trahison d'un ami, le grand artiste, et j'entends par ce mot le poète aussi bien que le peintre ou le sculpteur, trouve la tragique volupté de l'admiration. Il a parfois le coeur à la torture, mais plus fortement encore que sa peine, il éprouve l'âpre joie de comprendre et d'exprimer. Dans tout ce qu'il voit il saisit clairement les intentions du destin. Sur ses propres angoisses, sur ses pires blessures, il fixe le regard enthousiaste de l'homme qui a deviné les arrêts du sort. Trompé par un être cher, il chancelle sous le coup, puis, se raffermissant, il contemple le perfide comme un bel exemple de bassesse, il salue l'ingratitude comme une expérience dont s'enrichit son âme. Son extase est parfois terrifiante, mais c'est du bonheur encore parce que c'est la continuelle adoration de la vérité. Quand il aperçoit les êtres qui se détruisent les uns les autres, toute jeunesse qui se fane, toute vigueur qui fléchit, tout génie qui s'éteint, quand il voit face à face la volonté qui décréta toutes ces

sombres lois, plus que jamais il jouit de savoir et, rassasié de vérité, il est formidablement heureux.¹⁰¹

The reader is to understand that Alan simply identifies with this passage inasmuch that he feels he could have been an artist had life only dealt him a different hand. Such a claim clearly places Alan's words in the realm of pure subjectivity, leaving the interpretation of *L'Enfance d'Alan* as a whole rather untouched by the inclusion of this mention. In the end, it is given to the reader to decide whether Rodin's words actually apply to Alan Cope; yet, even this example falls short of a purely textual allusion in *bande dessinée* since it occupies the privileged position at the close of the narrative, preceded by over one hundred pages of images that influence the reader's interpretation of the inclusion of Rodin's passage, and it has the *Edition Cahiers Rouge* image associated with it. It cannot be understated that very few people would have ever heard of Alan Cope had Emmanuel Guibert not befriended him and written his story, and thus all interpretation (by an average reader) of Alan's life as artistic or otherwise can only be viewed through Emmanuel Guibert's filter, who, as

¹⁰¹ See Emmanuel Guibert and Alan Cope's *La Guerre d'Alan, d'après les souvenirs d'Alan Ingram Cope, Intégrale* (Paris: L'Association, 2009), 158-159. No specific citation is given of the Rodin quotation. (My transl. – "Recently a friend gave me a book by Auguste Rodin. It talks about artists in it. I believe I had what it took to be an artist, but life was such that I did not become one. I became what the Germans call "an artistic person." That's something else. I'm going to read you a passage from this book that says a lot and goes pretty far. Mr. Rodin expresses in it the sentiment that I have felt since I was 11, a few nuances aside. The chapter is entitled: "For the artist, everything in nature is beautiful." It's Rodin speaking about artists. "But for him, everything is beautiful because he walks incessantly in the light of spiritual truth. Yes, even while suffering, even in the face of his loved-ones deaths and up to betrayal by a friend, the great artist, including the poet as well as the painter or the sculptor, finds beauty in the tragic. Sometimes he tortures his own heart, yet worse than his own pain, he feels the bittersweet joy of understanding and expressing. In all that he sees he clearly grasps the intentions of destiny. Upon his own anguish, his worst injuries, he directs his focus as though he has divined his lot. Betrayed by a loved one, he shudders fitfully, then, gathering himself, he contemplates the perfidious like a fine example of lowness, he salutes ingratitude as an experience that enriches his soul. His ecstasy is sometimes terrifying, but it is joyful, for it derives from his continual adoration of the truth. When he catches sight of those who destroy each other, all his youth withers, all his vigor sways, all his genius fades, when he faces the will that decreed all these somber laws, then more than ever is he satiated by the pleasure of truth, then he is truly happy").

a friend, offers a necessarily biased filter. Still, this instance is rather rare, as most allusions in *bande dessinée* find their significance to previous works through a combination of text and graphic signifiers; however, some may remain purely visual, offering no textual accompaniment.¹⁰²

As stated above, the majority of allusions in the *bande dessinée* come as a result of textual and graphic combination. Such is clearly the case in Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemercier's *Le Photographe* when the authors make a textual allusion to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879).¹⁰³ Although distanced by one hundred twenty-four years, religious and social contexts, and geographies, the two works meet at the crossroads of the uninitiated traveler's experience. While Stevenson exhibits a fair knowledge of French and the Cevennes, his travel narrative indicates that this is his first voyage to this location, and like Didier, he undergoes several similar practical challenges, among which are packing a donkey correctly, getting sound directions, navigating through intensely devout religious territories, and, perhaps the most poignant, overcoming the physical sickness he experiences as a result of beating his mule. The allusion does not stop at content, however, as *Le Photographe* and *Travels with a Donkey* intersect at the level of description, of theme and of landscape.¹⁰⁴ Stevenson relies on his refined words to create landscape, whereas Lefèvre offers elegant

¹⁰² I provide an example of a purely visual allusion a few pages down, when I discuss Guy Delisle's *Shenzhen*.

¹⁰³ It should be noted that a photograph of *Travels with a Donkey* appears in *Le Photographe*, proving that the book actually accompanied Didier on his voyage.

¹⁰⁴ The example I discuss here is a pure example of intertextuality, and the degree to which that intertextuality is recognizable to the reader demonstrates what Riffaterre described as a literary phenomenon, when "not only the text, but also its reader and all of the reader's possible reactions to the text" contribute to interpretation. See Michael Riffaterre, *Text Production*, transl. Terese Lyons (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p.3.

photographs. Where they differ is equally alluring. The threat of death is rather constant in both works, however that death comes from different sources.

Stevenson fears the legend of a man-eating wolf that is known to roam the country in which he travels. It is no accident that Guibert chose to describe the man who rescued Lefèvre at the top of a treacherous mountain pass and then extorted all of his money as a "wolf-faced" man. This particular misadventure was not one that Didier feared, yet the presence of Stevenson's text earlier in the narrative could have very well alerted an astute reader to the potential threat Lefèvre would face from another version of a man-eating wolf. Lefèvre, on the other hand, fears landmines, Russian helicopters, the weather and exposure, and, of course, the Afghanis with whom he travels.¹⁰⁵ While Stevenson has no fear of death at proclaiming his atheism to the Christians he meets, Lefèvre will not dare to do so, as he has been told that Afghanis will kill you for being an atheist. Furthermore, despite the years that separate the writing of these two works, both are done in a style that evokes a sort of reverence for the people met along the way and for the experience of travelling.

Guibert places Lefèvre's story in an appropriate era by employing a certain layout strategy that evokes the past. The most clear example of an effort to date this piece can be seen on page three, where Guibert inserts Lefèvre's contact sheets directly into the text. The inscription, 'Kodak TX 5063,' along with numbered images, serves as headers and footers to these contact sheets. Some are clearly removed, as can be deduced by the gaps in numbering, yet their sequence lends an intensely personal air to the work. Further visually situating this text in the mid-

¹⁰⁵ Lefèvre only indicates a certain fear once he separates from the MSF team and travels the road to Pakistan with guides he neither knows nor trusts.

eighties is the content of these contact sheets – hair, clothing style, and, perhaps the most obvious temporal marker, a man wearing roller skates in France.¹⁰⁶

Using this sort of visual metonymy Guibert localizes the story; however, these few images are minor compared to the metonymy Guibert creates in tailoring his artistic style to that of Hergé's *ligne claire*. Guibert textually summons Hergé's most famous character, Tintin, writing in the voice of Lefèvre, « *Par moments je pense à Tintin. C'est vraiment quelque chose, Tintin. On a souvent l'impression qu'il est passé par où l'on passe* ». ¹⁰⁷ This textual allusion to Hergé and *Les aventures de Tintin* is significant in that it bridges the gap between fiction and reality, indirectly stating that *this* voyage through Afghanistan is in some ways comparable to Tintin's entirely fictional adventures. Moreover, this allusion is reinforced by Guibert's drawing directly underneath it (see Fig. 7).



Fig. 7 - Left, Guibert's direct textual and visual reference to *Tintin au Tibet*, right (*The Photographer*, 72, and *Tintin in Tibet*, 18). It is clear from this example that the allusion to *Tintin* relies not only on textual reference, but also on style.

¹⁰⁶ See Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemerrier, *Le Photographe, tome 1* (Belgique: Dupuis, 2003), 3.

¹⁰⁷ See the English edition of *Le Photographe*, entitled *The Photographer*. "Every now and again, I think about Tintin. Those stories are really something. I often have the impression he's traveled through where we're going." Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre, Frédéric Lemerrier, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel (New York: First Second Books, 2009), 72.

In no way does the style of this drawing differ from the rest of the drawings in *Le Photographe*. It depicts the caravan ascending the shaded side of a mountain pass, everyone lined up in a row and fading into the distance. Stylistically, the placement of the mountain, the personages, and the path in the drawings resemble a drawing on page 18 of Hergé's *Tintin au Tibet*. Again, what Guibert accomplishes by mimicking the lines of Hergé's famous work is a multi-faceted allusion. The last complete *Tintin* story was published in 1976 (*Tintin et les Picaros*), but all the adventures of Tintin are practically bedside necessities for many French-speaking children, even today. Unquestionably Guibert is drawing a parallel between Tintin braving faraway lands to Didier's brave undertaking of a photojournalism mission in war-torn Afghanistan. Guibert also creates a parallel between the naivety of a child reading about an adventure in a foreign country through the Tintin prism, which parallels Didier's own naivety (and possibly the readers') about Afghanistan. By summoning a parallel image from *Tintin au Tibet*, Guibert produces a subconscious emotional response in a reader already familiar with Hergé's work. Tintin's Tibetan adventure was written as an ode to lifelong friendship, specifically Hergé and his Chinese friend Tchang who originally appeared in *Le Lotus Bleu* some twenty-six years earlier. Hergé loved his friend Tchang the way that Didier loved Afghanistan and the people with whom he maintained relationships. The appeal to a reader's latent emotions from this childhood reading, through these textual and visual cues, creates sympathy that a reader consciously or unconsciously uses to relate Didier's love for the Afghan people to a work with which they have previously encountered.

Another example, albeit less direct, of this combination of textual and graphic allusions occurs in Satrapi's *Persepolis* in which she briefly alludes to Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Mandarins* and *Le deuxième sexe*. Attempting to understand herself, Satrapi states that she goes to her source, her mother, whose favorite book was Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Mandarins*. Satrapi narrates that after having read *Le deuxième sexe* she attempts to apply Simone de Beauvoir's logic in changing the female perception of life by peeing while standing.¹⁰⁸ The allusion takes place over six panels: The first panel and the last two panels are temporally united by the black background and physical appearance of an older Marjane Satrapi. The other three are understood to be a flashback, indicated by the white background, and in the representation of Satrapi as a young girl standing next to her mother trying to read the name 'Simone de Beauvoir'.¹⁰⁹ While appearing to be a straightforward allusion to Simone de Beauvoir, the reader can glean that Satrapi is more concerned with searching for herself through her mother than she is with the content of de Beauvoir's work. At the outset of the first volume of *Persepolis*, young Marjane recounts how her mother was involved in a number of political protests in the 1980s against the forced wearing of the veil in Iran, and even had her photograph published by a German photographer.¹¹⁰ That image appeared in a number of European magazines and one Iranian magazine (according to the diegesis). The personal allusion to her mother's identity and the role of women in Iranian society

¹⁰⁸ See Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis 3* (Paris: L'Association, 2002), no page numbers, however, 21, under the subtitle, "les pâtes" should suffice for a reference.

¹⁰⁹ Satrapi does not distinguish all instances of temporality by varying the background. The strategy is used predominantly to indicate a spatial shift in the narrative.

¹¹⁰ See Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis 1* (Paris: L'Association, 2000), 5.

serves as a diegetic framework that Satrapi develops over the course of her narrative. That framework, eventually, cannot contain Satrapi, as she experiences different degrees of social, political, and religious freedom, and, becomes her own person.

Allusions can be uniquely visual as well. In *Shenzhen*, Guy Delisle combines elements from Hergé's *Le Lotus Bleu* to create a full-page image that serves to divide



Fig. 8 - Delisle's full-page reference to *Le Lotus Bleu* in *Shenzhen*.

episodes in his first *bande dessinée récit de voyage*. He creates the allusion through substitution, replacing Tintin's face for his own face in typified graphic representation, and through imitation, replicating Hergé's style and a number of familiar drawings from Hergé's masterpiece. Making the reference to *Tintin*

immediately brings to mind the qualities that describe the *Aventures de Tintin* - investigative exploration, journalism, humor, et cetera. Delisle's discovery of Shenzhen, a Chinese industrial city, indirectly performs several functions; the redrawn scene is not actually a scene from *Le Lotus Bleu*. It is a composite of several elements from *Le Lotus Bleu* that Delisle freely incorporates into one graphic image; banners and Chinese characters from one large-panel scene, the push-cart driver from earlier pages in the story, and an old man whose clothes and face are redrawn but whose beard is derived from another character near the beginning of *Le Lotus Bleu* (see Fig. 8). Without alluding to a specific scene, Delisle alludes to a style, to Hergé in general, as well as to his and other Francophone peoples' long-past childhood, contrasting the China he sees in *Shenzhen* and the China he saw through the *Tintin* cipher. By doing so, Delisle summons a caricature of journalism (I am arguing that Tintin, the character, is a caricature of journalists, and his methods criticize and even ridicule journalists) and, thus, qualifies his own caricature of the city and the people of Shenzhen. His allusion avoids any explicit conflation of signification between the narratives of *Le Lotus Bleu* and his own *Shenzhen*, but rather alludes to a certain aesthetic. In this manner, Delisle antagonistically situates *Tintin* in relation to his own narrative, the China in the *Tintin* series being cleanly, colorfully and neatly drawn¹¹¹, while Delisle's China is gritty and gray. This allusion can be further interpreted as Delisle's unveiling of 'the truth' from Hergé's

¹¹¹ Based on the style of imitation used for *Shenzhen*, Delisle most likely worked from the far more abundant color editions of Hergé's work rather than the original black and white editions during the production of *Shenzhen*.

somewhat-idealized representations to the dirty and harsh environments depicted in Delisle's work.

Delisle's second travel narrative *Pyongyang* contains a clear, thematic political allusion. Upon arrival at Pyongyang airport, a customs agent inspects Delisle's belongings. In his bag is a copy of Orwell's *1984*, and Delisle must explain to this agent the nature of the book. The second, third and fourth panels are dedicated to this allusion. Overt as it is, the allusion operates in three manners. Firstly, the reference to *1984* invites readers to peruse the science-fiction of the 1950s which leaned heavily on two competing fatalistic views for society as a whole – total submission to the state and total submission to the self – where Orwell's work decidedly depicted the former and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* favored the latter. The dominant state model is alluded to by means of the simple presence of *1984* in Delisle's luggage. Secondly, Delisle's presence in, as well as his experience as a foreigner working in North Korea links Orwell's work to the dictatorship of North Korea. By juxtaposing Orwell's work and the country of North Korea, Delisle suggests that the experience of living under these conditions can be accurately likened to the oppressive nature of Big Brother from *1984*. Thirdly, since Delisle experiences the most famous dictatorship on Earth, his allusion loosely links his personal experience to that of the fictional protagonist created by Orwell in the 1950s.

Delisle does another remarkable thing regarding his use of allusion in his travel-based comics narratives. He has published four such books to date; *Shenzhen*, *Pyongyang*, *Chroniques Birmanes*, and *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. In the first three,

Delisle leans on allusions that summon the works of other authors; however in the last two he specifically cites his own work.¹¹² In *Chroniques Birmanes* Delisle cleverly inserts a drawing of himself prone on a couch reading a *Time Magazine* with Kim Jong-Il on the cover, indirectly reminding the reader of his previous *BDRV*. He later takes great pride in his accomplishment of *Louis au ski*, a children's book he wrote based on his son's first skiing experience, as well as his first Burmese children's book (*Minile et ses anges*), which has as its goal an amusing way to remind HIV positive children to take their medication daily.¹¹³ In *Chroniques de Jérusalem* Delisle uses an allusion to one of his earlier, wordless comics, *Aline et les autres*, a work that appears to be a creative exercise in character and panel transformations in series' of one to four page strips (see Fig. 9). The strips are alphabetized using

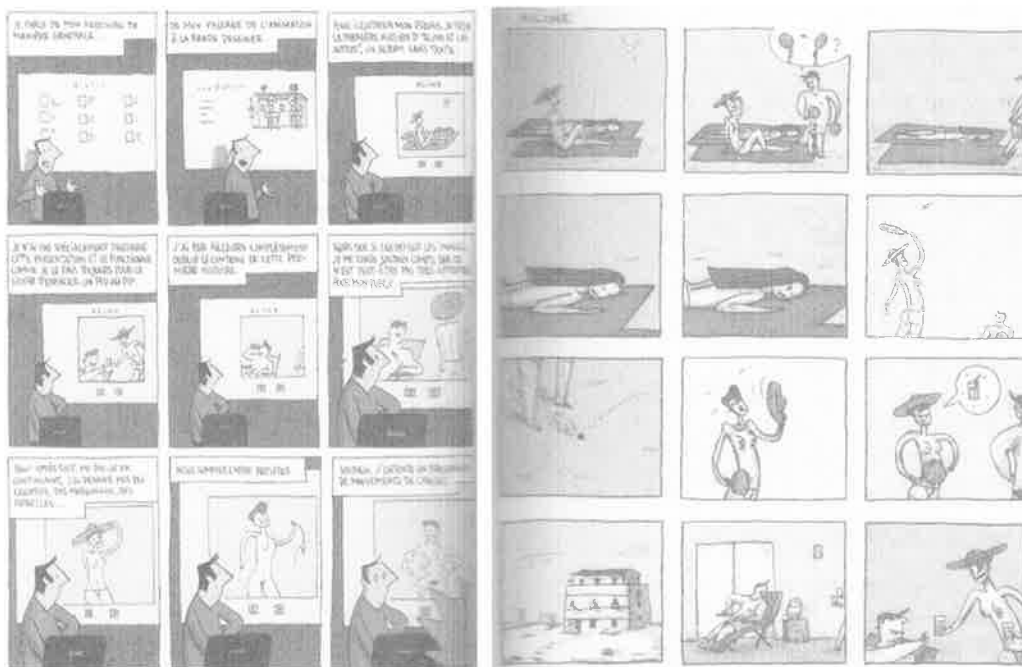


Fig. 9 - Delisle's self-referencing of *Aline et les autres* in his *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. Note the subtle abbreviation of the drawings in the self-allusion.

¹¹² Delisle still summons other authors textually in his last two *BDRV*, however these are done in passing and serve uniquely anecdotal purposes.

¹¹³ See Guy Delisle, *Chroniques Birmanes* (Paris: Delcourt, Shampooing, 2007), 121 and 205.

women's names, and the women featured perform a variety of activities that cause their figures or the panels that contain them to alter. The physical conditions they experience, many of them sexual or emotional, vary in bizarre surrealistic humor and chagrin. In four separate episodes during *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, Delisle shares a provocative strip from *Aline et les autres* with different groups of university students as an exercise in comics and animation as well as for Delisle's own self-promotion. The first time, he is at the predominantly Islamic Nablus University in Naplouse. After several slides, a great many of the students exit his presentation in a sign of protest, while a few others stay. The second time he gives the same presentation at the predominantly Hebrew Ramallah University, just a few miles from Naplouse. The same scenes that inspire protest at Nablus University incite laughter at Ramallah University. The third presentation takes place at Al-Quds University. Six Palestinian women attend his lecture, and, when presented with the same provocative strip, react with laughter. At Tel-Aviv University, where Delisle conducts his final lecture on comics and animation, the students are already so familiar with a wide variety of comics and their authors that Delisle does not even include their reaction to *Aline et les autres*, presumably because the students have no emotional reaction to it. The repetition of Delisle's self-quoting serves at least two narrative purposes; the first is that it reinforces earlier statements in the work that Israel and Palestine are incredibly diverse in terms of culture and exposure to other cultures; the second is to affirm to the reader, at least by juxtaposition, the type of culture with which Delisle can identify most readily. While Delisle appears

to make a concerted effort not to take sides, it is clear that the openness of the Tel-Aviv culture appeals to him.¹¹⁴

Many other examples of allusions exist in *BDRV*, as authors may choose to make an allusion to a prior work in order to give their own work a greater degree of gravitas. This is especially true of works that can be categorized as *BD de reportage*. Roannie attempts this approach in her four-volume-to-date *L'Intruse*, in which she cites and quotes numerous Israeli documents and political leaders. She also attempts a further humanization of her work by quoting the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and the late Palestinian academic Edward Saïd, although she does so as either an introduction or a conclusion to a chapter rather than inter-narratively, and she does not give specific references to those quotations (see Fig. 10).¹¹⁵

Each of the above examples exhibits a different degree of allusion in autobiographical and biographical *BDRVs*. The allusions clearly vary in scope and execution, which make them difficult to categorize into like-groupings. Nonetheless, it may be understood that each of them derive semantic power, and expand the scope of the work in which they are included, by introducing ideas or images from a

¹¹⁴ See Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 211-213, 229, 254-258.

¹¹⁵ Roannie does not reveal the origins of the quotes she used by Darwish and Saïd. The one she provides, respectively, are as follows: Darwish, at the end of the second album - « *Nous sommes atteints d'une maladie incurable : l'espoir* »! (My transl. - "We are afflicted by an incurable disease - hope!"), and Saïd, on the title page of the third album - « *Pourquoi attendons-nous du monde entier qu'il prenne conscience de nos souffrances en tant qu'arabes si nous ne sommes pas en mesure de prendre conscience de celles des autres, quand bien même il s'agit de nos oppresseurs, et si nous nous révélons incapables de traiter avec les faits dès lors qu'ils dérangent la vision simpliste d'intellectuels bien-pensants qui refusent de voir le lien qui existe entre l'Holocauste et Israël* ». (My transl. - "Why do we wait for the whole world to acknowledge our suffering as Arabs if we are not capable of acknowledging the suffering of others, even when it is that of our oppressors, and if we prove to be incapable of accepting the facts whenever it upsets the simplistic vision of well-thinking intellectuals that refuse to see the link that exists between the Holocaust and Israel.").

former era into the era in which their work was conceived, either by reinforcement or through antagonism.

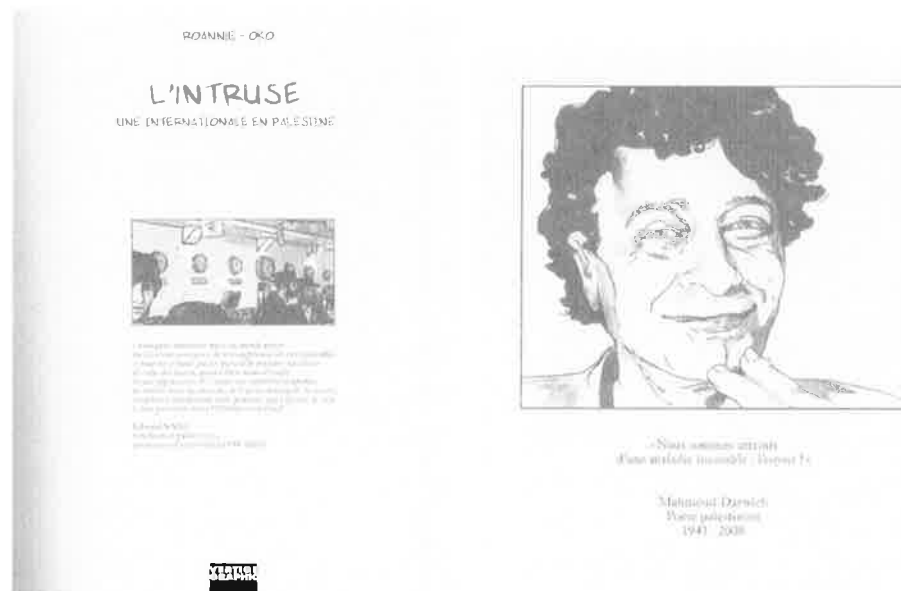


Fig. 10 - Roannie and Oko's quotation of Edward Saïd and Mahmoud Darwish as a preface and postface.

Semiology, Narratology and genre-specific focus in *BDRV*

Before the script is written, before preliminary drawings of characters or landscapes, before a concept of a work begins to take shape, that work is structurally confined to certain codes and resources. This is in part due to the limitations of the author(s); however, it is also generally governed by the choice of narrative. For instance, it is clear that autobiographical or biographical narratives must be approached from an entirely different perspective than works of pure fiction, both from the authors' and the readers' points of view. If we are to apply Lejeune's *pacte référentiel* to this study, we know that first and foremost, the author must act as testifier to the veracity of events recounted, and that there exists a solidarity between the identities of the author, the protagonist, and the narrator.

This recognition alone determines in large part the possibilities available to the author(s), as formal codes and resources available to the production of a fictive *bande dessinée* differ from those of non-fiction. Thus, the narrative itself holds a bearing on the formal codes and resources available to the author.

David Vrydaghs identifies three major divisions within the *bande dessinée récit de voyage*.¹¹⁶ These are the *récit de voyage*, the *BD de reportage*, and *l'autobiographie*. The difficulty that arises when attempting to sub-divide genres within the *récit de voyage* genre is that many overlap or do not exhibit traits that clearly distinguish themselves from other genres. On this note David Vrydaghs rightly questions whether or not these should be considered three separate genres or one, without, however, coming to any concrete conclusion. He finds that the genres converge at certain points and diverge at others, but neglects certain key aspects of these intersections. For instance, the memoir may be at once autobiographical and contain only a small portion devoted to a voyage here or there. When the focus is not necessarily the voyage, the voyage serves a far different narrative purpose. For instance, in *Persepolis* Satrapi spends a great deal of ink underscoring the events that shaped her as a child. One of these events involved a vacation to Spain and Italy. According to the narration and the fantastic symbolic representations that accompany it, it would seem that this moment was a high point in her youth, when she was both at peace with herself and the world around her. The reader observes Satrapi on a magic carpet with her mother and father, and

¹¹⁶ See David Vrydaghs, "Le récit de voyage en bande dessinée, entre autobiographie et reportage," in *Textyles, Revue des lettres belges de langue française*, edition entitled *La Bande dessinée contemporaine*, No. 36-37, S.l.d. Björn-Olav Dozo et Fabrice Preyat (Bruxelles: 2010), 139-148.

below them are landmarks from Spain (a bull-fighting arena and a Flamenco dancer) and Italy (the Leaning Tower of Pisa and some urban apartment dwellings). Despite the caption « *C'était merveilleux* », it takes Satrapi a total of two panels to abandon her depictions of the two countries and of her travel experience. Satrapi's memoir is of a personal nature and necessarily favors the exploration of the author/narrator/personage over the environment she inhabits. The relationship between the two cannot be separated, as they both take part in the creation of Satrapi's identity in the narrative. In other instances during the narrative, she travels from Iran to Austria for an extended period of time. A return trip to Iran proves an equally formative experience in her life. Each of her depicted travels establish her evolving identity within the reader's mind, showing the different stages of her life and the various personal experiences she endures, while each environment she experiences shapes her opinions, her actions, and, consequently, how the reader interprets her narrative. However it is Satrapi's first-person register that clearly distinguishes her autobiographical memoir from the autobiographical journalistic type of work done by an author like Roannie, who frequently depicts herself interacting with the environments and inhabitants she investigates. By "register" I do not specifically imply the usage of the first-person tense; I also imply that the manner in which Satrapi recounts her experiences is performed in such a way as to make Satrapi herself the object of discovery, rather than other people, other nations, or another ideology. Although she explores those subjects, they are not the primary focus of her narrative – her focus seems to be understanding her own subjectivity.

While the first-person register is used in Roannie's *L'Intruse*, the difference between her and Satrapi is that Satrapi's national identity by birth, her blood relationship to the former Shah of Iran, and her specific focus from childhood to adulthood while navigating the intricacies of the societies in which she finds herself, deflect much of what a reader may interpret as a clear bias for or against certain political ideals expressed in her work. That is not to say that Satrapi resists political labels, but rather that her approach shows an evolution of her political ideals and leaves no speculation as to whether or not those ideals are still in a state of evolution. Roannie, on the contrary, through her varying degrees of personal relationships to her subjects, necessarily employs a more militant, activist register than her Iranian expatriate counterpart. Additionally, for these two authors, landscapes and a multiplicity of primary characters other than the first-person narrator/author/personage hold a far stronger place in the narrative than they do for Satrapi, because the focus of her work is topical. Roannie's narrative is neatly framed in squared panels. The text is typed, a strategy that both limits the potential to transmit sentiment to the reader and permits a much clearer and easier reading without having a stylized font or an artist's hand directly involved in the production of the text. The final album in *L'Intruse* offers a unique text-image exchange. Approximately one third of the work consists of two-page spreads, the left page containing dialogic exchanges between members of Roannie's group in a freely drawn style, and the right page containing black and white, traced and shaded photographic or television images of scenes relating to the preceding dialogue-rich page. Sometimes these right-page scenes are temporally disruptive, depicting an

event that happened prior to or after the juxtaposed conversation, while at other times, there appears to be only an obscure relevance that links the two pages together. The album, aptly titled *L'Intruse - Tome 4; Gaza, Carnet de non-Voyage*, depicts Roannie's participation in a 2011 attempt at disrupting the Israeli blockade of Gaza by boat with an international group called Freedom Flotilla 2. The back and forth nature of reading her conversations aboard this ship weighed against the wordless images of the opposing page creates a reading experience that is comparable with Roannie's experience afloat (while the back-and-forth format is inconsistently used, it merits narratological consideration). Anyone aboard a boat immediately becomes aware of the side-to-side rocking motion of that boat while it is at rest. If the boat is large enough, the rocking is somewhat gentler than in a smaller vessel, depending on the size of the waves and the size of the body of water in which the boat floats. In this manner, the format and page layout mimic the physical experience of being a passenger on this boat (see Fig. 11). The very nature of travelling by boat, in this case, has a measurable effect upon the narrative structure of *L'Intruse - Tome 4; Gaza, Carnet de non-Voyage*, reinforcing my observation that the back-and-forth format translates Roannie's experience of floating at rest in a boat, as well as underscores the back-and-forth fighting between Israel and Palestine over the last century.

I agree with Vrydaghs that what he has identified are, in fact, the major genres of *BDRV*; but, I must insist that not all *BDRV* within the same genre possess

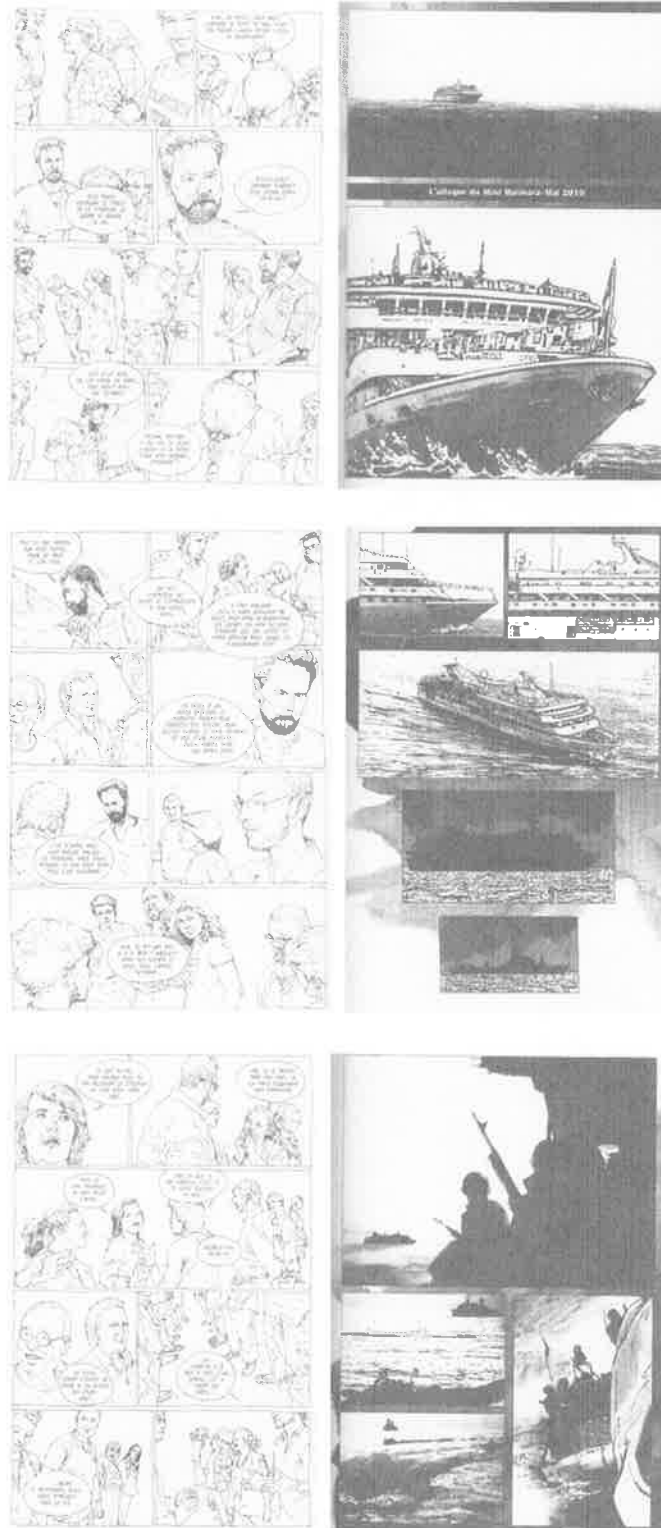


Fig. 11 - Side-by-side presentation of six pages in *L'Intruse - tome 4*, as they appear in the book. On the left page, a dialogue between members of the *Freedom Flotilla 2*, on the right page, a flashback from the *Mavi Marmara* incident of 2010.

the same types of articulation. The number and variety of possible means of articulation available to authors of such works is endless. Each *BDRV* explores comics arthrology in a different manner. Each possesses a unique focus that drives articulation in a variety of possible directions, both textual and pictorial. While certain of these may overlap, it is the focus of a given work that remains constant enough for a reader to derive meaning from it. The focus of the work, therefore, embodies a certain contextual and conceptual solidarity, not dissimilar to the iconic solidarity described by Groensteen.

Summation

The formal resources and codes that, in part, determine the direction and scope of the in *Bande dessinée récit de voyage* are dependent upon the author/artist's ability and desires. We observed that choice of genre plays a large role in the production of a *BDRV*, how temporal indices are at play when an author chooses to use memoir or biography as a narrative template, and how journalism and activism take a front seat in topical works. We also observed the many different manners in which allusive arthrology expands the scope of a text beyond the framework of a given comic, opening new avenues of interpretation. While comics are perfectly capable of incorporating textual allusions, it is their graphic allusions that, I believe, are the most valuable to the field of semiotic studies. We see this benefit most acutely, here, in the work of Emmanuel Guibert, but also in the work of Guy Delisle, when their allusions are employed as metaphors. While allusive arthrology most certainly applies to works of fiction, we only examined them in a

limited manner here. Joann Sfar informed us through his allusion to *Tintin au Congo* that an allusion can at once mimic and dissent from a prior work, while Delisle affirmatively asserted that an allusion can imitate and unite works across genre boundaries. Satrapi's allusion to Simone de Beauvoir's *le deuxième sexe* demonstrated how personal allusions aide in discovering one's identity. Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse - Tome 4; Gaza, Carnet de non-Voyage* revealed that even an experience as ordinary as the rocking of a boat at sea can be translated by using the formal resource of the two-page spread.

CHAPTER 3 - AUTHORSHIP, AUTHENTICITY, SUBJECTIVITY AND *LA BANDE DESSINÉE RÉCIT DE VOYAGE AUTOBIOGRAPHIQUE*

In this chapter, we will examine the topics of authorship and the authenticity of autobiographical *BDRVs*, and our focus will alternate between cases of individual and multiple authorships and how their fundamental differences affect reader reception. Thereafter our discussion will veer towards subjectivity in the comics, in which we will focus on narrative strategies that reveal varying degrees of authorial subjectivity. We shall primarily treat the works of Guy Delisle's *Shenzhen*, *Pyongyang*, *Chroniques Birmanes*, and *Chroniques de Jérusalem* and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* as cases of individual authorship, and Emmanuel Guibert and Alan Cope's *La Guerre d'Alan*, and Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemerancier's *Le Photographe* as cases of multiple authorship. From time to time I will refer to other important works besides these; nevertheless, my analysis will rest largely with the above-mentioned. While I will not specifically treat works of fiction in this chapter, our discussion will contain elements that apply equally to both fiction and non-fiction.

We will focus on the following questions regarding authorship, authenticity, and subjectivity:

- What fundamental differences exist between individual and multiple authorships?
- What formal techniques are employed to relate the experiences of the author/personage/narrator to the reader?
- What referential authority secures the plausibility of a given account of depicted events?

- How do individual or multiple authorships affect subjectivity in representation?
- In what ways do the authors selected for this corpus employ allusions to bolster the authenticity of their work?
- How does anthropomorphism reveal a degree of authorial subjectivity?

In order to answer these questions we will rely on a variety of critical sources and many published personal interviews of writers and artists.

Authorship and Authenticity

The authenticity of an individual author's testimony of an event or events that took place in his life is often understood as genuine unless there exists some great outcry against him and his account.¹¹⁷ Works of multiple authorship are often overlooked and their potential for authenticity is questioned. In *Nous est un autre* Michel Lafon and Benoît Peeters discover that works of multiple authorship are often "*ignorés ou méprisés*," even marginalized.¹¹⁸ While their study does not explicitly treat autobiographical works, their observations regarding the perceived degree of authority arbitrarily assigned to works of multiple authorship are pertinent to our current discussion, and even more so if we consider the historically marginalized status that comics have endured in Western society.

¹¹⁷ James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, a falsified and embellished memoir about the author's struggle with addiction, comes to mind. It was exposed first in the press and then on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Frey admitted to embellishing his story and Frey's publisher, Nan Talese, stated during her appearance on *Oprah* that she did not investigate any of Frey's claims before publishing. The book, originally sold as a memoir, has now been re-packaged as a novel with a disclaimer by both the author and publisher concerning the authenticity of the account. See James Frey, *A Million Little Pieces* (New York: Random House, Anchor Books), 2003.

¹¹⁸ Paraphrase from Benoît Peeters and Michel Lafon, *Nous est un autre; enquête sur les dous d'écrivains* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 7-8. The use of the term '*marginaliser*' to describe works of multiple authorship implies a lack of authority or authenticity in comparison to works of individual authorship.

In an article entitled "*Autobiographie et bandes dessinées*" Jan Baetens takes specific issue with the question of authenticity regarding double authorship in autobiographical *bandes dessinées*. He states, « *Rejeter comme inauthentique la collaboration entre deux narrateurs différents, le premier chargé du récit, le second chargé du dessin, sous-estime, je pense, les possibilités de "fusion" qui peuvent se produire lors d'une collaboration réussie* ». ¹¹⁹ His estimation raises legitimate questions concerning the plausibility of testimonies, accounts, or narratives in which multiple authors reflectively explore an event or events that occurred in at least one of the authors' lives together. The question remains; "How does a reader reconcile the fact that neither the artist or the writer was present at the time of the events depicted in their narrative?" Moreover, when a work is considered autobiographical because one person working on the text or images was actually present during the events depicted, and there is at least one other person working on a major aspect of the work that was not present, does the work suffer from a measurable degree of inauthenticity?

Although Baetens clearly believes that labeling a work of dual authorship as inauthentic would be to "underestimate" the potential of the medium, we must examine autobiographical *BDRVs* from a variety of angles in order to establish whether or not such a potential, in fact, exists. We will explore the autobiographical potential of the *BDRV* for both individual and multiple authorships through the critical prisms of Philippe Lejeune's work on autobiography, Benoît Peeters'

¹¹⁹ See Jan Baetens article "Autobiographie et bandes dessinée," in *Belphégor*, Vol. IV, n.1 (November 2004). Dalhousie University Electronic Text Centre, available at the URL link below: http://etc.dal.ca/belphegor/vol4_no1/articles/04_01_Baeten_autobd_fr.html

metanalysis of his experience as a *bande dessinée* writer, and Ann Miller's analysis of subjectivity in the *bande dessinée* in her *Reading Bande Dessinée*.

One fundamental difference between 'autobiography' and 'autobiographical *BDRV*' that I have observed is that the latter necessarily carries with it a distinctly converse weight of authority due to the nature of its content. The story of an author's individual life or the exploration of his personality implies an acute subjectivity; however, when an author incorporates an account of a foreign people and culture into his writing, his account carries with it the weight of both the histories of his own culture along with that of the people about which he is writing and his own pre-/misconceptions of that culture and people.¹²⁰ An autobiography, according to Lejeune's definition, relies on the testimony of the author concerning the story of his personality or his life. The focus of the author is inherently introspective, and likely any mention or depiction of his culture and origins will remain introspective as well. The autobiographical *BDRV*, on the other hand, does not necessarily treat the story of the author's personality or his life. Rather, it more precisely treats the author's travels, his first-person perspective and presentation of a culture other than his own, as well as a land foreign to him. His subjective presentation is much larger than himself, or than it would be generally for a standard autobiographical work. While he may reflect at times on his own culture and origins, his reader is acutely aware that he is offering a comparison and contrast

¹²⁰ Individuals base their conceptions of other individuals and cultures primarily on the influences of their closest personal relationships from birth to adulthood, transmitted to them in part by his parents, as well as by the history of relationships between his culture and that of the one about which they are writing. See Gordon Alport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 29-33 and fig.2, 43. Also, the following section entitled "**Philippe Lejeune's 'pacte autobiographique' and its Implications for Authorship**" for more precision regarding this statement.

of his culture, people, and origins to that of this other culture, its people, and its origins. The autobiographical *BDRV* is only a portion of an author's life, and more accurately recounts the engaging of the author's culture and personality with the culture, personalities, and lands of the people he encounters in his travels.

Philippe Lejeune's '*pacte autobiographique*' and its Implications for Authorship in the *BDRV*

In 1975 Philippe Lejeune published his second major study on autobiography, *Le pacte autobiographique*. A continuation and expansion on his foundational work, *L'Autobiographie en France*, Lejeune took aim at distinguishing autobiography from fiction, for he stated in his first work that autobiography is necessarily a fiction produced under special circumstances.¹²¹ To date, virtually every comics scholar or critic who addresses autobiographical works does so through the prism of Lejeune's 1975 definition.

In *le pacte autobiographique* Lejeune defines 'autobiography' functionally and in definitive terms as a « *Récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité* ». ¹²² He then identifies four categories that pertain to this definition, positing its necessary traits of: (1) a form of language that is either an account or a discourse in prose; (2) the treated subject must be the individual life or the story of the subject's personality, and does not exclude the presence of other lesser topics, like political and social history; (3) the author must be the narrator

¹²¹ See Philippe Lejeune, *L'Autobiographie en France*. (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 30.

¹²² My transl. - "A retrospective narrative in prose written by a real person about his or her own existence, stressing his or her individual life, particularly the story of his or her personality."

and the name of both must refer to a real person; and (4) the identity of the narrator and the protagonist must be the same, and the account they tell must be, for the most part, retrospective.¹²³ Distinguishing this definition from the definition of the *pacte autobiographique*, Lejeune writes on his website, « *C'est l'engagement que prend un auteur de raconter directement sa vie (ou une partie, ou un aspect de sa vie) dans une esprit de vérité* ». He continues with his description, stating:

[...] un texte autobiographique peut être légitimement vérifié par une enquête [...]. Un texte autobiographique engage la responsabilité juridique de son auteur, qui peut être poursuivi par exemple pour diffamation, ou pour atteinte à la vie privée d'autrui. Il est comme un acte de la vie réelle, même si par ailleurs il peut avoir les charmes d'une oeuvre d'art parce qu'il est bien écrit et bien composé. [...] On ne lit pas de la même manière une autobiographie et un roman. Dans l'autobiographie, la relation avec l'auteur est embrayée (il vous demande de le croire, il voudrait obtenir votre estime, peut-être votre admiration ou même votre amour, votre réaction à sa personne est sollicitée, comme par une personne réelle dans la vie courante)[...].¹²⁴

What Lejeune underscores in these definitions, and quite intentionally, is that the autobiography contains two seemingly contradictory stances; on one hand, it insists on truth and veracity of those events to which it refers, while on the other, it is a

¹²³ Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 14-15. The word "story" retains a double meaning here that must be acknowledged. Translated from the French, '*histoire*' signifies both "story" and "history." By my own reckoning, the first translation indicates a personal and subjective perspective, while the latter implies a collective perspective often assumed to be factual.

¹²⁴ Quotes are contained on both Lejeune's website and in his *Signes de vie*. The first: "It is the commitment an author takes to tell his life's story (or a part of it, or an aspect of it) in the spirit of truthfulness." The second: "An autobiographical text can be verified legitimately by an inquiry [...]. An autobiographical text takes on the legal responsibility of its author, who can face criminal charges for defamation or for intrusion into the private life of another. It is like a real-life action, even if it may have the charm of a work of art, being well written and composed. [...] Autobiographies are not read the same way that novels are. In an autobiography, the reader's relation with the author is set into motion by the author (he asks you to believe him, he would like to obtain your esteem, maybe even your admiration or love, your reaction to his person is solicited, in a manner not unlike that of a real person in real life) [...]." - Both quotes my translation. See Philippe Lejeune, *Signes de vie : le pacte autobiographique 2*, (Paris : Seuil, 2005), 31. See also - *Autopacte, site proposé par Philippe Lejeune*. Accessed 4 January 2014, http://www.autopacte.org/pacte_autobiographique.html

solicitation from the author, a subjective perspective that solicits the reader's belief in what the author writes.

One rather neglected aspect of Lejeune's auto-analysis of his definition, probably because it is so obvious, is that the author is "*une personne*" – one person – "*un auteur*" – one author. According to this classic definition, any works that offer an autobiographical treatment by more than one author would necessarily fall under another label, be that biography, portrait, or perhaps semi- or partial-autobiography. For the purposes of this essay, it merits stating that Lejeune's definition, while insisting that autobiography must be a *form of language*, written in prose, it makes no mention of the possibility for narratives in sequential images or photographs. Although it is arguable that images *are* a form of language, and that a sequence of images braided together by text can be considered a form of prose, Lejeune's examples and critique indicate that he did not account for these aspects in his foundational work from 1975.¹²⁵

At the risk of inspiring debate, it is necessary to assert that, unlike other forms of comics, there are no instances in which autobiographical *BDRV* can exist without necessitating some textual articulation. The necessity for text may also be requisite for any autobiography as well. The reasons I must insist here are rather obvious: Communication through written, textual language offers a precision that images, no matter how detailed or stylistically expressive, can ever offer. To

¹²⁵ Lejeune has updated his stance since the publication of this work, participating in several colloquia treating autobiography in the *bande dessinée*, including a recent one on February 6 and 7 of 2013 at Université Blaise Pascal -CELIS-TIL entitled, *Autobio-graphismes & Bande Dessinée*, as well as listing *bande dessinée* as a heading in his "*bibliographie générale*" on his website, providing several sources of reference for the exploration of practical aspects of autobiography in *bande dessinée*.

paraphrase Groensteen's observation, images cannot very well represent thinking and speaking.¹²⁶

In her 1980 article on autobiography in film, Elizabeth Bruss claims that: "[...] images lack the articulation and hence the selectivity of sentences; they do not distinguish between subject and predicates in a way that allows us to discriminate between the essential and the accidental."¹²⁷ While I apply her principle to my argument (that autobiography cannot exist without the inclusion of text), I must take issue with two aspects of her statement. First, images do not lack the selectivity of sentences; they differ in terms of degree. The fact that an image is almost always framed in some way attests to the presence of selection by the author, especially in the comics medium. Certain images lack selectivity *in isolation*, especially in painting, however once syntagmatically linked as they are in comics according to Groensteen's principle of iconic solidarity, more precise articulations may arise. I disagree outright with the article's estimation that images do not distinguish between subject and predicate, as would, most likely, Ann Miller.¹²⁸ I agree with Bruss' article, however, that the difference between the two mediums, in isolation, is their capacity for articulation. There are only two instances in which an image cannot represent that which the text can, and Groensteen has identified those as being thought and speech. All travel narratives, and all autobiographies for that

¹²⁶ Groensteen, *Système de la bande dessinée*, 152.

¹²⁷ Elizabeth Bruss, "Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, Ed. James Olney (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 301-302.

¹²⁸ See below under the heading, "**Establishing a Referent - Groensteen's Iconic Solidarity**", in which I underscore Ann Miller's observation that the face of a character is the visual equivalent of a subject noun. Images in sequence, especially ones that incorporate iconic solidarity, clearly identify which character performs which action.

matter, are fundamentally subjective in nature, and therefore necessitate the specificity of thought and speech. Indeed, without the subjectivity of the author, a travel narrative would be no more than a context-free image of a space, and an autobiography without subjectivity would be null. While the gaze of a given character can be isolated without words (allowing for a character's focus, and thus, a degree of thought, to be envisioned by the reader), and framed, sequential images can approximate the feelings and thoughts of a character, words possess a different degree of articulation. Groensteen's observation is thereby justified, and text must be included in anything purportedly labeled autobiographical in *bande dessinée*.

In my estimation, the 'autobiographical *BDRV*' must meet the following constraints: (1) it must be composed of both images and text arranged in such a manner that it recounts one or more instances of significant voyages in the protagonist's life; (2) the protagonist and (at least one of the) narrator(s) must share a single identity with the author or one of the authors and that identity must refer to a real person; (3) it must be retrospective; and (4) the focus of the narrative should predominantly depict and discuss at least one of the author's voyages as well as his experience from within a culture other than the one of his origin.

The first standard by which I judge the nature of a potential candidate for the autobiographical *BDRV* is incongruous with Lejeune's definition, as it accounts for the inclusion of images and text in mixed format, all the while necessitating the presence of text. The addition of a multiple line of narration (a pictorial one) compounds the degree of nuance associated with the label 'autobiography'. The second deviates from Lejeune's definition by virtue of its inclusion of potentially

multiple authors. Also, the second precept that I have identified includes the necessity of creating a single identity shared between personage, narrator, and author, as opposed to Lejeune's division of identity. By placing my definition in terms of identity and not using the word '*name*' I am simply attempting to avoid complications that may arise when discussing authors who use a pen name and/or call their protagonist by that name, all the while possessing a different legal name.¹²⁹ The 'retrospective' element is in line with Lejeune's definition, while the 'depiction of voyage' element parallels Lejeune's constraint that insists that an autobiography be an account that tells the story of an author's life or the origins of his personality. This fourth element assures that a potential autobiographical *BDRV* is not one in which the depiction of travel is merely a background or secondary element in the narrative. The voyage must be, in large part, central to the narrative.

The importance of *le pacte autobiographique*, therefore, is that it provides an initial structure from which this subdivision of the autobiographical genre may be addressed. While I do not adhere to some of the parameters set forth in Lejeune's initial definition, my autobiographical corpus differs from his. Moreover, I am not treating the same 'comics autobiography' that critics like Ann Miller, Elizabeth El Rafaie, and Thierry Groensteen have addressed at length. At the points of authorship and the focus of the narrative, this study necessarily departs from their recognized frameworks.

¹²⁹ As is the case of 'Roannie' in her *L'intruse*. Her legal name is Marie-Jo Parbot.

Establishing a Referent - Groensteen's Iconic Solidarity

In his *pacte autobiographique* Lejeune goes to great lengths to identify the pronominal referent of the protagonist to the author in text-based works, and it must be stated that the predominant trend in autobiographical *BDRV* is that the usage of the first-person pronoun 'je' is exclusively (as far as I have observed) employed to refer to the narrator/author/personage in the text, and that all the examples I have chosen, and for that matter, all the ones I have excluded, do not deviate from this structure. However, in a hybrid system such as the *bande dessinée*, while the pronoun 'je' is employed in the text, the narrating image is in many ways responsible for establishing a referent other than the name of the protagonist and other personages. Quoting film theorist Roger-Yves Roche's article "Photos-fictions," Ann Miller extracts a notion of the visual cue that identifies the protagonist – the face.¹³⁰ As a partial narrator, the artist mediates the identity of the personage/narrator/author through the establishment of a diegetic personage who, based on the artist's abilities and intentions, and to varying degrees, resembles the extradiegetic model. Photo-realism is a priority for some artists, while others rely on caricature. No matter the degree of resemblance, the result is the same – the creation of a recognizable personage that the reader will interpret as both the author and narrator.

¹³⁰ See Ann Miller's article "Autobiography in *bande dessinée*," in *Textual and Visual Selves: Photography, Film, and Comic Art in French Autobiography*, eds. Natalie Edwards, Amy L. Hubbard, and Ann Miller (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 235-262. Roger-Yves Roche's original article, "Photos-fictions," appeared in *Le Je à l'écran*, eds. Jean-Pierre Esquenazi and André Gardies (Paris: Harmattan, 2006), 189-200.

The degree of resemblance can shift graphically during the course of the narrative. This occurs in one of two manners: The narrator/personage/author can physically change over the course of the narrative, either by progressing in age or enduring trauma, or the narrator/personage/author can depict himself in a figurative manner in order to alter the reader's interpretation of one or more scenes. While formal experiments with a shifting degree of resemblance exists in the autobiographical *BD*, it is a rather rare phenomenon in the autobiographical *BDRV*. The greatest degree to which this takes place is perhaps found in Manu Larcenet's *Presque*, where Larcenet shifts between three self-representations. In the first, Larcenet differentiates himself from the soldiers with whom he shares a diegetic space; another in which he draws himself as indistinct from the rest of his company; and another in which he and his mother are drawn as abstract blobs only distinguished by their position on the page, the artifacts that adorn their faces and their dialogues that clearly distinguish the mother from her son (see Fig. 12).¹³¹



Fig. 12 - Three distinct self-representations from Manu Larcenet's *Presque*. Each shift in representation indicates both a temporal and emotive shift in the work.

¹³¹ Larcenet's *Presque* (Paris: Les Rêveurs, 2007) is difficult to label due to its dual account of how Manu came to possess the personality he maintained during early adulthood and how he clashed with the culture at the interior of the French Army. While clearly a 'memoir,' Manu's induction into the Army and transition from civilian life involved a dramatic change of environment. Nevertheless, I will not be using *Presque* for my formal analysis because I find its focus centered on the formation of Larcenet's personality and because the account of travel is tertiary to that formation and the harsh experience of being a marginalized new recruit in the Army.

The standard diegetic identity marker for an author (individual or multiple) in the autobiographical *BDRV* is, unquestionably, the appearance of the protagonist/author, who is readily identifiable by means of Groensteen's principle of iconic solidarity, or "interdependent images that, participating in a series, present the double characteristic of being separated – this specification dismisses unique enclosed images within a profusion of patterns or anecdotes – and which are plastically and semantically overdetermined by the fact of their coexistence *in presentia*." ¹³² While I agree with Miller's assessment, that the face in autobiographical comics is akin to the first person 'je', I would also point out that identifying a personage goes beyond the initial appearance of the face; it also incorporates representations of clothing, accessories, scars or birth marks, body sizes, silhouettes and even dialogic markers that include, but are not limited to, the size and color of text, grammar and syntax, the speech balloon, and choice or content of utterance, all of which are associated with that face. Of course, the absence of a face can also identify a character; however this narrative tactic is more or less confined to the crime and mystery genres.¹³³ While identity of the protagonist is necessarily dependent upon iconic solidarity, the identity of the voyage, the visited culture, the landscape and the inhabitants encountered must necessarily adhere to this principle as well. This is easily demonstrated in all autobiographical *BDRVs*, but for the sake of examples, the various types of Jews and

¹³² See *Supra*. footnote 13.

¹³³ The face does not simply identify characters within a comic. Weather has often been personified through the usage of caricatural faces. Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre, and Frédéric Lemercier have shown that this notion extends beyond the drawn image through the use of Lefèvre's most ominous photograph in *Le Photographe*. See my commentary in the section below entitled, "**Individual vs. Multiple Subjectivity and Anthropomorphism**" for a complete explanation.

Christians in Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* are distinguishable by their dress, the presence of beards, and the styles of their respective religious artifacts (see Fig. 13).¹³⁴ Likewise, the reader becomes hyper-aware of the presence of the wall



Fig. 13 - Delisle's representations of the six Christian sects that occupy the Saint Sepulchre.

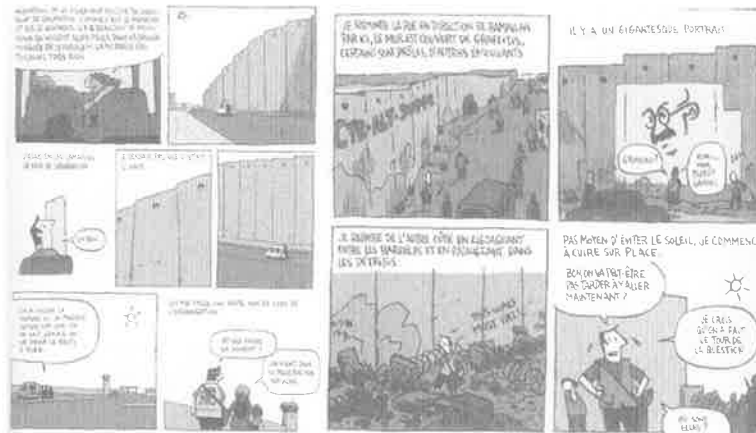


Fig. 14 - Delisle's depictions of conditions inside and outside the Wall, respectively.

around Jerusalem and on which side of it Delisle happens to be on, depending on the actions of the Israeli Defense Force and the pedestrians in Delisle's proximity (See Fig. 14). Thus, textual referents, such as the ones mentioned above, become

¹³⁴ See Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 109.

obsolete in the presence of pictorial elements that sufficiently transmit meaning. The only necessary element in establishing and maintaining a referent is that of iconic solidarity.

Authenticity and Individual vs. Multiple Authorship

The *bande dessinée* industry is primarily composed of two modes of authorial production – individual authorship and multiple authorship. Some of the most versatile creators in the industry have managed to go back and forth between the two modes. However, as I suggested in chapter 1, going back and forth between authorial modes of production was not a formal practice before the liberating movement headed by René Goscinny at *Pilote* and in turn taken to its logical conclusion by the creators of *Métal Hurlant*, *L'Association*, and, now, the artists in the movement that Dayez identified and interviewed in his *La Nouvelle Bande Dessinée*. Between these movements, new genres have arisen in the *bande dessinée* medium, most notably autobiography, biography, diary, and travelogue, and each of these having varying implications for authorship.

"L'auteur complet"

Benoît Peeters makes a clear distinction between the individual and multiple authorship modes of *bande dessinée* creation in two of his works, *Lire la bande dessinée* and *Écrire l'image*, as well as in articles and interviews. He identifies the individual author of a *bande dessinée* as an '*auteur complet*,' a term he designates as signifying that the individual author creates both text and images in his work, thus

performing the roles of both the graphic and textual narration simultaneously.

According to Peeters, the *auteur complet* writes and draws his *bande dessinée* with a freedom that duos cannot imitate. He is able to re-direct his work in an instant, whereas the collaborative effort is more confined to pre-planning and mutually agreed upon schemas. The redirections of an *auteur complet* can occur at the slip of the pencil, in which a mark is made on the page that drives his thoughts in another direction than the one he had planned.¹³⁵

The "messages" that an *auteur complet* can receive are not always the driving force behind a given narrative, however their role is not to be understated.

Moreover, those messages can be coaxed out and manipulated if an author is sensitive enough to his own abilities. In a recent interview with Thierry Groensteen, Joann Sfar discusses his method of creation, stating that, indeed:

c'est le contact entre ton idée et le papier qui fait naître quelque chose de surprenant. Le dessin que tu fais ne ressemble pas à celui que tu avais en tête [...] l'exécution fonctionne bien chaque fois que je me fais spectateur de mon propre dessin. Je fais confiance à mon imagination et ça vient vraiment tout seul. Je me demande ce qui se passe dans telle case, et la main répond à ma place. J'ai le sentiment de ne pas dessiner, mais de regarder le dessin en train de se faire. Je ne suis pas actif, je ressens la volupté du spectateur. Pendant longtemps je faisais

¹³⁵ Peeters cites quotations from Töpffer, Hergé, Moebius, and Edmund Baudoin concerning the nature of their artistic productions, all of which indicate a certain unplanned graphic or narrative interjection in their work that is the direct result of the application of their drawing device to the paper. For Töpffer it was « *un bond de plume tout à fait hazardé* », for Hergé it was « *les idées[...], les gags, les trouvailles au fur et à mesure qu'ils naissent dans [son] esprit* », for Moebius, « *l'histoire est venue d'elle-même* », and for Baudoin, « *Les traits noirs qu'['il] dessine [...] sur le papier blanc m'envoient des messages[...], des questions que je n'avais pas prévues, des réponses inattendues* ». (Peeters, *Lire la bande dessinée*, 155-163).

une comparaison avec l'image photographique qui apparaît sous l'effet du révélateur.¹³⁶

Sfar also indicates that by experimenting with the comics form while in different states of mind (for instance, working only after becoming completely exhausted or in a trance-like state for three or four days with little rest) his work takes on a different form and concept. Perhaps most intriguing, however, is the following comment; « *Je suis davantage dans une recherche plastique, j'appuie sur ma plume pour provoquer des accidents, donner d'autres impulsions, changer de rythme...* ». ¹³⁷

It is important to note that Joann Sfar is not simply an *auteur complet*. His prolific output in a variety of endeavors highlights his incredible flexibility as an author and artist. He has collaborated with many writers and illustrators to produce comics of multiple authorship, as well as written novels, directed two films, adapted text-based works to his graphic style, and taken on the role of editor of Delcourt's *Shampooing* collection with his collaborator Lewis Trondheim. A number of influential figures in the *bande dessinée* industry - Emmanuel Guibert, Christophe Blain, Manu Larcenet, Benoît Peeters - fill a multiplicity of creative roles, although few as diverse as Sfar. It is most likely Sfar's willingness to tackle every position in the periphery of his main profession (*la bande dessinée*) that makes him so capable. The *auteur complet*, in my view, is not someone who was simply lucky enough to

¹³⁶ See Thierry Groensteen, *Entretiens avec Joann Sfar* (Belgique: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2013), 180-181. (My transl. - "it's the contact between your idea and the paper that creates something surprising. The drawing you do doesn't resemble what was in your head [...] each time I make myself a spectator of my own drawing, the execution is successful. I trust my imagination and it just comes out all by itself. I wonder about what occurs in whatever panel, and my hand responds. It feels like I'm not drawing, rather it's like I'm watching a drawing being produced. I'm not an active participant - I feel the pleasure of an observer. For a long time I made such a comparison with the photographic image that appears under the effect of the revealer.")

¹³⁷ Groensteen, *Entretiens avec Joann Sfar*, 184. (My transl. - "I am more involved in a plastic study; I push on my pen to provoke accidents, give other impulsions, change the rhythm...")

have been born with a talent that some are not capable of possessing. Rather, he is a person who is willing to develop and experiment with his skills, thus developing a sensitivity that allows for creative flexibility. Not every creator can aspire to the celebrity of someone like Joann Sfar. Practice, experience, and a constant search for personal expansion are available to whoever is willing and able to put in the time. Like Hergé, Sfar has expanded the horizons of the possibilities available to the *auteur complet*.

In the autobiographical works that a given individual author produces, there is no question that the author is both the narrator and the personage at the center of the narrative. This is not the case with such works created by multiple authors.

The Experience of Multiple Authorship

In contrast to the relationship between an individual author and his production, for a work of multiple authorship to result in a seamless product of harmonious and complementary text and images the artist and the writer must allow themselves to share a common artistic and narrative space. As a partner in the creation of *Les Cités obscures*, Benoît Peeters finds that collaboration necessitates a reciprocal relationship between both partners. Peeters describes the discovery of common ground with François Schuiten, stating:

Cette découverte d'un territoire véritablement commun est loin d'être instantanée, d'où le privilège que j'accorde aux collaborations longues. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de choisir une idée visuelle, mais bien un projet conçu pour un style graphique, un rythme narratif, un ton, une personnalité [...] Écrire pour la bande dessinée, c'est aussi

mettre en fiction un style particulier de dessin, et par conséquent une démarche.¹³⁸

The writer, according to Peeters, has an influence over the drawn image through layout suggestions, the interpretation of a character's gestures, and documented research on topics that would effect the representation of diverse historical considerations, such as architecture or clothing, all of which the artist has to translate into an agreed upon style. For Peeters, the production of signs, therefore, is one of text/image relationships forged over a long duration of collaboration rather than some unique instantaneous production that seems to run contrary to industry standards. In Peeters' own experience, he notes distinctions between working with different artists, the detailed architectural and period studies that went into the creation of *Les Cités obscures*, the vigorous attention to gestures that he studied using video and photography for the creation of *Tokyo est mon jardin*, *Love Hôtel*, and *Demi-Tour* with Frédéric Boilet, and the vast constraints of sequential photography in narration that he discovered working on *le photo-roman* medium with Marie Françoise-Plissart (see Fig. 15). Most pertinent to our study, however, is the intensely personal nature of the relationship between the writer and the graphic artist and the exchanges they share in production. In an interview conducted by Adelaide Russo and Fabrice Leroy, Peeters expounds upon this aspect:

Dans une collaboration classique entre un scénariste et un dessinateur, ces échanges sont loin d'avoir la même évidence et quelquefois la spécificité du médium se perd, au profit d'un récit écrit

¹³⁸ Peeters, *Lire la bande dessinée*, 167-168. (My transl. – "This discovery of a veritable common ground is far from instantaneous, from which I attribute the privilege to long collaborations. It's not only about choosing a visual idea, but also a project conceived for a graphic style, a narrative rhythm, a tone, a personality [...] To Write for comics is to put a particular style of drawing into fiction, and consequently, a process.")

par le scénariste et illustré par le dessinateur. Certains albums proposent des récits palpitants et très habilement dessinés tout en ayant perdu en chemin quelque chose qui est la bande dessinée même.

Ce type de collaboration, où deux professionnels se contentent d'additionner leurs compétences respectives, ne peut en aucun cas me satisfaire. Nous avons donc essayé, François et moi, par un jeu d'échanges permanents, de vraiment concevoir ensemble l'univers *des Cités obscures*, et ce aussi bien dans le projet global des albums que dans le détail de leur mise en scène. Dans presque toutes les collaborations que j'ai eues, notamment avec Marie-Françoise Plissart et Frédéric Boilet, j'ai cherché à établir des rapports de la même intensité, c'est-à-dire d'inventer avec quelqu'un, pour quelqu'un, et non pas d'écrire de mon côté un scénario qui, à la limite, pourrait être illustré par n'importe quel bon dessinateur. Evidemment, la façon de procéder s'adapte à chacun. J'écris non seulement pour le dessin (ou pour la photographie), mais pour le dessin particulier de Schuiten ou de Boilet, et même pour ce que j'imagine être le potentiel de celui qui dessine et qui peut être encore autre chose que le dessin qu'il a déjà pratiqué. J'écris pour ce que je sais ou devine de ce qu'il est ou pourrait être, comme individu autant que comme artiste. Et je crois que mon collaborateur agit de façon comparable: il joue, sans forcément me le dire, avec l'idée qu'il se fait de moi, de mes forces et de mes limites.¹³⁹

In order for a collaborative effort to function with a seamlessness even comparable to that of an *auteur complet*, it must not lose that which makes the *bande dessinée*

¹³⁹ Adelaide Russo and Fabrice Leroy, "Entretien avec Benoît Peeters," in *Études Francophones*, s.l.d. Adelaide Russo et Fabrice Leroy, vol. 20, no. 1, Printemps (Lafayette: Université de Louisiane à Lafayette, 2005), 156. (My transl. – "In a classic collaboration between a scenarist and an illustrator, these exchanges are far from having the same obviousness and sometimes the specificity of the medium is lost, to the benefit of the narrative written by the scenarist and drawn by the illustrator. Certain albums propose thrilling narratives, skillfully drawn, all while having lost that thing that is comics. This type of collaboration, where two professionals agree to add their respective competences, cannot satisfy me under any conditions. Therefore, using a permanent game of exchanges, we (François and myself) have tried to conceive of the entire *Cités obscures* universe together, as much in the global project of the albums as in the detail of their scene direction. In almost every collaboration I've participated in, notably those with Marie-Françoise Plissart and Frédéric Boilet, I sought to establish the same intensity in relationships, that's to say, to invent *with* someone, *for* someone, and not to write from my side of the script which, in a pinch, could be illustrated by any good illustrator. Obviously, the process occurs differently for everyone. Not only do I write for drawing (or for photography), but for Schuiten or Boilet's particular drawing, and even for what I imagine to be the potential of the illustrator, something that can be completely different from the drawing he has done previously. I write for what I know or foresee about what the illustrator could be, both as an individual and as an artist. And I believe that my collaborator acts in the same manner; without necessarily telling me, he plays with the ideas that he has of me, my strengths, and my limits.")

medium so unique. It must not be an illustrated text, or a collection of illustrations with explanations. The writing must be performed with the artist's limits in mind,

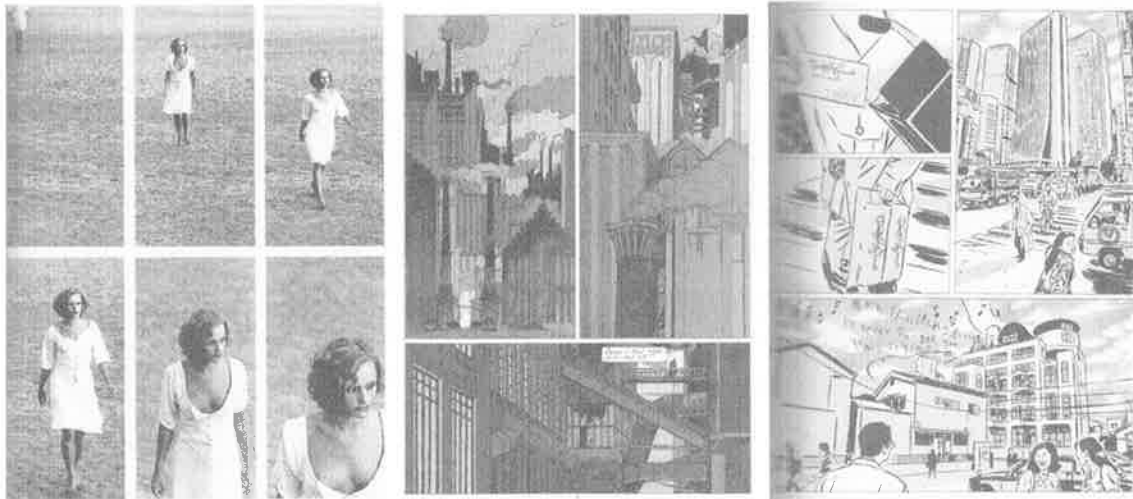


Fig. 15 - Example's of the various artistic styles that Benoît Peeters writes for/with. Respectively, Marie Françoise-Plissart, François Schuiten, and Frédéric Boilet.

and the artist must perform within the limits of the writer. With each type of collaboration comes a different set of constraints. Both graphic artist and writer must personalize their abilities to match each others', and the only way that can happen is through close proximity, complicity, and a shared vision. Creating a work of multiple authorship, such as Peeters is accustomed to creating, is not dependent on veracity, or recounting as accurately as possible events that took place in the past. The most important aspect of collaboration is the fruitful relationship between the collaborators. This principle remains true for autobiographical works of multiple authorship as well.

If we think of Lejeune's *pacte référentiel (autobiographique)* as necessarily linking the identities of the author, narrator and personage, then it stands to reason that problems would arise if there were more than one narrator, one of whom was

not present during the events depicted. Establishing which author was explicitly responsible for each aspect of a text, and thereby verify which portions of the text could be considered *more* authentic, would seem a substantial challenge. Obviously, in the case of an autobiographical *BDRV* created by a single author, with the author narrating, both textually and visually, the shared identity is rather easy to establish. In the case of an autobiographical *BDRV* of multiple authorship, the establishment of that identity becomes partly obscured by the fact that one or more of the narrators does not share the identity of the personage whose experience is treated within the work. Nevertheless, duality in narration does not necessarily detract from the authenticity of a collaborative effort. It may, in fact, enhance it. For example, Guy Delisle is the author/artist of *Chroniques Birmanes*. His legal name is on the front of his work, he identifies himself as the narrator through his usage of the first-person 'je,' and he appears in the form of his drawn character in well over 65 percent of the panels in his work. Because Delisle's primary languages are French and English, and his *Chroniques Birmanes* was not published in Burma, very few people, except perhaps his wife and a couple of others, can corroborate his experiences. Emmanuel Guibert, on the other hand, is the co-author, illustrator and co-narrator of *La Guerre d'Alan* and *Le Photographe*, yet he does not depict his own experiences. Alan Cope is a co-author/co-narrator and the protagonist of his tale, while Didier Lefèvre shares his roles as author and narrator, in addition to protagonist. Cope's account was recorded and discussed numerous times with Guibert, and his words were used to narrate the story. Lefèvre's words were also used, however much of the dialogue between characters was invented by Guibert. In an interview with Matthias Wivel,

Guibert explains the natures of these relationships, both of very long duration, and how it was possible to achieve plausibility without ever living Cope and Lefèvre's experiences:

Alan used to play out the dialogues, which helped me in the passages of "direct speech." I always quote him, quoting others, in my balloons. There's more direct speech in *The Photographer* because I interviewed a lot of people in preparing for the book and asked them to play out the dialogues with me, assuming the part of the person they had been 20 years earlier. And I invented a lot of the dialogue in it. Alan, on the contrary, was my only source of information for the telling of his story - at least for the first two volumes - and I remained very faithful, almost as if stuck to his words.

[...]

Alan shaped me as a man, and I shaped him too. It was an exchange. Both of us gave and received a lot. He certainly prepared the way for Didier. It was because I had started *Alan's War* that I decided to make *The Photographer*. I've had two interesting friends, and I want to share the good moments we had together with my readers. They're both dead, and I want them to keep on meeting people and exchanging ideas and experiences. I work for that purpose.

[...]

He(Didier) was my neighbor. When I moved into the building where he lived in Paris, I was 14 and he was 21. That was in 1978. The idea arose 21 years later [...]. He invited me for lunch at his place - fried sausages - and we spent the afternoon together. I asked him to choose a reportage from his archives and describe it to me from A to Z. He chose Afghanistan '86, the first important reportage of his career, and he chose well. We looked at the contact sheets together and he spoke, he spoke, he spoke. I was looking at these "still lives," and his words would bring back to them the movements, the dust, the smells, the voices, the atmosphere.

[...]

First of all, I needed him (Lefèvre) to tell me the story in such detail and with such clarity that I would be able to write, saying "I," a story that I hadn't lived. I was asking him questions after questions throughout the work process. He was my first reader and I wouldn't have kept anything in the book upon which he would have disagreed.

[...]

In *Alan's War*, I mostly explore seven years of his [Alan's] life, apart from the last part, in which he is shown as an aging man. In *The Photographer*, I was concentrating on four months of Didier's life, and it's more like a diary. Alan's story is in the past tense. Didier is in the present tense. I needed much more detail for Didier's story if I were

to really have the reader share his experiences, day by day. That meant I had to recreate dialogues and thoughts. I would constantly read my work to Didier, so he could tell me "this is correct, plausible; I, he or she could have said that, reacted this way, etc." or "I would never have said such a thing, or done this, etc." And of course I made use of all the psychological knowledge I had of him, and later of the medical crew, to write my texts.

[...]

Didier was an ideal partner. Like Alan, he perfectly understood the trust and freedom I needed to do my work properly, and he was constantly supportive, helpful, friendly, and lucid. Without full trust between partners, this kind of initiative cannot exist. Especially when you ask a photographer to give you all his photos, without choosing - the job of a photographer is, first of all, to choose - and to let you pick out whatever you want from his contact sheets. That's one of the highest measures of trust, and it demands from you a solid sense of responsibility in return.¹⁴⁰

There are not too many people who can corroborate Alan's story, much like Delisle's *Chroniques Birmanes*, however Didier's story has a massive set of photographic witnesses, the entire MSF crew that he accompanied, most of whom are still alive, as well as his Afghani friends whom he met during his repeated voyages. In the afterword of *Le Photographe* we read follow-ups about these people in which we learn what became of them in the years that followed this MSF mission. For Guibert, the only way to achieve a work like *Le Photographe* effectively is to have a long-standing relationship with the subject and the subject's full trust and complicity. Only then does the artist discover how truly to depict his subject in the most appropriate manner.

Through collaboration in autobiography, the testimony of one person may be reinforced through the work of another, and both may witness for a single testimony. The work, once affirmatively received by other witnesses to the events,

¹⁴⁰ Wivel, "The Emmanuel Guibert Interview", 103-108.

witnesses who have real-life, verifiable referents, such as those who were present in *Le Photographe* as members of the MSF group, testifies to something that may be considered more than plausible.

Commonalities of both Modes of Authorship

Between the modes of individual and multiple authorships lies a certain common ground - not simply the fact that both employ images and text, or work in the *bande dessinée* medium, of course, those are obvious. In order for either to work successfully, a good story comes first. Peeters and Sfar, both, attest to this detail in different respects. For Peeters' part, he states that:

Un album de qualité, dans une optique comme celle-là, ce serait avant tout une bonne histoire, c'est-à-dire un substrat à peu près indépendant du média dans lequel il va se couler, une intrigue si forte, si solide, qu'elle pourrait résister aux transpositions les plus diverses. Un tel principe, on le devine, conduit insensiblement à une sorte d'instrumentalisation du dessin.¹⁴¹

and for Sfar, when asked by Groensteen if he knows where his images come from, he states,

D'un récit. D'une volonté de récit. Il raconte quelque chose. Ou, si c'est une illustration ou un dessin d'après nature, il montre quelque chose. Dans tous les cas il y a quelque chose que l'on souhaite transmettre. Donc on est en situation de langage. Il ne m'arrive jamais de faire un dessin qui ne dise rien. Si, par exemple, je dois dessiner un renard qui attrape un oiseau, la première question que je me pose est de savoir si je vais m'identifier au renard ou à l'oiseau.

¹⁴¹ Peeters, *Lire la bande dessinée*, 164. (My transl. – "A good album, from a perspective like that, starts with a good story, or rather a somewhat independent substrate of the medium in which it fits, such a strong intrigue, so solid that it would resist the most diverse transpositions. Foreseeably, such a principle leads imperceptibly to a sort of instrumentalization of the drawing.")

Dessiner un renard qui attrape un oiseau, ce n'est pas la même chose que dessiner un oiseau qui est attrapé par un renard.¹⁴²

At the heart of any work, no matter the medium, is the story. The only difference between the individual author and the multiple authors' manner of depicting that story is perhaps the time it takes to share ideas between them.

Another necessity of both modes of authorship is the publisher. While the publisher is necessarily involved to some degree, no matter the work or medium, Peeters distinguishes between the two modes of production that concerns the association of the publisher in comics:

À la liberté vagabonde de l'*auteur complet*, toujours prêt à se laisser entraîner par les joies de l'invention à mesure, le scénariste veut opposer rigueur et efficacité. La plupart du temps, il préfère un usage transparent du média bande dessinée, afin que son récit puisse se développer sans obstacles. La soumission d'une grande partie de la bande dessinée aux formules les plus éprouvées (les reprises de héros, l'allégeance vis-à-vis des genres traditionnels, l'acceptation du principe de la série et du cadre du 48 pages couleur) m'apparaît comme le résultat d'une alliance objective entre les éditeurs et les scénaristes. Le scénariste est devenu la valeur sûre du métier; au dessinateur de se plier.¹⁴³

Although not explicitly stated, it is clear that Peeters recognizes the influences of the publisher as a primary force in the output of a *bande dessinée* duo. It stands, then,

¹⁴² Groensteen, *Entretiens avec Joann Sfar*, 184. (My transl. – From the story. From the will of a story. It tells something. Or, if it's an illustration or a nature drawing, it shows something. In each case, there is something that one wishes to transmit. Thus we're in a language situation. It never happens that I draw something that says nothing. For example, if I have to draw a fox catching a bird, the first question that I ask myself is if I'm going to identify with the fox or the bird. Drawing a fox catching a bird is not the same thing as drawing a bird that is caught by a fox.")

¹⁴³ See Benoît Peeters, *Écrire l'image* (Belgique: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2009), 73. (My transl. – Compared to the liberty of the *auteur complet*, always free to let himself be taken in by the joys of measured invention, the scenarist must oppose rigor with efficiency. Most of the time, he prefers a transparent usage of the comics medium so that his narrative may develop without obstruction. A large number of comics submit to the most tried and true formulas (renewal of heros, fidelity to traditional genres, the acceptance of the 48-page color album format for a series), which, to me, are the result of an objective alliance between publishers and scenarists. The scenarist is the sure value of the profession; it's up to the illustrator to adapt.)

that an *auteur complet* is also subject to the whims of the publisher, however, as both writer and artist, the technical imposition of his image production is not necessarily the submissive component of the publisher's suggestions.

Propositions Concerning the Authorial Self in Narration

While Lejeune's *pacte* was groundbreaking at the time of its publication, narrative theorists have expounded upon understandings of the relationships between author, narrator and personage. In critical comics theory circles, Jan Baetens, Thierry Groensteen, and Ann Miller have undertaken these discussions, to name only the most prolific. Another strong voice, Elisabeth El Refaie, has recently published a theoretical framework for autobiographical works in comics. Taking a multi-disciplinary approach to her analysis of the comics field by applying concepts from literary and cultural theory, semiotics, linguistics, narratology, art history, philosophy, psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, and media studies, El Refaie works back from Lejeune's *pacte* to David Herman's 2011 critical essay "Narrative Worldmaking in Graphic Life Writing," first citing sociologist Erving Goffman as having identified a truism of auto-representation:

Lejeune's [model] [...] can only be upheld if the self is construed as a coherent and unified identity, which remains more or less stable over the course of a lifetime. Such a view of the self is now generally considered to be inaccurate and misleading. According to Erving Goffman (1969[1959]) identity is an amalgam of the many different roles we all adopt in life in order to evoke the desired responses from our audiences. In this sense, there is no such thing as the one, true, coherent, and constant self. [...] [T]he self in all writing can be said to be tacitly plural, including a divergence between, at the very least, the

real-life I (the author), *the narrating I* (the self who tells), and the *experiencing I* (the self told about).¹⁴⁴

From this, it is clear that one of El Refaie's central arguments for the plurality of the authorial self is that the temporality of the author, an ever-changing entity, points to a necessary distinction between the concrete presentation of that author in written/drawn form and the author himself. Miller espouses the same sentiment regarding the multiplicity of the self in autobiographical works, stating,

The potential for distending or collapsing time, between and within panels, can have a strong affective charge, while the discontinuous nature of the medium makes it particularly suited to the expression of a sense of self that is fragmented and never definitive: the built-in multiplicity of the self works against any fixity of the autobiographical subject.¹⁴⁵

While I entirely agree that a person develops over a lifetime, and the experiences one may have as a youth are not fully representative of that person's entire identity, I reject the notion that a person's diegetic identity is necessarily dependent upon a desired response from an audience. In my opinion, the only instance in which a person's diegetic identity would be dependent upon audience response is in the case of falsification or embellishment, such as with James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*. I also disagree that writing about oneself is an implicit exercise in pluralizing oneself - I feel it is simply an attempt at documenting the past from the precise perspective of the author at the time of publication. Nevertheless, I recognize that in autobiographical comics, there appears to be multiple versions of a self that possess the same identity. In the *BDRV autobiographique*, we often encounter multiple

¹⁴⁴ See Elisabeth El Refaie, *Autobiographical Comics: Life Writing in Pictures* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 53-60.

¹⁴⁵ Miller, "Autobiography in *bande dessinée*," 258.

images of the protagonist/author/narrator simultaneously. These images rarely depict the protagonist/author/narrator as having multiple appearances (whether through temporal displacement or otherwise) while sharing a single identity.

When we encounter such sequential repetitions, along with whatever manner of textual accompaniment, the affect is one of rhythmic progression, repetition and alteration in a poetic manner, most likely in order to illustrate an emotion. The affect is not upon the authorial self, but rather the diegetic self, the personage, without having any static bearing on the extradiegetical 'author'. Moreover, an author's choice to remain fixated on a particular aspect of his life in his writing, or on a particular instance, tells the reader nothing of other past, present, and future experiences. It is simply his memory of his experience translated into a more concrete form, albeit replete with gaps. This idea of the pluralized authorial self is a current mode of thought concerning autobiographical representation, and merits the underscoring that El Refaie and Miller give it.

For comparative purposes, El Refaie also evokes Jan Baetens' conception that visual presentation is a form of narration, as well as Miller's adopted notion of the *meganarrator*, and Groensteen's distinctions between the *recitant* (verbal narrator) and the *monstrator* (visual narrator). El Refaie favors an older conception of the self-as-narrator - Wayne Booth's "implied author", previously hailed by film critic Seymore Chatman (1990), which El Refaie redubbs "implied author/artist".¹⁴⁶ The implied author/artist is "the reader's mental image of the person responsible for the

¹⁴⁶ See Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1961.

selection and combination of events in a work." ¹⁴⁷ Her application of this manner of envisioning the author serves to call attention to the content of the work as a "repository of choices - of already *made* choices" rather than assigning to the personage the same status of the "real" creator of the work. The problem that I have with this designation is that its premise is based on the assumption that a reader necessarily invents an image of the author, and that the same reader will distinguish between the author as represented, the author as representing, and the author as a real person. In a work that is packaged as an autobiographical portrayal, such a division stratifies the three into separate degrees of plausible referents, and presents the 'author as represented' as the least plausible of the three for any measure of truth. To label a work as autobiographical yet expect a reader to imagine the 'author as represented' as an entity entirely separate from the real person may undermine the logic of the reader and, furthermore, wrestle against the autobiographical authority of the author by suggesting that they do not share an identity. El Refaie does this when describing the "autobiographical protagonist [as] a literary construct," which, in the case of memoirs like Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* or Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* in which both authors depict themselves as little girls, breaks up the authorial self into multiple incarnations that cannot possibly have the same knowledge and, therefore, identity as the narrator.¹⁴⁸ While it may be true that the creation of this self-portrayal is a literary construct, its diegetic presence does not multiply the identity of the author/narrator/protagonist, rather it

¹⁴⁷ El Refaie, *Autobiographical Comics*, 57-8.

¹⁴⁸ El Refaie, *Autobiographical Comics*, 52.

serves to temporally extend the scope of the work.¹⁴⁹ While her application of the implied author/artist may function for the examples she provides, I feel that her designation of the author/artist as "implied" is a self-serving term for her argument, based on Wolfgang Iser's *The Implied Reader* (1978), and an overestimation of the role of the author.¹⁵⁰

It is understood that a person, no matter his professional designation, is subject to aging, and may change his way of thinking at times, and, after many years, may appear physically different than he did at an earlier period in his life. That person, however, is not multiplied through the passing of time. The author/artist is a specific person, an accumulation of life experiences, in a constant temporal flux, while his mode of self-representation is concrete and resists temporality (except maybe some yellowing of the pages). El Refaie approaches this notion when she states that a work is a "repository of already made choices." The concrete self-representations of the author/artist are the only sure measurements to which a reader can refer. A self-representation may be understood only as accurate at the

¹⁴⁹ While I understand that El Refaie is concerned with depictions of the authorial self and the diegetic self, I disagree that in portraying yourself as younger than you are at the time you are narrating is an act of multiplying your diegetic identity. Autobiographical comics, memoirs in particular, function to some degree on the illusion of authorial stasis. In the cases of *Fun Home* and *Persepolis* the narrators (*monstrator*, reciter, and overall narrator, according to Groensteen's distinctions) share an identity with the author and the protagonist. The *monstrator* depicts the protagonist at an earlier age, the reciter describes the protagonist at an earlier age, and the overall narrator traces that evolution from this earlier age to an age that is closer to the author's present age, but is still an earlier age. Thus the reader arrives at the illusory conclusion, upon finishing the book, that the narrator/protagonist/author is somehow fixed in the identity punctuated at the turning of the final page. The narrator and the author are still the same extra-diegetic person. To draw an analogy, a personal photograph is a narrative construct as well, a slice of the life of whomever it depicts, and is comparable to the literary construct in autobiographical comics in that it can be understood as a depiction of a person at an earlier age in his life. If I take a photograph of myself as a youth, then show it to a friend, I do not multiply my life's identity in the process. To quote the late-comedian Mitch Hedberg, "Every picture of you is a picture of you at an earlier age." Identity, therefore, is not defined by age at the time of depiction, nor is it determined by the knowledge one has at the time one narrates a story in his or her life.

¹⁵⁰ El Refaie, *Autobiographical Comics*, 181.

time it was written, for the time period in which it depicts the self. 'Implication' denotes a degree of uncertainty, and, in an autobiographical packaging, uncertainty must be limited in the concrete representation recorded by an author/artist. While the author/artist's extradiegetical self shifts, as it will, the term "implied author/artist" attempts to encapsulate a reader's thought about an author/artist, when, in fact, that thought is also in a constant state of flux. Only the written record of a reader may be concretized through such a label. In an autobiographical setting, that which the author/artist writes must be regarded as accurate for the point in time in which it was written. Whether that person writes from the perspective of their memory as a younger person, or depicts their feelings at the time of writing through diegetical meta-discourse or otherwise, the term 'autobiographical' etymologically denotes this certain degree of representational accuracy. Moreover, the choice to borrow Booth's terminology opens an obvious fissure in El Refaie's framework. Booth's analyses were based on works of fiction, while Refaie's work specifically treats autobiographical works. If there should be specific terms assigned to this concept of the narrator in graphic works, perhaps 'assumed author' better fits this particular mold. Nevertheless, the terminology is secondary to the concept. While Refaie finds Groensteen and Miller's concepts cumbersome, their respective applications are just as sound as the 'implied author/artist,' if not better suited for universal application.

El Refaie also states that due to the nature of the construction of *Le Photographe*, a work "lived, photographed, and told" by Didier Lefèvre, "written and drawn" by Emmanuel Guibert, and "laid out and colored" by Frédéric Lemercier, a

reader "[...]cannot regard the author and narrator as being identical in this case."¹⁵¹

While I agree that a distinction exists between Lefèvre and Guibert's roles, I disagree that authorship and narratorship are necessarily separate. Lefèvre's photographs and contact strips must be considered at least partially responsible for narrating, regardless of their arrangement by Guibert and Lemercier. Lefèvre's words, while not explicitly written by him, were re-created and used with his permission, and his story was tape-recorded by Guibert on numerous occasions to serve as a foundation for the work as a whole. If anything, the trio is at once author and narrator, together. Only Didier, on the other hand can be regarded as a personage, and only Didier has both a diegetic and extradiegetic referent. This consideration supports Baetens, Groensteen, and Miller's respective understandings of the authorial self.

Subjectivity in *Bande Dessinée Récit de Voyage*

Few critics have undertaken the notion of subjectivity in *bande dessinée*. Those who have, namely Ann Miller and, of course, Thierry Groensteen, have structured their arguments upon prior theoretical conjectures in fields as diverse as semiotics, psychoanalysis, and narratology. Miller and Groensteen approach subjectivity in drastically different manners, while their approaches, to some degree, intersect at the material they analyze. Miller's *Reading Bande Dessinée* (2007) predates Groensteen's *Bande dessinée et narration* (2011).

In *Reading Bande Dessinée*, Miller devotes three chapters to subjectivity - "Psychoanalytic Approaches to Tintin," "Autobiography and Diary Writing in *Bande*

¹⁵¹ El Refaie, *Autobiographical Comics*, 55.

Dessinée," and "Gender and Autobiography." In the first, she examines four prominent theorists' works - Benoît Peeters' *Les Bijoux ravis* (1984), Serge Tisseron's *Tintin chez le psychanalyste* (1985) and *Psychanalyse de la bande dessinée* (1987), Michel David's *Tintin à la lumière de Lacan* (1994) and Tom McCarthy's *Tintin and the Secret of Literature* (2006). By examining these commentaries, she explores their separate approaches to Hergé's *Le Secret de la Licorne*, *Le Trésor de Rackham le Rouge*, and *Les Bijoux de la Castafiore*. She concludes that metonymy and metaphor provide a potentially rich source of information about the unconscious subjective processes of a prolific author, and characters like Bianca Castafiore offer a remarkable variety of subjective readings and applications. In her chapter "Autobiography and Diary Writing in *Bande Dessinée*," Miller explores Lewis Trondheim's *Approximativement* and Dupuy and Berberian's *Journal d'un album* as three distinct self-representations of professions, fears and aspirations in the lives of three well-known comics authors.¹⁵² She determines that, no matter the style or approach to self-representation, diegetic reality can be easily invaded by subjective

¹⁵² While Dupuy and Berberian's work was published as a single entity, their contributions to the work were conceived and constructed in isolation from one another. The presentation of the work is that of an alternating journal, where one author creates a section, shares it with his collaborator, and then the other does the same in turn. Thus, Miller identifies the two works as three perspectives.

elements, like dreams and memories, which frequently establish a *bande dessinée* 'imaginary'.¹⁵³ She concludes that this 'imaginary' gives way to complex narrating instances that can allow for a diegetic doubling of self-representation and projections onto other characters, and thus permit subjectivity to seep into representation. In "Gender and Autobiography" Miller examines Julie Doucet's *Ciboire de Criss!*, Jean-Christophe Menu's *Livre de Phamille*, and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* with her critical eye focused on the relationship between the gender of the author and how he/she represents him/herself in relation to the opposite sex diegetically. Miller essentially demonstrates the variety of this relationship by distinguishing between the 'narrated self' and the 'narrating self,' as well as the 'represented self' and the 'representing self.'

Groensteen, on the other hand, limits his focus to one topic concerning subjectivity. He devotes one chapter of his *Bande dessinée et narration* to "*Le personnage comme subjectivité*," or "The Subjectivity of the Character."¹⁵⁴ Semiotic and narratological concerns lead Groensteen to explore how variations in language within and outside of speech and thought balloons permit a specific degree of access to the subjectivity of diegetical characters (as Chris Ware demonstrates in *Jimmy Corrigan*), while the graphic representation (the framed image) may suggestively

¹⁵³ Miller briefly describes what Lacan identifies as the 'imaginary order' in the developmental process of a child as taking place "[...] approximately between six and eighteen months, as the child sees its own image in mirror and identifies with this representation of itself, more perfect and unified than it feels itself to be.[...] The ego is, therefore, founded on alterity, since the specular self is an external image, separate from the child. It is necessarily split, dependent on its mirror-image other, and any sense of a unified identity can only be illusory. This imaginary unity, will, however, continue to haunt the child on into adulthood. The mirror may be taken as metaphor for mother's gaze: the self only exists as reflected in her look. Although separate from the mother, the child remains locked in an intense and narcissistic relation with her as she confirms its sense of self." Miller, *Reading Bande Dessinée*, 202 (see also Lacan, *Écrits 1* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 90).

¹⁵⁴ The English title of Groensteen's chapter as translated by Ann Miller. The citations of comics in this paragraph are all Groensteen's examples.

represent thoughts and feelings of characters by means of juxtaposition over a series of panels a static foreground and a shifting background or vice versa (as Fabrice Neaud demonstrates in his *Journal*). He further guides the reader through the usage of color-coding to represent different, subjective states of mind, as in Lynd Ward's *Wild Pilgrimage*, and how subjectivity of perception by one character allows the reader to experience that character from a complicit and privileged position as the reader (as in *Calvin and Hobbes*). Comics are, thus, an excellent medium in which to explore 'style indirect libre' because of how easily a work can alternate from the objective to the subjective register and back.

I find both Miller and Groensteen approaches to their notions of subjectivity perfectly functional. It is clear that comics' critical circles have explored this topic in a limited fashion; however, and with the solid framework established by these two critics, as well as El Refaie's groundbreaking work on autobiographical comics, expansion is inevitable. I wish, therefore, to offer my own contribution to the notion of subjectivity through the poetic/narrative devices of 'allusion' and 'anthropomorphism.' I will use examples from four works in my corpus - Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang* and *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, and Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre, and Frédéric Lemercier's *Le Photographe*.

Individual vs. Multiple Authorship; Subjectivity and Allusion

When an individual author employs allusion in his work, any subjectivity that can be gleaned from its use will necessarily point back to him. As author of both text and images, he controls the scope and direction of the narration, therefore, his

personal subjectivity will be more apparent than a work in which multiple authorship is a factor. In cases of multiple authorship, that same subjectivity will, more often than not, point to the author responsible for the overall narration of the work.¹⁵⁵

In mainstream Western comics, which in some cases appear to be created in assembly-line fashion, the roles of writer, artist, penciler, inker, letterer, colorist, and layout are divided between a crew of workers. The role of the publisher, as indicated above via Benoît Peeters' comments, plays a singular role on the cutting room floor as well. With so many hands involved, this type of production reduces the potential for clearly distinguishing the subjectivity of one contributor from another. In this type of comics assembly, the writer's words are the easiest element to isolate in terms of authorship. Contrary to this manner of production, solo, duo, and trio authors' individual subjectivities are far more obvious, and certain subjective elements are easily observed and verified. One of the most readily available manners by which we can determine the nature of an author's subjective perspective is through their employment of allusions.

For example, Guy Delisle's *Pyongyang* contains the straightforward metaphorical allusion to Orwell's *1984*. It serves as a sort of preface to his work, and the theme of an all-powerful state suppression of the individual from *1984* saturates the mood of *Pyongyang*. Delisle's use of this allusion points to his subjectivity in doing research for *Pyongyang* prior to arriving on location. In an

¹⁵⁵ Miller's term, adopted from André Gaudreault's filmic analysis, the 'meganarrator' works equally as well as Groensteen's concept of the combined narrator, the '*monstrateur*' and the '*écriteur*' which he deems, simply, '*narrateur*', and I will refer to their terms, as well as the term 'overall narrator' from time to time in this section.

interview with Brian Heater from *The Daily Cross Hatch*, Delisle states that he considers Orwell's *1984* to be an integral part of his research into North Korea:

-I read all of the books I could find, because I knew that once I was there, there would be a filter, and they wouldn't answer the questions I would ask. That's why I brought *1984* with me. I was half-done with the book. Everyone was saying, North Korea, *1984*, they're the same.[...]

-To you this old Orwell book was research?

-Oh yeah, oh yeah. Because I use it in my book. I was so impressed. He wrote that in '48 and he had seen so precisely a regime like North Korea, and I think a regime like the Soviet Union and some of these countries. It's amazing. You go in there and they have these two minutes of hate with America, but then America has the same with Bin Laden.¹⁵⁶

Delisle's preconception of North Korea, therefore, was informed by his reading of *1984* and not through personal experience. It is only after having focused his attention through an Orwellian prism that Delisle's vision of North Korea comes into focus for the reader. By embracing *1984* as an accurate source for research on North Korea, Delisle necessarily skews his experience as well as his readers' experiences in discovering the notorious closed state. His subjectivity in research, using a book that was not specifically written about North Korea or its people, and one that paints a decidedly negative view of the totalitarian state, illustrates to what degree a purportedly accurate account may be altered by subjectivist research practices.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Guy Delisle, "Interview: Guy Delisle Pt 3 [of 4]," *The Daily Cross Hatch*, ed. Brian Heater (New York: October 26, 2009) <http://thedailycrosshatch.com/2009/10/26/interview-guy-delisle-pt-3-of-4/>

¹⁵⁷ By making this statement I am in no way implying that I have any knowledge of North Korea other than through the prism of Delisle's *Pyongyang* and the interview that I read in which he mentions his experience. My argument here remains specific to the type of allusion he used and how he used it, and in no way is intended to invalidate the authenticity of Delisle's experience. I am also in no way advocating for the totalitarian state - rather I am simply conducting an exercise by playing devil's advocate.

Emmanuel Guibert offers an alternate employment of subjective allusions. As stated in chapter two, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* accompanies Didier in *Le Photographe*. Lefèvre (narratively) states, and proves with a photograph of his gear and Stevenson's book, that he did in fact possess the book during his voyage. Diegetically, he states that he "borrowed" it from the *Médécins Sans Frontières* house in Pakistan (see Fig. 16). Of course, *Travels with a Donkey* and *Le Photographe* parallel each other in numerous ways: preparations, challenges, dangers, even the types of images we read about and see unite the two works in theme and style. The application of this allusion exhibits Guibert's attention to narration and detail in images.

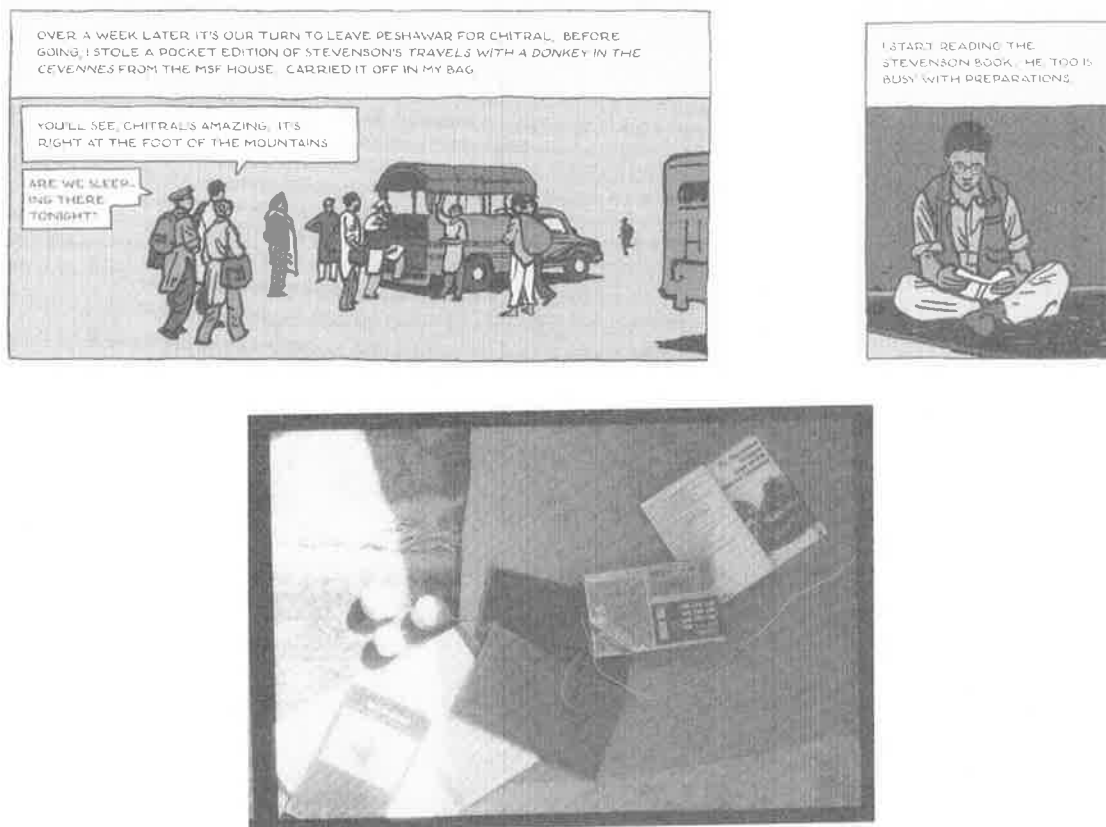


Fig. 16 - Guibert's *The Photographer* has three direct allusions to *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* by R.L. Stevenson. All other allusions are content-associative allusions that can only be properly understood through close readings.

We experience another degree of Guibert's subjectivity in his use of an allusion to *Les Aventures de Tintin*. We read that Didier (the diegetic character) thinks about Tintin from time to time, and that he often has "the impression [Tintin] traveled through where we're going," and yet, in his interview with Matthias Wivel, we learn that Guibert, in fact, invented this detail:

I put that sentence in Didier's mouth, and he didn't reject it. But he couldn't remember whether he had thought about *Tintin* or not during the mission. The fact is that I did. Of course, as some of the very first books that were read to me as a child, *Tintin* left a huge impression [...]. But we all have a way of "sweating" - sorry about the image - what we absorbed as children, so there are certainly a few drops of *Tintin* in my work. What I absolutely want to be clear is the story and how it reads. That may be the aspect about which I feel the closest to Hergé[...].¹⁵⁸

In this case, Guibert clearly asserts himself as the overall narrator, subjectively and intrinsically inserting himself into the work he has helped create. Inserting a narrating instance such as this adds flavor and, with knowledge of the interview, provenance to the finished product, at once drawing inter-generational parallels and permitting a reader to understand, at least in part, the origins and inspirations that manifest themselves in *Le Photographe*. Without reading the interview, however, the source of this reference remains obscured, and, since Guibert writes from Didier's perspective in the first person, easily confoundable as having been a true conversation between Didier and Régis in Afghanistan.

¹⁵⁸ Wivel, "The Emmanuel Guibert Interview," 109.

Authorial Subjectivity via Conversation Substitution

By one curious method, Guibert and Lefèvre remarkably transfer a portion of their own private conversation into a personalizing moment of character-development in *Le Photographe*. One of the final, long drawing-only sequences in tome 1 involves Didier and an MSF doctor, Régis, discussing the finer details of craftsmanship in photography. There is no narration in this sequence, as it is simply a dialogue between the two men about Didier's profession, photography, and its comparison to Régis' passion, making wine (see Fig. 17). The dialogue reads like a



Fig. 17 - Guibert and Lefèvre's conversation about photography directly implanted into the narrative.

conversation straight out of Guibert's post-*Le Photographe* publication, *Conversations avec le Photographe*, in which he and Lefèvre discuss topics ranging from image theory to morality as it pertains to photojournalism. Below I juxtapose the conversation in *Le Photographe* to the one in *Conversations avec le Photographe*. Lefèvre remarks in *Le Photographe* that,

« *Les vraies bonnes photos, il faut s'arracher les yeux* »,

while in *Conversations* he states,

« *Les vraies bonnes photos, il faut vraiment s'arracher les yeux pour les faire* ».

Régis, the character, questions Didier with,

« *Et c'est quoi, une bonne photo* »?

while Guibert, the interviewer, indirectly asks,

« *En même temps, pour la galerie, je suis obligé de te demander ce que c'est qu'une bonne photo* ».

Lefèvre, in both cases, responds identically,

« *Je ne sais pas. Il faut chercher, chercher, tout le temps, tout le temps* ».

In *Le Photographe*, Lefèvre remarks that improving one's photos is a matter of improving one's relationships with others,

« *Une amélioration des photos passe nécessairement par une amélioration des relations avec les gens* », ¹⁵⁹

while in *Conversations*, he remarks to Guibert that,

¹⁵⁹ Guibert, *Le Photographe*, 61. Translations are not necessary here because we are merely comparing the similarities of the text from one work to the text of an interview. It is clear that the interview was adopted as a useful dialogic instance that served to develop both Didier and Régis as characters in *Le Photographe*.

« Perfectionner ma photo passe forcément par une amélioration de ma relation avec les gens, avec l'entourage ». ¹⁶⁰

From *Le Photographe*,

« Ce que tu es en train de dire, en fait, c'est que pour faire de bonnes photos, il faut bien vieillir »,

and from *Conversations*,

« Tu es en train de dire que pour faire de bonnes photos, il faut bien vieillir, en fait ».

It is clear that the exchange derives not from an actual dialogue between Régis' and Didier, but rather from Didier and Guibert's recorded conversation. By re-imagining this conversation, Guibert transfers a little piece of his own personal relationship with Lefèvre to the reader. In terms of narration, personalizing Didier becomes crucial to enhancing the *plausibility* of Guibert's writing. This conversation grafts into the narrative rather inconspicuously, aiding Didier's character development. By personalizing Didier, Guibert encourages the reader to invest emotionally in Didier the *character*. This emotional investment, in turn, aids a reader in identifying with Didier's depicted experiences in a progressively emotive manner.

Subjectivity and Anthropomorphic Landscape

Capable comics authors employ anthropomorphic tropes without violating Lejeune's authenticity clause. In several bio/autobiographical *bande dessinée* travel narratives we see the anthropomorphism of landscapes, either in drawings, through textual references, or even in photographs incorporated into a *bande dessinée*

¹⁶⁰ See Emmanuel Guibert, Didier LeFèvre, Frédéric Lemercier, et Jean-François Berville, *Conversations avec le Photographe* (Marcinelle, Belgique: Dupuis, 2009), 52-53.

narrative. These instances offer wider readings regarding the subjectivity of the diegetic character experiencing the landscape.

A *bande dessinée* creator writes necessarily with his audience in mind, while at the same time, knowingly or unknowingly projects pieces of himself (his personality, his fears, his desires) into his work. By virtue of the exchange between author and consumer, the material within a *bande dessinée* relates in some form or another the experiences represented to the consumer. The transmission of the authors' experiences is most efficiently accomplished through the medium of human emotion. Thus, the argument may be made that the most efficient means of exploiting human emotion is through the very human tendency towards anthropocentrism.

Scott McCloud addresses readership and interpretation of the anthropomorphic trope in *Understanding Comics*, in which he writes, "We humans are a self-centered race. We see ourselves in everything. We assign identities and emotions where none exist. And we make the world over in our image."¹⁶¹

McCloud's observation primarily applies to emotional reader response towards artistic style within a given comic. Using familiar images such as an electrical socket, suggestive of a human face, McCloud relates our involvement with the world and representations of things in the world to our anthropocentric tendencies. Our fascination with ourselves drives us as children to allocate personalities to stuffed animals, or to exhibit an emotional response to the face made by the faucet, drain, and hot/cold water handles in a bathtub. We treat objects like a mirror-image of

¹⁶¹ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 32-33.

ourselves, in effect projecting our own emotions and identities onto those objects. This operation, more or less a psychological substitution, is entirely contingent upon our relationship to marking events unique to our subjective experience emotionally.

Complementary to McCloud's observation, Serge Tisseron provides an analysis of the projection of emotions or identities upon images in his *Psychanalyse de la bande dessinée*. He relates this idea to an artistic production, such as drawing, painting, or sculpture, stating,

Le choix du dessin, de la peinture ou de la sculpture comme modes privilégiés de symbolisation pourrait donc venir témoigner de la tentative faite par un individu de connaître et d'introjecter des fragments [d'émotions,] de détresse, de rage, d'amour, ou de révolte, ainsi les représentations correspondantes[...].¹⁶²

We may derive from this that a creator of comics attempts to project his own emotions into his work through creative substitution. Conversely, readers may identify with certain aspects of a work by projecting their own identities back onto those authorial projections through an act of consumptive substitution.¹⁶³ The exchange lends to the possible conclusion that, in fact, an author's projections are at once a self-projection and an approximation of his readers' back-projections.

Although Tisseron explicitly draws this observation through representations of sexual fantasy in *bande dessinée*, Tisseron's observation applies first and foremost to the emotional component, latent or otherwise, that an artist projects on his work.

Both Tisseron and McCloud's observations apply to the drawings we see in Marjane

¹⁶² See Serge Tisseron, *Psychanalyse de la bande dessinée* (Paris: Champs-Flammarion, 2000), 121. (My transl. – "The choice of the drawing, whether painting or sculpture as a privileged mode of symbolization would testify to the individual's attempt at knowing and interjecting fragments [of emotions,] of distress, rage, love, or revolt, as well as in the corresponding representations [...].)

¹⁶³ Hereon referred to as 'McCloud's substitution theory' (referred to again in Chapter 4).

Satrapi's *Persepolis* and Guy Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. We observe the emotional projections of the artists and how they are woven into the narrative. The differences lie in both experience and presentation.

Satrapi's *Persepolis* uses the anthropomorphic trope very limitedly to relate her somewhat traumatic emotional state as a child more effectively to her readers. One of the ten full-page panels in Satrapi's narrative depicts her as a young girl on a flying carpet with her mother and father (see Fig. 18).¹⁶⁴ Below the family are symbolic representations of Italy and Spain, a claire-obscure representation of the



Fig. 18 - Anthropomorphic landscape in Satrapi's *Persepolis*.

Leaning Tower of Pisa and a woman posed in a stereotypically Spanish dance stance.

The narration of this image is as follows:

La situation s'aggravait de jour en jour. En septembre 1980, mes parents organisèrent subitement un voyage avec moi. Comme s'ils

¹⁶⁴ Full-page panels are often understood as bearing more narrative weight than other panels due to their size and, consequently, the attention that the artist/author gives to them.

sentaient que bientôt ce ne serait plus possible. La suite leur donna raison...nous partîmes donc pendant trois semaines en Espagne et en Italie....¹⁶⁵

At the bottom right of the panel another text box simply reads, «*C'était merveilleux* ».

The text preceding and following this image provide details of some of the personal strife that Satrapi and her family endured as tensions mounted and war was declared in Iran between 1979 and 1980. These two enunciations are divided by Satrapi's magic carpet ride.

The image is not atypical of Satrapi's style – she draws herself within a symbolic construct. The placement of these symbols in privileged positions on the page provide the reader a layer of interpretation, in this case, indicating degrees of emotional affect. For instance, Satrapi's enjoyment on vacation near her mother and father (on her magic carpet) is derived from the fact that she felt far away from the turmoil in Tehran, and nearest to the people that mattered most in her life. The buildings bordering the left and right sides of the panel frame Satrapi and her parents within a landscape of Spain and Italy, the facade of a bull-fighting arena, Italian apartments and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The position of Satrapi's self-depiction on the page, however, permits the reader to interpret that, taken away from her hometown, Satrapi is obtaining a view from above, or a perspective of some scene at large. Since there is no depiction of land, no curvature of the earth,

¹⁶⁵ See Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis 2* (Paris: L'Association, 2001), (no page number). "Things got worse from one day to the next. In September 1980, my parents abruptly planned a vacation. I think they realized that soon such things would no longer be possible. As it happened, they were right. And so we went to Italy and Spain for three weeks...it was wonderful." See Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*, trans. L'Association and Anjali Singh (New York: Random House, Pantheon, 2004), 77.

and the presentation of the relative stature of objects is de-emphasized, it may be stated that Satrapi's figuration captures a sort of "big picture" of life.

The symbols of countries, here represented by a national monument and a dancing woman surrounded by swirling strokes that represent the wind, offer a variety of interpretive possibilities. I feel that the presence of the Leaning Tower of Pisa is both decorative and symbolic. It may signify that Satrapi feels that her life is instable and at risk of collapse, or it may serve as a sort of metaphorical clarion call to the importance of being raised "on solid ground" with good principles, i.e. in a healthy environment, or by two loving parents. But that is of far less interest than the Spanish dancer. Incorporated into Satrapi's rather flat, black and white fountain pen drawing style, the dancer's dress, legs and hair blend in with the black background, while the white strokes outlining the dancer blend with the lines formed to represent the wind. Drawn by itself, the wind may suggest the mood at a given point in the narrative, but may also simply indicate the weather, however when coupled with the outline of a Spanish dancer, and depicted as carrying Satrapi and her family to these European destinations, I believe the image takes on another level of interpretation that incorporates a deliberately emotion-laden, personal component. The dancer and the swirling wind are one in the same, as is their effect on Satrapi, and vicariously, on the reader. The dancer suggests that different human movements and actions creates a different reception; having witnessed firsthand the sight of human violence performed against others in Tehran, Satrapi absorbed a lasting negative impact during her formative years. Juxtaposed to this, her

experience of a Spanish culture at peace, engaged in a non-violent cultural activity (dancing), had an opposite effect.¹⁶⁶

So what are we to understand by this blending of symbols? The common expressions 'dancing wind' and 'winds of change' suggest, respectively, a sort of calm but unpredictable isolated wind patterns and a major shift in one's life, and may serve to elucidate the content of Satrapi's complex image. Immediately preceding her Southern European vacation, Satrapi experienced her first protest at which she witnessed mass violence in the streets of Tehran. Not long before, Satrapi's Russian uncle was abducted by Iranian fundamentalist forces in Tehran and executed publicly as a Soviet spy. Satrapi was the last member of her family to see him alive, and he was her favorite uncle. According to her narrative, the trauma of knowing that her favorite uncle had been executed led to an emotional fit in which she first began to doubt the goodness of God. Satrapi needed to be removed from the horrors she was experiencing. While an airplane transported her body to Spain and Italy, her mind was transported through the awakening of her senses to exotic sites and sounds. Satrapi's depiction of a dancer as the wind, or the wind as a dancer, narratively transports her mind away from the troubles at home, and it is that peace-time pleasantry that allows her to understand that turmoil is not a permanent state of being everywhere. The simple accompanying text, « *C'était merveilleux* », explains the degree to which her relief was short, while the size of the

¹⁶⁶ Diverting briefly from the subject of anthropomorphism, the psychological affect humans can have on other humans through their actions is common knowledge. Likewise, the weather can shape one's mood as well. Intense heats during the summer, combined with dehydration and exposure to the sun, can adversely affect one's temper and is often cited as a cause of increased violence. Conversely, stormy and rainy weather are commonly associated with depression and suicide.

image, again, one of ten this size, indicates the poignancy of this moment to Satrapi's narrative. Depictions of Spain itself are absent - the reader is only privy to a stereotypical representation of Spanish culture as a sort of dancing wind, a symbol of change, calm, and understanding.

Satrapi uses symbolism and metonymy to create a sort of semiotic alchemy.¹⁶⁷ Her symbols derive their meanings from their interrelationships with other symbols in the panel, and as such, create multiple levels of meaning. To express the relief of seeing a culture at peace juxtaposed by her own inter-warring culture is something akin to a fantasy, a magic carpet ride, if you will, a happy, vague memory amid a host of terrible ones. With the magic carpet, there is a clear association with the Orient and Persia. The metonym of a Spanish dancer (representing Spain) combined with those of the wind and the magic carpet accomplishes this emotional transportation for the reader. Does the wind gain human attributes? Indeed, the wind, gathers up Satrapi like a tender parent, taking her away from her torments. Does it function as a symbol within the narrative, used in tandem with several other symbols? Yes, as a portative element of travel, the wind carries, but it also blends into the form of a dancer, and these combinations carry with them the strength of emotional affect. Symbolism and metonymy combine here as separate and unfied entities that figuratively develop the reader's understanding of Satrapi's subjectivity.

¹⁶⁷ Here I use an understanding of *Metonymy* derived from John Fiske and John Hartley's *Reading Television* (Routledge, 1978) which states; "A metonym is the application of a mere attribute of an object to the whole object. For instance many Londoners call their city 'The Smoke.' Smoke used to be a characteristic part of the London scene, resulting in the smogs which were called (metaphorically) 'pea-soupers.' It came to signify the city as a whole, but this time the relationship between the signifier (Smoke) and its signified (London) is *contiguous* rather than asserted."

With Satrapi's use of anthropomorphism we are not witnessing a specifically re-presented event. In this excerpt of her work there is no attempt at visual mimesis in the presentation. We are examining a metonymic representation, a pictorial combination of attributes that *represent* two distinct places (Italy and Spain). In Guy Delisle's exploitation of an architectural structure for his narrative, we witness, at least in part, the re-presentation of a location with a real-world referent.

Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* offers an entirely different emotional relation to the landscape in which he works. On page 182, he presents a sketch of the sundial above Zoharei Chama Synagogue (known as the "Sunrise Synagogue", the Sundial Building, or the Mahane Yehuda Clock Tower), situated at 92 Jaffa Road in Jerusalem, Israel (see Fig. 19). The "Sunrise Synagogue" is a real building. It

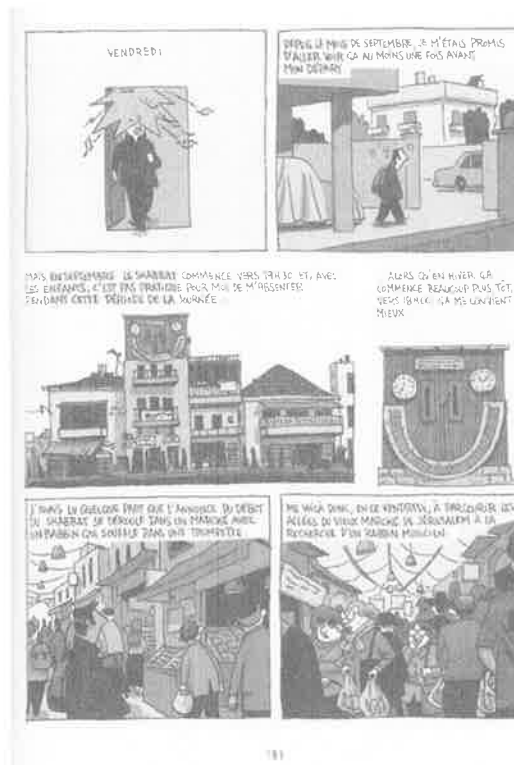


Fig. 19 - Anthropomorphic landscape in Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*.

features two clocks at either corner of the top of the building, and has a large sundial directly underneath them. In *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, this synagogue is presented without context – we are not given the name or location of the building. Rather, Delisle writes about how on this particular day in the year that he spends in Jerusalem with his family, he has the chance to go to market alone and witness the weekly announcement of the Sabbath performed by a rabbi blowing a horn. This scene is merely a background detail that Delisle (diegetically) walks by on his way to the market – it functions diegetically in that the narrator intervenes directly to tell the story.

The smiley face is almost impossible to ignore. And yet, if I had not told you that this was a sundial or if you were not already familiar with this structure, you would probably never have guessed that Delisle's drawing was representative of an existing structure. This is the only scene in his book that expressly uses an anthropomorphic visual trope to relate Delisle's emotions to his audience. Neither of the two panels featuring this building contains representations of Delisle himself, however the panels immediately preceding and following do. In one sense, the smiling synagogue is framed by Delisle's presence in each frame except those featuring the synagogue, while his narration spans the entire page, uniting the drawings under a common textual segment. His absence from the pertinent panels, combined with continuous narration, suggests a substitution of Delisle's personage for that of the synagogue. In his touristic mode of exploration, Delisle has found something to which he relates – a structure. This structure has a double purpose; it

contributes to the mosaic of discovering the sights of Jerusalem and expresses Delisle's enjoyment of anticipation. The sundial synagogue as anthropomorphic trope is further layered by the narrative detail that, finally, Delisle has a moment away from his two small children. Delisle's drawing is not specific enough to show the details of the building that would give us the exact location and significance of this structure, yet it adequately performs the task of transmitting to his readers the emotion he experiences at that instant through a visual anthropomorphic trope.

Delisle's drawing visually depicts a moment in which he passes the Sunrise Synagogue, while it is safe to state that Satrapi never flew on a magic carpet beyond the realm of her imagination. Both examples perfectly and complexly incorporate the anthropomorphic trope. While one incorporates a certain degree of realism, the other relies on fantastic elements. One is mimetic while the other, symbolic. Yet both insist upon subjective emotional liaisons; both attempt to draw the reader in by creating a series of relatable events with which a reader may sympathize or empathize.

If so much of interpretation of drawn images, particularly of those that represent non-humans may be so bound up in anthropocentrism, what can be said of photographs that represent non-humans? According to semiotician and comics scholar Jan Baetens, the photograph and the drawing in narrative sequence vary primarily in the nature of the image, but are not that distant from each other when employed in narrative sequences that attempt to incorporate images representing

reality as opposed to *unreality*.¹⁶⁸ If we accept this notion, then we can accept a certain degree of complementarity that exists between photographs and drawings that, placed in narrative sequence together, aid in unifying the two aesthetically disparate mediums for the creation of a single, integrated narrative. Baetens identifies two examples of mixed *bande dessinée/roman-photo* that employ this alchemy differently: Emmanuel Guibert's *Le Photographe* and Benoît Peeters and François Schuiten's *L'Enfant Penchée*.¹⁶⁹ Baetens restricts his exploration of the two mediums to aesthetic distinctions. In the case of *Le Photographe*, in particular, he notes the manner in which the transitions from one medium to the other occur, how Guibert attempts to fill in the spaces of Lefèvre's narrative when no photographs were available or when textual narration was necessary, and what Guibert's attempt at this sort of collaborative effort means for the future of mixed media works. The photographer's image is a slice of time, of a landscape, a slice of a past reality. As such, the image created by snapping a photograph is surrounded by lacunas and the image that is retained becomes a fragment of an exact representation of what is no longer. In effect, the photograph is a symbol imbued with the photographer's temporary tunnel vision. It is an artifact and is complete with all the emotion that went into its production.

Lefèvre transmits his emotional state through his photographs. In all of Lefèvre's photographs of landscapes there is an indelibly personal sentiment that

¹⁶⁸ Paraphrase from the opening paragraphs of the second chapter of *Pour le roman-photo*. See Jan Baetens, *Pour le roman-photo* (Bruxelles: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2010), 95.

¹⁶⁹ For our purposes we shall neglect any examination of the latter here, as it does not meet the criteria set forth for analysis in this study. Had we been addressing fictional texts, it would have had a central role.

accompanies them, but one image is particularly striking because it is the only photograph that reveals Didier's primal emotion of fear, rather than the humanitarian exploits of MSF in Afghanistan, or the tragic faces of injured or exhausted people.¹⁷⁰ He expounds upon this sentiment, how it is impossible to be emotionally detached from one's subject, in an interview with Emmanuel Guibert, stating,

Je pense qu'il n'existe pas d'objectivité journalistique et pas de neutralité non plus [envers son sujet]. On a spontanément une opinion, on prend forcément parti. Et donc, on réagit[...]. [Envers les gens qui souffrent] la seule chose qu'un photographe peut leur apporter, c'est de raconter leur histoire le mieux possible [...]. Il ne m'est jamais arrivé de faire un reportage en étant totalement détaché, je ne peux pas. ¹⁷¹

The emotional connection is the driving force behind the power that the images have to encourage a sympathetic or empathetic reaction towards a subject. This same connection works on any level of emotion.

In Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Mind's Eye*, he recounts his first attempt at creating stories with a sequence of pictures. His first "picture story" appeared in a cooperative enterprise called "Magnum Photos" in 1947, and describing the function of this story and how the photographer must go about his art, he states:

The picture story involves a joint operation of the brain, the eye, and the heart. The objective of this joint operation is to depict the content of some event which is in the process of unfolding, and to communicate impressions. Sometimes a single event can be so rich in

¹⁷⁰ At the climax of *Le Photographe*, tome 3, Didier takes a picture of the landscape he sees at the top of the Kalotac mountain pass (see Fig. 20). He is in the path of a deadly storm, his horse is broken, and he thinks he is going to die from exposure. See Guibert, *Le Photographe*, tome 3, 60-61.

¹⁷¹ Guibert, *Conversations avec le photographe*, 59-60. (My transl. – "I think objectivity in journalism, as well as neutrality [towards one's subject], does not exist. Spontaneously, one has an opinion and takes sides. Therefore, one reacts [...]. [Towards those who suffer] the only thing a photographer can give them is to tell their story as well as possible [...]. I have never been able to be totally detached from a report – I can't.")

itself and its facets that it is necessary to move all around it in your search for the solution to the problems it poses – for the world is movement, and you cannot be stationary in your attitude toward something that is moving. Sometimes you light upon the picture in seconds; it might also require hours or days. But there is no standard plan, no pattern from which to work. You must be on the alert with the brain, the eye, the heart, and have a suppleness of body.¹⁷²

According to Cartier-Bresson, communicating impressions is the only way to tell the story of whatever event is unfolding. Yet he states that in order to do this, the photographer's heart must be alert.

The common point that Cartier-Bresson and Lefèvre share is clear: In order to depict the scene one photographs, one must be entirely invested, physically and emotionally. This principle, at least in this case, is applicable to all subjects, including landscape.

Comics artists and writers in general, probably have an easier time anthropomorphizing landscape in their works than a photographer does. Of course, without some narrative sequence of images and/or words, context may entirely restrict such an effort in photography, as the subject of a photograph, particularly a weather landscape, is extremely unpredictable, and therefore, difficult to control. But in a hybrid work such as Guibert, Lefèvre and Lemerrier's *Le Photographe*, some of the formal restrictions imposed by the limits of a given medium simply no longer apply. By placing the photograph in a sequence of writings and drawings, the *bande dessinée* author may frame the photograph in a context that underscores details that a reader might overlook otherwise. This is precisely what we observe in the climax of *Le Photographe*. Moreover, anthropomorphism and zoomorphism are used once

¹⁷² See Henri Cartier-Bresson, "The Decisive Moment," in *The Mind's Eye* (New York: Aperture, 1999), 23-24.

each; the singular, climactic event of the narrative in which Didier Lefèvre ascends a mountain pass by himself, and gets caught in a life-threatening situation, and his subsequent rescue by a caravan leader described as having a wolf-face. Guibert and Lefèvre's use of anthropomorphism is even further remarkable for its absence of textual accompaniment.

In the 250-page, three-volume *Le Photographe*, the only two-page spread containing a single photographic image depicts a treacherous landscape; it conveys the first steps of a descent from an icy mountain pass. A storm has moved over the landscape, and clouds filter the sun's light to varying degrees in the photograph. Didier's caravan has abandoned him at the foot of this pass, leaving him to perform the task of packing his horse, which he does not know how to do properly, and ascending the pass, which proves nearly impossible to accomplish alone and without the proper horse-packing skills. It takes Didier more than sixteen hours to surmount the sixteen-thousand-foot pass, and there, at the top of the pass, amid the freezing wind and snow, Didier is overcome with fear the moment his horse will no longer walk forward. Didier's fearful response to his mount's disobedience is a violent beating of and shouting at the exhausted animal. Once he realizes the futility and shamefulness of his actions, he unpacks the horse, feeds him, and then packs himself into survival blankets, thinking to himself how he is nearing death. Before resigning himself to death, however, he takes out a camera to photograph the place where he thought he would die and then writes a brief note to his girlfriend, Dominique (see Fig. 20).

The photograph, framed by the page itself, evokes fear on two levels: First, we know that Didier feels threatened by death, because he states, « *Je sors un de mes appareils, je prends un vingt millimètres, un très grand angle, pour photographier depuis le sol. Qu'on sache où je suis mort* ». ¹⁷³ This textual context heightens the

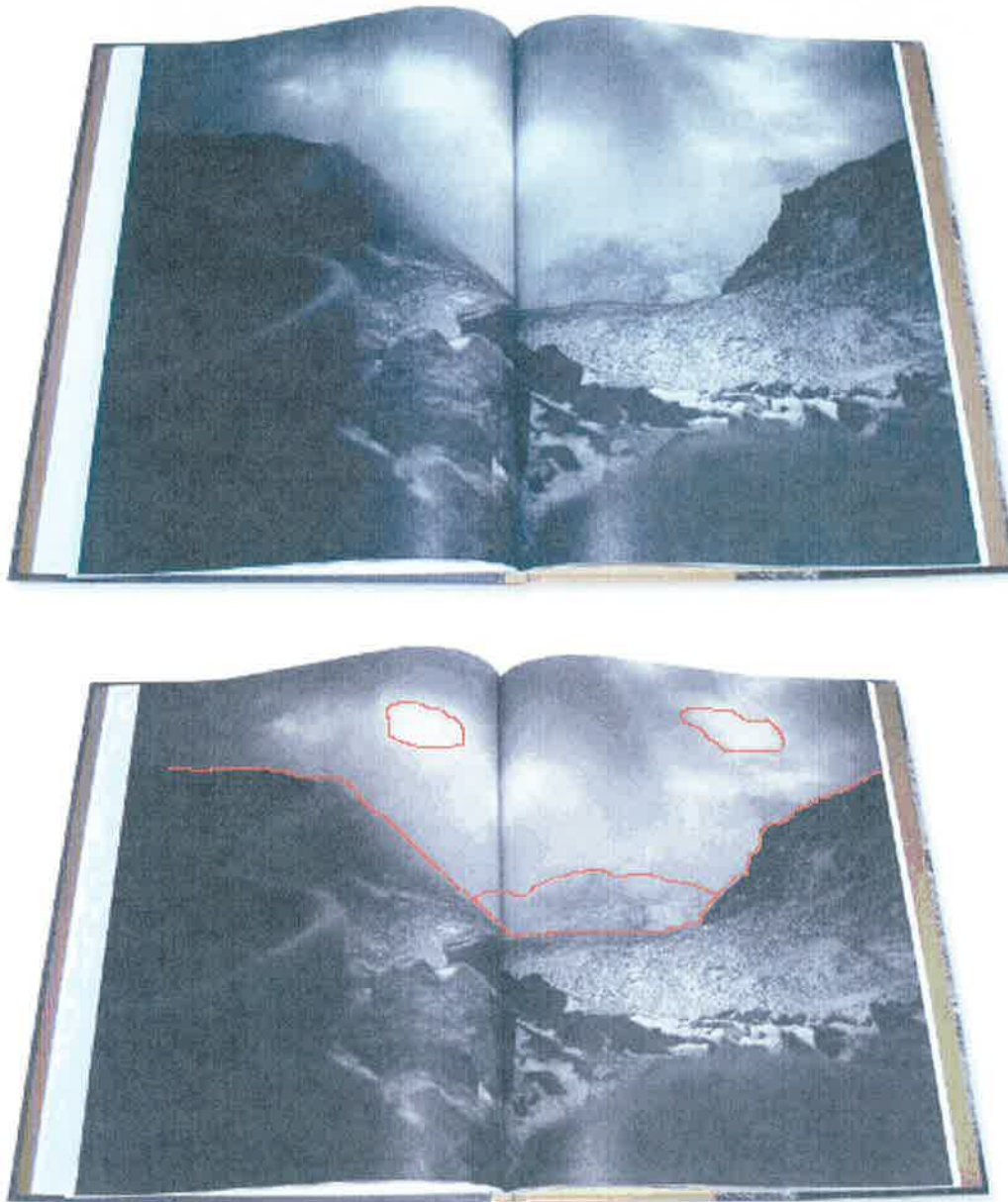


Fig. 20 - Anthropomorphic landscape in Guibert's *Le Photographe*.

¹⁷³ Guibert, *Le Photographe*, tome 3, 59. (Alexis Siegel's transl. – "I take out one of my cameras. I choose a 20-milimeter lens, a very wide angle, and shoot from the ground - to let people know where I died." *The Photographer*, 219).

reader's perception of danger, and Guibert uses it to offer the reader an occasion to sympathetically or empathetically relate to Didier's near-death experience. The second reason for this evocation of fear occurs in the reading of the image itself. Upon first impression it may seem like an ordinary, bad weather landscape. Combined with Guibert's narrative, it gives the reader a relatable context, but the most remarkable part about this image is how it is personified. The storm clouds have darkened the sky except in two large spots that happen to be more or less parallel to the top and bottom of the page, ever so slightly off-center. Are these staring eyes? The mountains on either side of the pass curl upward, creating a bowl-edged shape in the center of the page. The natural lines of the foreground and mid-ground horizon lines guide the reader's eye to this point. They seem to outline a face created between the mountains. The actual horizon is obscured by the storm, nevertheless a distant patch of rising mountains creates a darkened space immediately above the mid-ground horizon's bowl. Didier's camera is not merely capturing an image of some random storm – this storm has a face (see Fig. 20, one last time). The eyes appear as white patches of sun breaking through the clouds, parallel to each other across the two-page spread. The jaw line is formed by the nearest two rocky ridges that rise to a parallel height on both sides of the spread, connected by a foreground horizon line. The mouth appears in the valley just above that horizon line as a dark patch of distant mountains. In part, the effect of the camera angle impacts the reception of this photograph, as Lefèvre is supine and the face seems to be looming over him.

Much like Satrapi's full-page figurative depiction of her Italy-Spain vacation, Lefevre's photograph is given a central role in the narrative. At Didier's perceived dying place, Didier's eye, by chance or on purpose, captures an image of the weather ferociously menacing the landscape with its cold breath, tormenting eyes, and vicious, curled smile. This dreadful landscape's face engages an emotional reception through anthropocentrism, and exhibits a unique moment in the subjectivity of both a diegetic personage and its extra-textual model. What is most interesting is the fact that the narrator is implicit; he is not figured textually, rather we see the scene through his photographic eyes. Didier's perception of fear, even in total isolation from the human race, manifests itself in human form. This fear echoes in the following zoomorphic instance in which a passing caravan picks Didier up, rescuing him, and the leader of the caravan (described as having a wolf-face) extorts him for all of his money. Having to endure a grueling pace, unable to communicate, and sleeping very little, Didier again fears that he is approaching death, led by his captors like a lamb of slaughter. To his great relief, this does not transpire, yet the parallelism between Stevenson's fear of a man-eating wolf and Lefèvre's experience comes full-circle in zoomorphic and allusive contexts.

Summation

We have observed some of the manners in which authenticity is affected by the number of authors contributing to an autobiographical *BDRV*. Of course, there are other considerations that go into the creation of a *BDRV* and the role of the publisher, who holds significant sway over the final product, has not been fully

explored. We have also observed some of the approaches that leading academicians in comics studies have offered concerning subjectivity. Through my concept of *Allusive Arthrology* as an addition to the existing dynamic terms in *bande dessinée* semiotics, with my emphasis on anthropomorphism as an indicator of a degree of subjectivity, I have discovered and explained an efficient theoretical framework that compliments Groensteen's existing semiotics studies. Moreover, the term *Allusive Arthrology* is more suited to critical comics studies of intertextual relationships because, unlike the term *intertextuality*, *Allusive Arthrology* is not derived from the literary tradition of text-only works. Incorporating Groensteen's terminology relegates its usage to *bande dessinée*, specifically, and other hybrid forms, generally. Since *comics* is a mixture of mediums, *arthrologie* ("articulation") is simply better suited for a discussion of intertextual relationships than the term *intertextuality*.

Unlike its counterpart in text-based literature, the semiotic and formalist approaches to studying comics have remained quite persistent in academic analysis for several decades. The reasons for this stagnation, I believe, derive from three sources: (1) while autobiographical comics began (according to Groensteen) in the United States, there has been a sharp increase in the number of autobiographical comics in the European and, particularly, in the Francophone traditions in recent years; this creative production has driven the interest of academia in Europe and abroad. It appears that academicians in the United States have deferred to European authority on the matter of comics scholarship partly as a result of the absence of a comparable American interest in such production; (2) the semiotic and formalist heritage, from Barthes to Groensteen appears more unified by schools of

thought than the somewhat sporadic American approach. Although I believe American academicians are more capable in terms of creative analysis (I admit my bias here), I acknowledge that the Francophone tradition has a clearer lineage both in procedure and terminology, making the semiotic and formalist approach more accessible and efficient than other more creative approaches (like Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*); and lastly, (3) I feel like comics lags behind other scholarly traditions because it has lost the popularity contest with film. While I enjoy reading static images, there can be no question that the allure of the motion picture is stronger, better socially situated, and more accessible than the comics medium. The 'fringe' element of comics, the desire to shock audiences with content, and the rebellious nature of comics artists who actively fight against the mainstream in an endless variety of ways, does very little to situate the medium in a positive light. Nevertheless, a strong following of supporters continue to prop up the medium. Hilary Chute is a prime example of a supporter of comics culture and scholarship, and her 2010 work, *Graphic Women, Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics*, is an excellent semiotic and formalist treatment of elements both autobiographical and feminist in the comics medium. I support this semiotic and formalist movement in comics scholarship. It has a clear lineage and unifies American and European scholarship in comics. Moreover, the geometry of a comics page, the structure of images situated on that page, necessitates, in my opinion, a constant recognition of the formal constraints of the medium, and any study of comics should, therefore, always contain some consideration for this form.

CHAPTER 4 - REPRESENTATION IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL *BDRV*

The comics medium has often been the target of negative criticism. This is in part due to the fact that comics, historically, have been marketed to the youth on a global scale, but also because change in any established industry upsets the normal *status quo*, especially when that change is (in the direction of the) extreme. The United States, publicly, has always held a puritanical stance on lewdness; therefore when the images created by R. Crumb, Art Spiegelman, and Justin Green were published in the early nineteen-seventies, they were considered among the most shocking, flagrant and revolutionary of their time. The manners in which they represented sex, violence and drug use, especially, coupled with their twisted humor, and gritty graphic style pushed the boundaries of the socially acceptable, marking a shift in the character of graphic representation at the level of the image and content. Moreover, their works contained a great deal of autobiographical material, an aspect that comics had yet to explore thoroughly at the time.

Other authors, for instance, Will Eisner, sought the legitimization of the comics medium, and thus began experimenting with what he called "graphic novels." Eisner showed that he could treat adult-themed content without shocking the literary community. Conversely, authors like Guido Crepax deepened the value of literary shock by graphically translating already sexually explicit text-based works such as Marquis de Sade's *Justine* and Pauline Réage's *L'Histoire d'O* into comics form. Crepax's experiments with the literariness of both male and female

bodies graphically depicted, as opposed to textually depicted, blur the lines between comics, literature and pornography.

While these authors, and many more, experimented in their art, criticism also shifted focus. It was during this era (1960s, 70s, and 80s) that academic criticism began a more in-depth exploration of comics' formal properties, as well as the literary merits of certain works. As stated earlier, in Europe, semioticians have taken up the challenge of decoding comics - a vogue that is presently spreading throughout North American academic circles, as is evidenced by a rapidly growing number of critical comics studies published by the University Press of Mississippi, Columbia University Press, the Modern Language Association, and others. Among these new studies is a steadily growing segment dedicated to the subject of graphic representation.

As autobiographical and historical events emerge from the creative minds of comics writers, prominent academicians have, most recently, concerned themselves with the graphic representation of time. Comics challenge the linear temporality of pictorial narration because the medium primarily consists of two ostensibly incongruent mediums, text and image, combined to form meaning around a single narrative. The copious number of ways in which temporality can be represented are not the primary concern of this study, however a brief examination of their usage will provide some context for the primary corpus analyzed in this essay. Hillary Chute describes the representation of time as a spatial construct, "time as

space," in her article, "History and Graphic Representation in *Maus*." ¹⁷⁴ Her observation is perspicacious regarding the various degrees to which Spiegelman braids (using Groensteen's concept) disparate time frames together. In one instance she analyzes Spiegelman's layering of multiple temporalities in a single panel, on the last page of the section entitled "Prisoner on the Hell Planet," originally published in 1973 in *Short Order Comix #1*, which simultaneously depicts, descending the panel, Spiegelman's mother (Anja) dead in a bathtub, a pile of dead bodies next to a wall with a swastika, Spiegelman and Anja reading a bedtime story, Anja's hands preparing for suicide, and Spiegelman sitting with his head in his hands, dressed in a prison uniform, with four exclamatory texts roughly separating each image from the others. The texts read, "Menopausal depression," "Hitler did it!," "Mommy!," and "Bitch," respectively. Chute remarks how these moments, disorganized historically, share a single panel and thus should be "[...] understood by the conventions of the comics medium to represent one moment in time." ¹⁷⁵ What she fails to mention in her article is that the entire panel is a unified representation of Spiegelman's scattered thought, as the narrated preface to the panel reads, "...but, for the most part, I was left alone with my thoughts...". The privileged position of Spiegelman's graphic self-representation in a prison uniform, sitting at the bottom right corner of the page, facing left, with the aforementioned images spatially situated above him, appearing disproportionate in relation to prisoner Spiegelman, suggests further that the images are thoughts emanating from his head [although not explicitly, and that

¹⁷⁴ See Hillary Chute, "History and Graphic Representation in *Maus*," in *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer, Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 340-362.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 346.

the figurations of Spiegelman in a prison uniform, as Chute keenly observes, are likely representative of his present feelings (at the time of "Prisoner on the Hell Planet's" initial publication) concerning his inheriting of a Holocaust survivor's identity].¹⁷⁶

What Chute has exposed is another important piece of the semiotic puzzle that makes comics an intelligible, literary language. In the comics medium we can visualize time as space [time = space]. Of course, as Spiegelman and others have shown, temporality may be manipulated spatially on the page. When temporality is linearly represented, however, the parameters of this formula shift slightly. Wherein 'time' is equivalent to the temporal setting of a given representation and 'space' is equivalent to the order of time over a series of panels, temporality represented in a linear fashion abides by a reworded formula [representation = time elapsed]. For the most part, the formula [representation = time elapsed] is the predominantly adhered to structure in *bande dessinée récit de voyage autobiographique*.

In such a limited field, autobiographical *BDRVs* heighten the reader's awareness to time and specific events that bear witness to the veracity of their narrative out of necessity. To do otherwise might lessen, to a certain degree, the conditions necessary for plausibility.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, while Rodolphe Töpffer and Charles Baudelaire may have "[...] rebutt[ed] the fundamental (traditional, classical) idea

¹⁷⁶ For those who have not read *Maus*, Art Spiegelman's father and mother were Auschwitz survivors, and Spiegelman often discusses his having 'inherited' the legacy of this tragedy from them. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* is an autobiographical treatment of writing his father's biographical survival story.

¹⁷⁷ 'Plausibility,' as a necessary ingredient for a work of this nature, is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 above.

that the function of art is to imitate nature," certain types of art, autobiographical *BDRV* being one of them, necessarily function through easily recognizable imitation. At the same time, however, Töpffer and Baudelaire's anticipation that "[...] the modernist idea that art transforms nature, does nature over, transcends and bypasses it, and that art obeys its own laws independent of nature," certainly hold true in regards to comics.¹⁷⁸ In comics, generally, we see the flattening of the image, emphasis on certain features and de-emphasis on other, less narratively crucial features. We often see text usage that braids images together. In other instances, the use of images that braid other images together, either through employing repetition and transformation, through a privileged position on the page, through a multi-panel sequence in which a single image is broken into several parts, or some other combination. The drawn images in autobiographical *BDRV* both imitate and transform nature. As such, we observe the linear passage of time in our reading of panels, over a pre-specified period of time, more or less precise, and, rarely if ever, encounter temporal interruptions, excepting, obviously, the gutters between each panel. Thus we may understand autobiographical *BDRV* as generally imitative of the linearity of time in nature. Simultaneously, time is isolated in a particular framework (the entire work itself being representative of this partitioning of time) quartered into manageable sections as chapters or large sections and/or sliced into sub-headings, and diced into consumable portions (panels). Therein we observe the continuous state of time (nature) transformed into a fixed series of images,

¹⁷⁸ Quotes from David Kunzle's article, "Rodolphe Töpffer's Aesthetic Revolution," in *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 17.

subordinate to the reader. *BDRV autobiographique*, therefore, illustrate this duality of temporal representation, as linear and fragmented.

While Chute has certainly underscored valuable details in representing time, any detail within a comics panel could be considered a temporal marker if an author is sensitive enough to the codices he employs. Due to the linear nature of autobiographical *BDRVs*, we observe representations of the self and landscape as being temporal markers themselves. There is little need to embellish such a narrative with anything more than the development of these two paradigms in order to establish a cohesive temporal setting. Due to the specific formal limits imposed on the genre of autobiographical *BDRV*, we will isolate and consider two representational paradigms: representations of the self, which, by virtue of the author's separation from the familiarity of his culture, largely comprise representations of the self-as-*other*, and representation of landscape. For our purposes, we will begin with a simple explanation of how time is represented in the works analyzed herein.

Temporality in *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, *L'Intruse*, and *Le Photographe*

In Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, the passage of time occurs in strips written about anecdotal occurrences that may happen in a matter of minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and seasons during one year. Delisle selectively recounts instances that he found noteworthy during his stay and, having divided them into monthly chapters, the reader encounters an approximated temporal progression. Having previously worked in animation, Delisle's attention is attuned to minute

details and actions and, in a sociological manner, he dissects the distinguishing characteristics of individuals and groups that he encounters, a process that he applies to his auto-representation as well. His works *Shenzhen* and *Pyongyang* are not as neatly organized. Those two works merely indicate how much time he spent in the country, and large, loosely unified segments of the text are separated from each other by the occasional full-page panel. In all of Delisle's works, his arrival/departure and the changing landscape, as well as his progressive familiarity with certain local mores, and his adaptation and confrontation to those patterns serve as temporal markers.

Roannie and Oko arrange the passage of time in *L'Intruse* according to 'visits.' From volume to volume, Roannie visits Jerusalem and the surrounding areas under different contexts and circumstances. The first is entitled *Palestine: la découverte*, in which she attempts to "discover" this region of the world on a set of guided tours. The tours underscore activist characters that join together in protest of the Jewish settlements in Palestinian lands. In the second volume, *Palestiniens: peuple invisible?*, Roannie visits a large number of Palestinians who have been reduced to living in rubble as a result of the bombing caused by the defense of Israeli settlements.¹⁷⁹ In the third volume, *Les Israéliens*, Roannie visits Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, and some of the surrounding areas with her Jewish friend, Héléna. Together, the two encounter a variety of Jewish perspectives of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Roannie, in what appears to be an earnest effort to learn about both sides of the

¹⁷⁹ Roannie and Oko never mention Joe Sacco in their work. It is my assumption, however, that their involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict and their *bande dessinée* exploits here were likely inspired by Joe Sacco's work.

conflict, confronts these perspectives with questions regarding the Israeli annexation of Palestinian homes. Her combative stance towards Israel is not lost on several of the people she meets, calling into question whether or not she really seeks to understand both sides of the conflict.¹⁸⁰ The fourth volume, *Gaza, Carnet de non-voyage* finds Roannie aboard an activist-filled boat, ready to interrupt the Israeli blockade of Gaza in the Summer of 2011. The entire volume is essentially a discussion amongst the passengers about what to do when encountering Israeli soldiers, and culminates in their relatively peaceful arrest and the removal of their boat from Mediterranean waters by Israeli Defense Force (IDF) agents. Temporal Representation is arranged therefore, at one level, according to visits, and at another level according to the progressively more activist positioning Roannie adopts as she returns for each visit.

For *Le Photographe*, the passage of time is framed by Didier's departure from France and his return to France, in a highly specific time frame. Divided into three major sections, each a few weeks long, *Le Photographe* examines: (1) Didier's initiation and voyage to the remote Afghan villages that MSF services; (2) a one month stint photographing the doctors at work in a hospital they established; and (3) Didier's return voyage separated from the MSF group, disconnected from the MSF group's help in navigating Afghan culture. The reader is fortunate to have Didier's abundant photographic perspective which, in addition to providing a more

¹⁸⁰ Roannie addresses the issue of her own self-implication in the Palestinian cause at the end of this volume. She declares herself in support of peace. How she proposes to advance 'peace' is left unaddressed. It is clear, however, from the activism she demonstrates in the previous two volumes as well as the fourth, that Roannie chooses to promote peace by obstructing the Israeli Defense Force through organized protests.

intimate context than Guibert's drawings, underscores the linearity of time represented, and probably largely dictated the degree to which Guibert could elaborate on certain aspects of the narrative. The developing characters, changing both physically and in temperament throughout the narrative, are the only real temporal markers, as the figurations, both drawn and photographic, of the landscape itself are simply too complex to use as temporal markers.

I have specifically chosen the three above-mentioned works, as opposed to any others, because their diverse authorship, along with their variety in technique and the way they have been marketed and received, are broad enough to establish a stylistic standard across the works and narrow enough to the specificity of this study. On the subject of authorship, these three works cover individual, dual, and multiple authorships. In this sample, we also have a variety of viewpoints from different genders, nationalities, and professional backgrounds, two from France and one from Canada, one journalist, one activist, and the more passive viewpoint of the chronicler. Technically, our sample encompasses the widest variety in the fewest possible examples. Delisle's work is entirely hand-drawn, and while he may use photographic references, he does not use tracing techniques. Guibert, Lefèvre and Lemerrier's work is a combination of actual photographs, contact sheets, and drawings. Roannie and Oko's work is predominantly traced photographs with graphic approximations for characters placed in strategic locations in order to help

develop characters and narratives.¹⁸¹ Our sample even limits diversity in destination of the traveler, for Guibert's work covers Afghanistan and Pakistan, Delisle's work covers Jerusalem-proper while Roannie's work centers on conflict zones outside of Jerusalem. Both Delisle and Roannie treat many of the same areas in Jerusalem, and both works were composed around the same time period, however the interactions depicted are entirely different in the two works. In addition, the perspective of two different persons treating the same territory at the same time offers us sharp contrasts that will open robust discussions of political and social motivation for writing.

Representation of the Self and Landscape

While studies of the representation of time in *bande dessinée* reveal a variety of formal properties at work, self-representations and representations of the landscape are more specific to the *bande dessinée récit de voyage autobiographique*. Here we are concerned with how those two forms of representation interact with each other over the course of the narrative. In order for the two to interact, narrative sequences must be constructed in which both types of representation play major roles, thereby applying Groensteen's theory of braiding (*tressage*) on a very fundamental basis.

¹⁸¹ Assuming the comics market continues to expand in the direction foreseen here, that is, that autobiographical travel narratives will emerge from all corners of the comics world, an expansion of this essay should comprise works that include works from the rest of the Francophone world, and as such should deal with a variety of other issues including post-colonialism, transnationalism, immigration and migration.

Self-representation is a fundamental trait of the autobiographical *bande dessinée*. The autobiographical *BDRV*, however, is treated somewhat differently than other autobiographies. Lejeune's standard description of an autobiography applies fairly well across mediums, for no matter the medium the reader observes the evolution of the self's personality on display, whereas within the autobiographical *BDRV* genre, the reader is given a limited profile of the author's personality and a limited timeframe in which this personality interacts within a culture. The author is obliged to mediate impressions about another culture from his own culture (assumedly his target readership), and must do so with his own flair. Furthermore, in the case of more than one author, both must maintain the appropriate register for the context without creating discrepancies through which plausibility becomes suspect.

It is without question that the most repeated subject of representation observed in every autobiographical *BDRV* is that of the self. But in *BDRV autobiographique*, the reader encounters three visions of that self: The first is the author's self-impressions (generally transmitted to the reader as both privileged textual narration and as multiple self-portraits throughout the work); the second is the author's own impression of the culture he is visiting (his impressions limitedly expose his own perceived identity in which he is either similar or dissimilar to said culture); and the third is the author's perceptions of the views that native inhabitants have of him and his culture (generally, although not exclusively, in the form of textual anecdote with a contextualized image). The former of these appears to treat aesthetic, superficial characteristics of the author, particularly in regards to

the body, and can have a strong pictorial component, whereas the latter two depend largely on narrative sequence, and do not necessarily rely on images. While the diegetic self may be the most pictorially represented entity in this genre, the textual presence of the represented self may be somewhat overlooked.¹⁸²

In those hundreds of self-portraits over the course of an autobiographical *BDRV*, an author depicts himself in a limited range of capacities, one or more of which may be as a person unrecognizable to himself (due to some physical change, as we shall see with Didier's character in *Le Photographe*), or, as is usually the case, juxtaposed to others around him, effectively contrasting one culture with another, or both. The reasons for this recognition as an *other* are quite simple; the author is *dépaysé*, removed from his native context, and having only himself as a referent to the realm of the familiar, the author looks inward at himself, grows aware of the ways in which he is vulnerable, the ways in which he is limited in and by his new surrounding, and, of course, how those realizations make him feel.¹⁸³ Visually, this occurs as an instance in which the author's body, or at the very least some feature of the author's body, is isolated from other bodies or juxtaposed to other bodies. More often than not, the images are accompanied by some text-based context. We shall see in our examination of Guy Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* that Delisle is an *other* even amidst an organization of *others*. Likewise, in *Le Photographe*, Didier recognizes his vulnerability as soon as he separates from *Médecins Sans Frontières*,

¹⁸² Below I treat these three categories of self-representation in my analysis of Delisle, Roannie, and Guibert's works, respectively. See *infra.*, 184.

¹⁸³ The French term '*dépaysé*' connotes a removal from one's habitual surroundings.

Landscape is typically less represented than the self in a given *BDRV*, despite the emphasis on travel, yet, for its employment in the genre, it is far more likely to have a broad diegetic impact. As the veritable stage upon which all narration takes place, the author's diegetic *dépaysment* supplies the reader with a conceivable space in which to orient oneself. It is both a frame and a cast for the interactions of the protagonist with others. Interestingly, only a few images depicting landscapes are necessary in order to establish such a space, and even more interesting is how disorienting an unfamiliar drawn landscape can be to a reader if the author saturates his work with landscapes. When landscape is depicted in relation to characters, landscape becomes a character itself, interacting with other characters according to circumstance. Landscape, like the weather, often shapes the people it touches, for the personages who inhabit the landscape are like water filling a jug slowly, taking the shape of its vessel.¹⁸⁴ As such, Landscape has the potential to mold the body and the mind. Here, we will treat landscape as both a space and a character.¹⁸⁵

Landscape as Space and Character

When I use the term landscape in this dissertation, I am not specifically referring to an image representing untamed land in isolation, nor do I intend by its usage necessarily to invoke a skyline, a cityscape, rolling hills, coastlines, or

¹⁸⁴ *Supra.*, Chapter three, "**Anthropomorphic Landscape.**"

¹⁸⁵ 'Landscape,' to me, does not exclude images of places that have been tamed by man. Images of cities, to varying degrees, have a tendency to impose themselves structurally, and certainly play a role in narrative development. Furthermore, the image of a body of water, by my estimation, is a landscape. In the contexts in which I am interested, landscapes can be characters that impose themselves narratively or spaces that provide an empty vessel for other characters to fill.

anything specifically limiting the scope of the word. I use the term to signify the comic artist's attempt at graphically depicting a specific place on Earth, a place that will serve his need to situate his narrative, a place that gives the reader some idea of the environment that surrounds the action and the characters in a narrative. W.J.T. Mitchell's words on the subject resonate well: "Landscape could be seen as the first cognitive encounter with a place, and an apprehension of its spatial vectors (thus, an appreciation of landscape may well include a reading - or an inability to read - its narrative tracks or symbolic features)." ¹⁸⁶ Although Mitchell's insight as to the first encounter with landscape is perspicacious in its own right, as we shall see, the autobiographical *BDRV* landscape is almost always more than "the first cognitive encounter," for it is often revisited during the course of the narrative. The artist's use of that image situates the reader visually and places the character and narrative in an identifiable context. Whether of the city or the countryside, the mountains, deserts or seas, tamed or untamed land, 'landscape' connotes an environment, no matter what size, that the narrative fills.

I use the term 'space' in an equally deliberate manner. 'Space,' according to my understanding, in the context of this study of autobiographical *BDRVs*, is the area in the narrative where characters are placed. Once it has been established where the narrative will take place in the landscape, the characters or personages that the reader will interpret as filling that space can begin occupation and interaction with

¹⁸⁶ See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Preface to the Second Edition of *Landscape and Power*," in *Landscape and Power, Second Edition*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002 (1994)), x. For autobiographical *BDRVs*, the revisiting of a given landscape, often under different circumstances, invites the reader to re-interpret the landscape as a narrative property. The effect is similar to that of repetition in poetry. *Infra.*, footnote 223.

the landscape. 'Landscape as space,' therefore provides the reader with context and gives the reader a specific environment with specific characters to observe over the course of reading.

'Landscape as character,' on the other hand, implies that the landscape itself interacts with the characters. As a character, *Landscape* comes into play at the first use of a landscape image. The reader immediately begins the process of 'closure', imagining the interactions of the characters and how they situate themselves in the landscape.¹⁸⁷ 'Landscape as character', therefore, constitutes the reader's observation of narrative events specifically related to the landscape.¹⁸⁸ As we shall see, landscapes in narrative sequence are imbued with power. In Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* and Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse*, for example, landscape possesses a semiotic power of exclusion or inclusion, in that the presence of the Wall of Separation (the Israeli-built wall that divides Jewish from Palestinian territories, or the wall that Israelis use to expand their territory at the expense of the Palestinians, whichever you may choose) as well as restrictions on visiting certain holy sites like the Tomb of the Patriarchs or the Temple Mount are used to direct certain narrative actions and, as a result, the reader's exposure to certain

¹⁸⁷ I am adopting Scott McCloud's term 'closure' from *Understanding Comics*, 69.

¹⁸⁸ In this dissertation I will not treat the use of landscape as a narrative medium that cannot be manipulated by the author. Although the name 'autobiographical *BDRV*' implies that the events depicted really happened, the characters are real people, the landscape exists and is not altered through authorial manipulation, landscape, once transformed into a narrative tool, separates from the authenticity of the real experience. Stated more succinctly, an actual experience, once transformed into a text, is no longer an actual experience; rather, it is a telling of an actual experience, and therefore incurs a degree of subjectivity.

geographies.¹⁸⁹ In Guibert's *Le Photographe*, the depicted landscapes are vast, open spaces, treacherous at times, overwhelming and awe-inspiring, sparsely settled and mostly indistinct to the uninitiated reader. They most often serve as natural passageways from one remote place to another, accessible in some areas, impassable in others. When the landscape interacts, be it restrictively, or permissively, the landscape acts as a character exercising its power. Landscapes are used both as signs of an authority as well as the authority itself.¹⁹⁰ When landscape is presented as a vessel where characters (or even objects for that matter) are situated, the landscape is acting as a space. 'Landscape as space' can possess the semiotic value of situating characters and events without emphasis on interaction, while 'landscape as character' necessitates an exercise of that semiotic value through interaction. Therefore, a simple hierarchical structure exists in the usage of these terms; from lowest to highest narrative layer, that order is 'landscape,' 'landscape as space,' and 'landscape as character.'

A Brief Word on Methodology

The two above-mentioned paradigms (the self and landscape) operate in three representational modes. They can be considered and understood at the

¹⁸⁹ See Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 69. In this example, Delisle attempts to visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim holy sites in one day. He succeeds in visiting the Saint-Sepulchre (Christian) and the Wailing Wall (Jewish) but when he arrives at the Dome of the Rock (Muslim), he is turned away by a security guard who states that it is closed.

¹⁹⁰ W.J.T. Mitchell identifies and explores several properties of landscape aesthetics, including, but not limited to, "Landscape is not a genre of art but a medium" and "Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package" that were particularly helpful in deriving the statements made in the text about landscape and autobiographical *BDRVs*. See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power, Second Edition*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002 (1994)), 5-34.

textual level (linguistic) independent of the visual level (pictorial), and as a combination of both levels (visual-verbal), depending on the circumstances. While I am not explicitly treating each of these representational modes separately in the following analysis, it is important to note their existence and be familiar with the technical distinctions between the three, since one rests in the realm of pure abstraction, dependent entirely upon the reader's familiarity with the content (text), one is a form of a flattened pictorial abstraction that freezes selected moments (visual), and one combines the two in another creature altogether (visual-verbal). My objective here is not limited to identifying strategies that our authors use for each of these, but rather how the employment of a given strategy contributes to varied readings of seemingly straightforward passages.

We will begin our discussion of the self and landscape in the following the order: (1) Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*; (2) Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse*; and (3) Guibert, Lefèvre and Lemercier's *Le Photographe*. For each work, the order of the following discussion topics will be maintained: (1) Authorial Self-Impressions and *Othering* and (2) Landscape as Space and Character. I chose this order, beginning with Delisle, because he is an *auteur complet*, while the other two rely on collaborators. The order of my analysis of individual and multiple authors in chapter three, is therefore, maintained.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, each discussion topic will be addressed according to the chronology set forth in the narratives, respectively, so as to develop the progression of a unified concept over the course of the narration. I

¹⁹¹ I felt it was more perspicacious to place my analysis of *Le Photographe* at the end of this chapter so that *L'Intruse*, a minimally known work by a first-time comics creator, was not the final work to be discussed. That statement, in no way, is intended to undermine Roannie and Oko's contribution to the *BDRV autobiographique*.

will examine authorial self-impressions and *othering* together because, obviously, in an autobiographical comics travel narrative, the author will represent himself very often. If the author is travelling to a country or territory that he or she is not familiar with, then the author should feel like an outsider.

Authorial Self-Impressions and *Othering*: *Chroniques de Jérusalem*

Guy Delisle uses a variety of subtle techniques to craft his diegetic self. When he draws himself, the most minute of details may accentuate the mood in a given scene, from the angle at which he positions his character to the slouch in his posture, the features of his drawn head, or the choice of text-based tools available to him (i.e. speech balloon vs. narration box, roman lettering vs. symbols). Here we shall examine some of the more poignant self-representations in *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, namely ones that treat Delisle, the personage, as a subject and an object simultaneously.

As protagonist of his autobiographical comics travel narrative, Delisle is necessarily his own subject. Yet, to the natives of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, Delisle is an outsider, a foreign object. He is aware of his dual capacity, but graphically does not treat it any differently than he would for a work of far less-reaching social significance.¹⁹² His personal character's drawn features are more reductive than those of his other characters, a technique discussed earlier that permits what was identified as a 'theory of substitution' to take effect on the

¹⁹² Although there is a clear evolution in Delisle's style from his earliest works to the present, the cartoonish lines remain a signature feature throughout his comics production.

reader.¹⁹³ The clear-line appearance of his drawings (in his most recent two *BDRVs* only) creates a high degree of accessibility to the reader. With a rather limited color palette, Delisle creates a diegetic environment that emphasizes certain features (particularly, but not limited to, the representation of sound) without necessarily de-emphasizing others.¹⁹⁴ While Delisle's style may appear cartoonish, his sensitivity to subject and detail, both textual and visual, attest to his being far more than a mere cartoonist.

As a personage, Delisle attempts to walk the line between participant in a culture and observer of a culture. In her article exploring graphic novels and the Holy Land, Nina Fischer asserts that Delisle occupies an "intermediary position" as "half-traveler, half-resident, but neither Palestinian nor Israeli."¹⁹⁵ While Fischer suggests that Delisle positions himself as a spectator of culture, I would argue that Delisle is a sampler of culture in an ancillary position. What appears touristic, even somewhat kitschy at times, is in fact Delisle's navigation through the culture of Jerusalem *as an auxiliary part of it*.¹⁹⁶ In his previous three major travel-themed works he was unable to ever pass for a native; nevertheless he spent the majority of his time abroad caught-up in the day-to-day activities of each place he lived,

¹⁹³ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 28-33. See also in chapter three of this study, *supra.*, 150.

¹⁹⁴ See Figs. 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 19, and 21-30, for examples of Delisle's limited usage of color.

¹⁹⁵ Fischer, Nina. "Graphic Novels Explore an (Un-)Holy Land." In *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC*. No. 6, December 2013. 18. <http://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=344>.

¹⁹⁶ Fischer accepts Jelena Buliä's observation of the distinction between Joe Sacco's work and Delisle's work: "Whereas Sacco has access to the (private) lives and stories of others, Delisle remains on the sides, as a spectator and an outside observer." (Quoted in Fischer's article, originally published in Jelena Buliä's article, "The Travelling Cartoonist: Representing the Self and the World in Guy Delisle's Graphic Travel Narratives." *Narodna umjetnost: Croatian Journal for Ethnology and Folklore Research* 49/1 (2012), 63. Compared to Joe Sacco's work, Delisle certainly appears to be more of an observer than an active participant. I find the distinction to be one of degree, however, since a closer reading of Delisle's work reveals that he is rather acutely attuned to the nature of his involvement in other cultures.

seemingly respecting the adage "When in Rome, do as the Romans." However, in this fourth chronicle, Delisle discovers that with the simple donning of certain clothes he can transform from tourist into passable-as-native, all the while continuing his pursuit of the everyday resident lifestyle. He is a flexible traveler, and wears whatever coat suits him best for the moment, yet Delisle makes it abundantly clear that he is an individual apart from those with whom he interacts.

In a three-page excerpt from Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* entitled "*La conquête de l'ouest*" the reader encounters the first of Delisle's many encounters with a culture at odds with, or at least, suspicious of, his own.¹⁹⁷ In the sixth panel of the first page under this heading, Delisle depicts himself as ignorant of the uncomfortable glance an Arab woman is casting in his direction as they ride side-by-side in a minibus to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁸ The title can be read as a play on two understandings of the French word '*ouest*'. The first is rather obvious - Delisle's goal in this excerpt is effectively to find and visit West-Jerusalem. After getting lost in a couple of indistinct neighborhoods, and navigating the minibus system, he finds his destination. Discovering West-Jerusalem is the first layer of the "conquest." The other layer is more subtle, and directly related to the inclusion of the single panel with the uncomfortable Arab woman sitting next to him. Delisle is unaffected by her

¹⁹⁷ The English translation of this excerpt from Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem* provides the following title: "Going West," omitting the translation of the word *conquête*. Etymologically this title is in line with Ménard's 1876 usage of the term to designate "discovery," as in "the discovery of natural elements." More frequently, however, the word *conquête* is understood as "domination" or "mastery" over a people, land, animal or product of the earth. The English title obfuscates the true meaning of the French title, which is, itself, confounding, as it could be translated as either "Conquering the West" or "Conquest of the West." See "*conquête*." Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales. Nancy, France. 2012 (accessed Feb. 7, 2014). <http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/conquête>

¹⁹⁸ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 21.

discomfort. This panel exemplifies a unique aspect of Delisle's ability to capture nuance. He acts simultaneously as the naive, uninitiated visitor to this foreign land, and as the extremely well-travelled, practiced voyager. His apparent naivety is a trap, for he is acutely aware (acute because Delisle has the wherewithal to notice it and include it in his narrative) of the woman and her discomfort. This nuance points to his own experience in navigating such awkward situations. Why be bothered by the discomfort of others if one is minding one's own business? His mastery over discomfort (both of being an *other* and of that projected by the woman, assumedly of Near-Eastern origin) is the second, easily overlookable, conquest of the West.

Occasionally Delisle positions himself as an *other* among *others* during his stay in Jerusalem. The reader finds Delisle in attendance at a expatriate party hosted by O.C.H.A. (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), a United Nations entity that provides statistics on checkpoints, roadblocks, occupied areas, and extensions to the wall, amongst other things.¹⁹⁹ In the final two panels dedicated to the party, we see Delisle alone in the middle of a crowd. He thinks to himself (in a narration box), « *Il doit y avoir au moins 300 expatriés rassemblés ici. Et un bon paquet de ces gens vivent dans mon quartier* ». ²⁰⁰ The last panel, in the privileged position before the turn of the page, appears as a zoomed-out, bird's-eye view of the party, and in the midst of the gathering Delisle's characteristic triangular-shaped nose points out, as he vocalizes (now, in a speech bubble, directly

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 31. Helge Dascher's transl. – "There's at least 300 expats here. Many of whom live in my neighborhood." See Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles from the Holy City*, trans. Helge Dascher (Canada, Drawn & Quarterly, 2012) 33.

addressing the reader), « *Mais alors, pourquoi j'en vois jamais un seul qui se balade à pied ou qui prend le bus* »?²⁰¹ Delisle's uneasiness with the O.C.H.A. expatriate scene stems from his inability to comprehend why no one there lives the life of an ordinary civilian. Typically, Delisle uses speech balloons when a character verbally interacts with another character; however, here, in the middle of a crowd, Delisle interacts with no one other than the reader. Without explicitly stating as much, Delisle finds the expatriates that O.C.H.A. attracts to be out of touch with the common man (himself). Hence, Delisle addresses the reader directly, as if to suggest that the only person who can conceivably relate to him is the reader. This is the only instance in which such a direct address occurs throughout *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. He simply cannot relate to the people there, despite their similar social status in Jerusalem.

In another instance, Delisle finds himself relating very well to an unlikely group. One evening while he is alone in his apartment, he hears something going on



Fig. 21 - Muslim wedding party in Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 31. Helge Dascher's transl. – "So how come I've never seen a single one out walking or taking a bus." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 33.

outside in the courtyard below his window. What he sees is a wedding party, presumably Arab (although never explicitly stated in the text), that is composed of all men, and where no alcohol is being consumed. The men are dancing with each other, when suddenly, over the loudspeaker, the call to prayer halts their celebration for a moment. Delisle remarks how bizarre it is to see the men dancing with each other, and imagines his displeasure at getting invited to such a wedding party. In the final two panels he returns to his observation, stating, « *Pas une seule fille* », ²⁰² The next panel is almost identically drawn, and the speech balloon reads, « *Un vrai festival de Bandes Dessinées* », underscoring the similarity of the crowd at an Arab marriage party and the Comics conventions that Delisle is accustomed to attending.²⁰³ The only graphically distinct feature from one panel to the next, here, with the exception of the text balloon's size and contents, is the slight deformation of Delisle's hair. In the final panel, the left side of his hair has somewhat sunken, almost as if his head has deflated just a little (see Fig 21). Here, therefore, we encounter an instance in which two disparate cultures intersect. However, it is an intersection linked by a common (negative) stereotype.

In another instance, Delisle leaves no questions as to which religion he identifies with the most in Jerusalem, and yet he is an avowed atheist. During an afternoon with his wife, Delisle takes her on a tour of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The couple encounters a few peculiarities with the several Christian orders that share custody of the church (Ethiopian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic,

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 75. Translation - "Not a girl in sight." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 77.

²⁰³ Dascher's transl. - "Just like a comics festival." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 77. Generally, *la bande dessinée* is a male domain.

Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, and Syriac Orthodox). Delisle illustrates that the orders do not get along well by highlighting the presence of a ladder propped up on a balcony against a wall and leading up to a window. According to his sources, the ladder remains there in perpetuity as a result of an unsettled dispute between the Armenian Apostolic and Greek Orthodox orders. The Armenian Apostolic order claimed control of the window while the Greek Orthodox order claimed control of the balcony. The ladder has remained unmoved since 1852 in order not disturb the fragile status quo of the church. After their visit to the Holy Sepulchre, Delisle depicts himself watching a television report of a fistfight that erupted in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in November of 2008.²⁰⁴ His somewhat nonchalant, narrated reaction to the spectacle, over the course of one comics page, follows:

Hier matin, des prêtres de communautés différentes se sont tapé dessus lors d'une célébration au Saint-Sépulchre. J'ai beau être dépourvu de toute foi religieuse, j'ai quand même un peu honte pour l'ensemble de la chrétienté. Si j'étais dans un autre coin du monde, ça me ferait probablement rigoler. Mais que des chrétiens n'arrivent même pas à donner l'exemple au milieu de ce conflit qui déchire le monde entier depuis si longtemps, c'est un peu désespérant. J'te [sic] jure, quand on voit le spectacle qu'offre la religion dans le coin, ça donne pas trop envie d'être croyant.²⁰⁵

The images that correspond to this narration are quite interesting. Delisle illustrates himself washing dishes. At the end of the sequence, Delisle dries his

²⁰⁴ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 112.

²⁰⁵ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 112. The English translation reads, "Yesterday morning, priests from different orders came to blows during a celebration at the church. Event though I'm not religious in any way, I feel a bit ashamed for Christianity in general. If I were somewhere else, it would probably make me laugh. But when you think that Christians can't even set an example in a conflict that's polarized the world for so long, it's a bit depressing. I swear, when you see the spectacle religion puts on around here, you don't feel like being a believer." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 114.

hands in the wordless penultimate panel with a towel (see Fig. 22). In the final panel, the reader sees the towel hanging from a cabinet knob, Delisle the personnage is absent from the panel, and the narration reads, « *Ah, merci mon Dieu de m'avoir fait athée* », ²⁰⁶



Fig. 22 - Delisle washing his hands of Christianity's shortcomings.

In this example Delisle appeals to and distances himself from Christianity all at once. Above I stated that Delisle relates to Christianity better than the other two religions in the region, because his family is mostly Christian, and Christianity is central to the culture in which he was raised. He knows what is and is not a good example of Christianity. This excerpt of *Chroniques de Jérusalem* indirectly points to this fact, while Delisle's personal response to a question I posed to him via email more directly addresses the subject; « *Je suis devenu athée avec le temps mais mes*

²⁰⁶ Dascher's Transl. - "Thanks, God, for making me an atheist." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 114.

*racines chrétiennes existent et malgré tout je me sens un représentant de cette "culture" alors, oui, je ressens de la honte face aux agissements des prêtres qui se battent dans le Saint-Sépulchre ».*²⁰⁷ Nowhere else in *Chroniques de Jérusalem* does Delisle express such a clearly stated shame for a specific religion. The accompanying drawings of him cleaning dishes, an entirely secular act that involves the very symbolic religious act of washing one's hands, equally invoke a deeply felt sentiment towards the religion of Guy's roots. Content to state his freedom from association with Christianity at the sight of such behavior, Delisle washes his hands of the sins of these Christians. The image invoked is that of Pontius Pilate. Pilate was responsible for maintaining law and order in the Roman prefecture of Judaea. According to Matthew 27:19, before granting the Sanhedrin Jewish council its wish (that Jesus be executed), Pilate washed his hands as a sign of his figurative lack of guilt in the crucifixion of Jesus. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment for treason, not a Jewish one, and was a sentence that could be received if one were to call himself 'king'. According to the account given in the gospel Matthew, Jesus never directly called himself king, and yet Pilate announced publicly that he did, thereby betraying Jesus and sentencing him to death. The parallels between Pilate and Delisle, in this instance, are noteworthy. Delisle is a representative of a culture, yet this particular aspect of the culture is one of which he wants no part. In his dual role, Delisle is endowed with the power to pass judgment on certain aspects of the culture. In this instance, he passes judgment ('shame' expressed in the printed

²⁰⁷ My trans. - "I became atheist over time but my Christian roots exist and despite it all I feel as though I am a representative of this "culture" so, yes, I feel shame when I see priests fighting in the Saint-Sepulchre."

word) all the while releasing himself from the responsibility of having passed such a judgment (washing his hands).

Since we are not expressly concerned with the study of religion here, I want to underscore the implications of this scene as an *othering* self-representation. Here we see Delisle both alienate and distance himself from his Christian readers.

Christian readers bound to religious solidarity might interpret this scene as an affront to Christianity as a whole. Christian readers who understand that not all Christians behave according to the guidelines they preach might derive from this passage something akin to the explanation I gave above. The *othering* process in this excerpt, therefore, is not in relation to the culture he visits, but rather to the culture he perceives as his own. Delisle is not only an *other* where he travels, he is also an *other* with respect to his own origins.

Throughout *Chroniques de Jérusalem* Delisle represents himself sketching in a notebook thirty-three times (by his own account). In a hyperlink called "In Situ" on his website, Delisle juxtaposes his drawing of himself sketching to the actual sketches he drew at those moments in the narrative. While not necessarily an exercise in *othering* himself, Delisle's exclusion of the vast majority of these original sketches from his published version of *Chroniques de Jérusalem* points to a conscious effort of revision or self-censorship on his part. A common practice among *bande dessinée* authors is to choose an image and draw it over and over again. Certain limitations can be placed on the artist, like timing each re-drawing, not being able to use an eraser, closing one eye while drawing. All these constraints emphasize different aspects of the same subject within each new drawing. In this sense, re-

drawing oneself equates to self-discovery, a type of discovery that implies that the self was not known beforehand. Each time Delisle depicts himself drawing, it is as though he is rediscovering himself as an artist, re-examining himself, re-familiarizing himself with himself. Throughout the years, from work to work, Delisle's style has shifted and continues to shift with his more recent series *Le guide du mauvais père*.²⁰⁸ The changes from work to work appear ever so slight, yet they



Fig. 23 – An example of Guy Delisle's *Le guide du mauvais père*. Note, Delisle has opted to remove the panel frame entirely, to undertake a much lighter subject matter, using strip-like episodes displaying bad parenting anecdotes.

are unmistakably clear. As Delisle refines himself as an artist stylistically, his identity evolves, as a father/husband/professional comics writer, and, as such, he is constantly re-discovering the *other* within.

Another remarkable scene of juxtaposed cultures occurs in Delisle's four major encounters with the inhabitants of Mea Shearim, a tightly-knit ultra-orthodox

²⁰⁸ See Fig. 23.

community of extremely strict Jews in a rather impoverished area of Jerusalem. In the first encounter, Delisle simply introduces the Mea Shearim neighborhood and its inhabitants.²⁰⁹ It is the oldest and most well-known of the ultra-orthodox communities in Jerusalem. The men do not work. Families average seven children. Due to the residents' great displeasure at the presence of outsiders, Delisle remarks that on Saturday (Sabbath) it is best to avoid Mea Shearim (as well as all other ultra-orthodox neighborhoods) altogether. The second encounter gives Delisle a completely different impression of Mea Shearim. According to tradition and certain interpretations of the Talmud, during the celebration of Pourim, a day that commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from Persian rule in the fifth century, the faithful must drink until they can no longer distinguish between "Cursed be Haman" and Blessed be Mordecai" (Good and Evil). Delisle and his wife venture through the streets, encountering little children smoking, teens too intoxicated to walk, and grown men passed out in the streets. Only the women of Mea Shearim do not participate in the debauchery. Normally, the Jews from Mea Shearim are not very hospitable to outsiders, but on this occasion, Delisle is invited to celebrate with a group of inebriated men, only to be turned down upon the realization that he wasn't wearing the traditional Jewish hat, the *kippa* (see Fig. 24).²¹⁰ At the third encounter, Delisle experiences the wrath of a severely offended group of Mea Shearim residents. During an outing with some MSF friends in an MSF vehicle, Delisle's group accidentally ventures into Mea Shearim on a Saturday. The scene unfolds like

²⁰⁹ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 95-96.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 209-210.



Fig. 24 - Delisle's representation of an intoxicated Mea Shearim.

a scene from a zombie film, with Mea Shearim residents lurching towards the intruding vehicle, raising their fists in the air and yelling "*Shabes! Shabes!*", crowding around the exterior of the van, ferociously glaring in the windows at the passengers (see Fig 25).²¹¹ The final encounter with Mea Shearim occurs in the form of a guided tour. Delisle joins a tour group of expatriate women, and learns about the various groups that reside in the neighborhood. He learns to distinguish these groups by the subtle differences in clothing.²¹²

Rather than stereotype the ultra-orthodox Mea Shearim residents as a group of undesirable and backwards people, Delisle draws comparisons between Mea Shearim Jews and Christians and Arabs in general. He documents his education of

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 234-235. '*Shabes!*' is Yiddish for 'Sabbath'.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 293-296.

certain religious practices involving the destruction of a religious text (and, for that matter, any text that contains the word 'God' in it, written 'G-d' out of respect for the

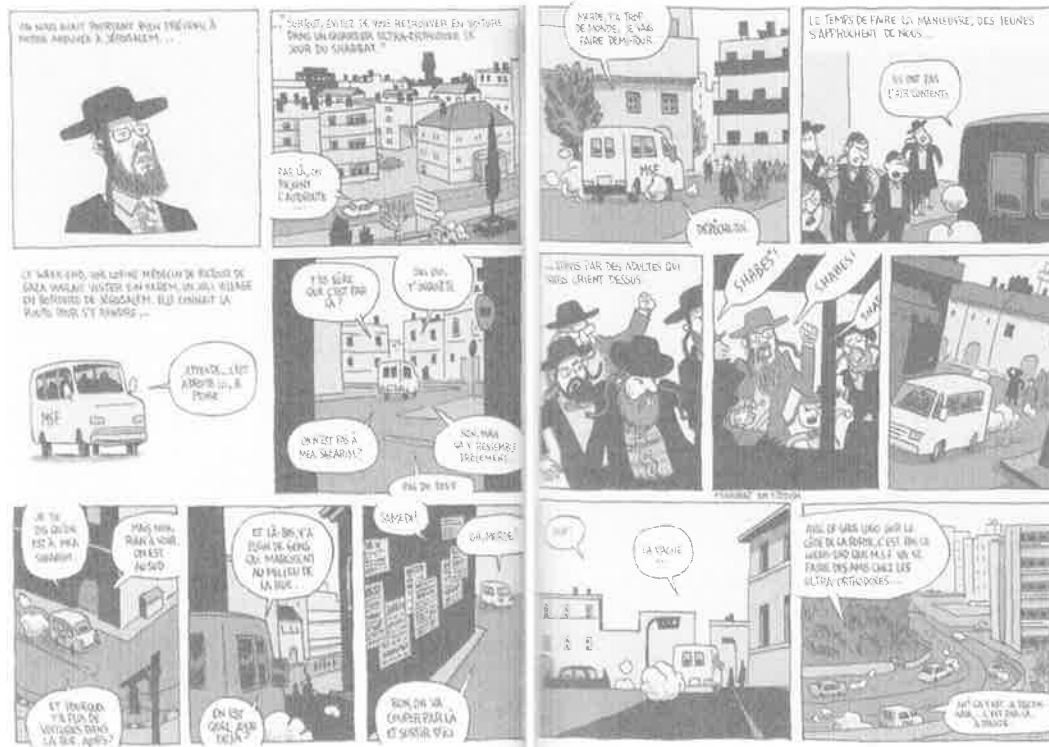


Fig. 25 - Delisle's cinematic representation of a Sabbath day encounter with Mea Shearim.

deity), the sacred nature of bread, and the generally sober environments in which these ultra-orthodox live their faith. In my interpretation, Delisle's sense of moral obligation to his reader leads to these multiple representations of Mea Shearim. Delisle attempts to portray this group that lives on the margins of society at large, in as fair a manner as possible, noting their internal diversity, respecting their strong religious fervor, and pointing out some of their eccentricities.

In June of 2009 Delisle attended a guided tour of Hebron. According to Delisle's narration, the guide gives a sugarcoated impression of Israel, Palestine, and the social and political interaction that these groups have experienced over many

years.²¹³ During the guided visit, Delisle's main objective is to finally see the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a site denied to him due to his non-Jewish status. After nearly a year in Jerusalem, Delisle has discovered the key to certain inaccessible locations. Delisle simply needs to wear a *kippa* to be granted access to this famous Jewish monument, about which he sarcastically remarks, "*L'habit ne fait pas le moine?*"²¹⁴ The access Delisle is granted by virtue of his disguise underscores the exclusivity of certain parts of Israel's landscape. The reader sees the same exclusivity with the Muslims in Jerusalem earlier in the narrative, when Delisle tries to enter Haram Al-Sharif (a.k.a. The Noble Sanctuary, or The Temple Mount) but is denied unless he can recite the Muslim declaration of belief.²¹⁵ Delisle's infiltration of a Jewish monument reserved for Jews only, here, is attributable to his appearance rather than to some permit or recitable knowledge.

In this example we observe an important strategy at work. Delisle reduces the number of instances in which his personage appears to well-below the average throughout the book (63.74% average to 37.9% for this heading), and simultaneously increases the number of instances of textual narration and the number of landscapes (percentage of textual narration rose from 49.1% to 67.2%

²¹³ There are some poignant variations between the French and English translation here. The title, for instance, in French, reads "*Une visite bien guidée*" (transl. "a well-guided visit") versus the English title "Back on the bus," and again, passing by what is identified as a 'wildcat settlement' (an Israeli settlement in which a make-shift tent constitutes a claim on the territory) Delisle's dialogue in the French reads, "*Tiens...toujours debout, celle-là!*" (transl. "Wait, that one's still standing!") whereas the English translation, reads, "Well...good luck Obama!," hailing back to an earlier panel in which Barack Obama is presented as desiring a halt to the Israeli settlements.

²¹⁴ Dascher's Transl. - "You are what you wear..?"

²¹⁵ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 69. Further in the text, Delisle discovers that there are two entrances to Haram Al-Sharif, one in which Muslims go, and another in which tourists go.

and percentage of landscapes rose from 26.3% to 37.9%).²¹⁶ The effect of this shift is two-fold; first, it re-directs the subject of observation, and second, it gives almost total control of the narrative to the narrative voice. The reader is no longer guided as pronouncedly by the interactions between personages, but rather by an overpowering narrative voice that is capable of altering interpretations of the accompanying images. Moreover, Delisle influences the interpretation of this scene by braiding many of the images under this heading to an earlier guided tour he took with a group called "Breaking the Silence," a group of former Israeli soldiers dedicated to revealing the atrocities of the occupied territories.²¹⁷ By situating the "Breaking the Silence"-guided tour before the settler-guided tour, Delisle places the first impression (the most important impression) of the occupied territories in favor of the Palestinians. The settler perspective, having been tainted by the earlier impression, appears barbaric and insulting to Delisle and, vicariously, the reader, as he encounters and re-encounters a number of previously visited landmarks, the abandoned marketplace²¹⁸, the wildcat settlement²¹⁹, and condemned streets,²²⁰ all originally presented in the context of Palestinian suffering at the hands of an unjust Israel. Had the guided tours been placed in the reverse order, or possibly in a different order, the apparently pro-Palestinian perspective Delisle advocates throughout the narrative would most likely have been muted, at the very least, and

²¹⁶ See Appendix 1 for a brief quantitative analysis of Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*.

²¹⁷ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 303-310.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 282, 306.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 281, 304.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 281, 315.

possibly all together overturned.²²¹ Directing the narrative thusly, Delisle, in effect, demonizes settlers and anyone who donates to their cause directly or indirectly. In this case, Delisle is creating an *other*. The *other* is the settler, or he who knowingly intrudes upon Palestinian territory. Removing the focus from himself, Delisle directs the reader's attention to Jewish settlers (figures only represented in a limited fashion in his work) making them the subject of observation.

Landscape as Space and Character: *Chroniques de Jérusalem*

According to the text, during the year in which Delisle wrote *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, he and his family resided in an apartment complex in Beit Hanina, a predominantly Palestinian neighborhood that had been annexed in 1967 to Jerusalem. One of the first things that Delisle does upon arrival at this location is explore the neighborhood on foot. What he discovers sharply contrasts with the impressions he had before arriving: « *Trottoirs inexistants, routes défoncées, bagnoles stationnées et chaleur écrasante [...] J'imaginai Jérusalem beaucoup plus*

²²¹ According to an interview in *Washington City Paper*, Delisle reveals his pro-Palestinian tendency, after interviewer Mike Rhode asked him, "[...] would you say that you tend to fall more on the Palestinian side?", stating, "Yeah, kind of. Well, at first the general idea is that all the Palestinians are suffering unfairly from what the Israelis are doing to them. I guess that's the feeling I came out with. Being with the Israelis, you know why they're so paranoid and security is so high, but then again they feed the paranoia to themselves with the media and all that - a bit too much to me. I don't talk about that in the book. I came back - I'm a left-wing guy, so of course to see what's going on there and what happens to the Palestinians - you feel sorry for them. I don't know anyone coming back from the humanitarian work in this region who says, "Everything's fine." That's not possible. They all come back and say, "That's so unfair." It must be stated, however, that Delisle does not announce an apology for the Palestinians behavior vis-a-vis the Israelis. In the same interview he states, "Even though the Palestinians are suffering, some of them were not very nice people and it's not because they're suffering that they have all the riots or they should be able to do whatever they want. [...] Sometimes you just don't feel sorry for any of them because it's too much." See Guy Delisle, "Cartoonist Guy Delisle on His Year in Israel and Creating *Jerusalem: Chronicles From the Holy City*," interviewed by Mike Rhode. *Washington City Paper*, Arts Desk. Apr. 25, 2012. <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/artsdsk/visual-arts/2012/04/25/meet-a-visiting-cartoonist-a-chat-with-guy-delisle/>

moderne que ça. Pourtant sur les photos que j'ai vues dans les guides, ça ressemblait pas du tout à ça ». ²²² As the initial impression that Delisle has of Jerusalem, it is clear that his expectations (the images of Jerusalem that he consumed before arrival) were not met, as he passed trash heaps and piles of rubble (see Fig. 26). The

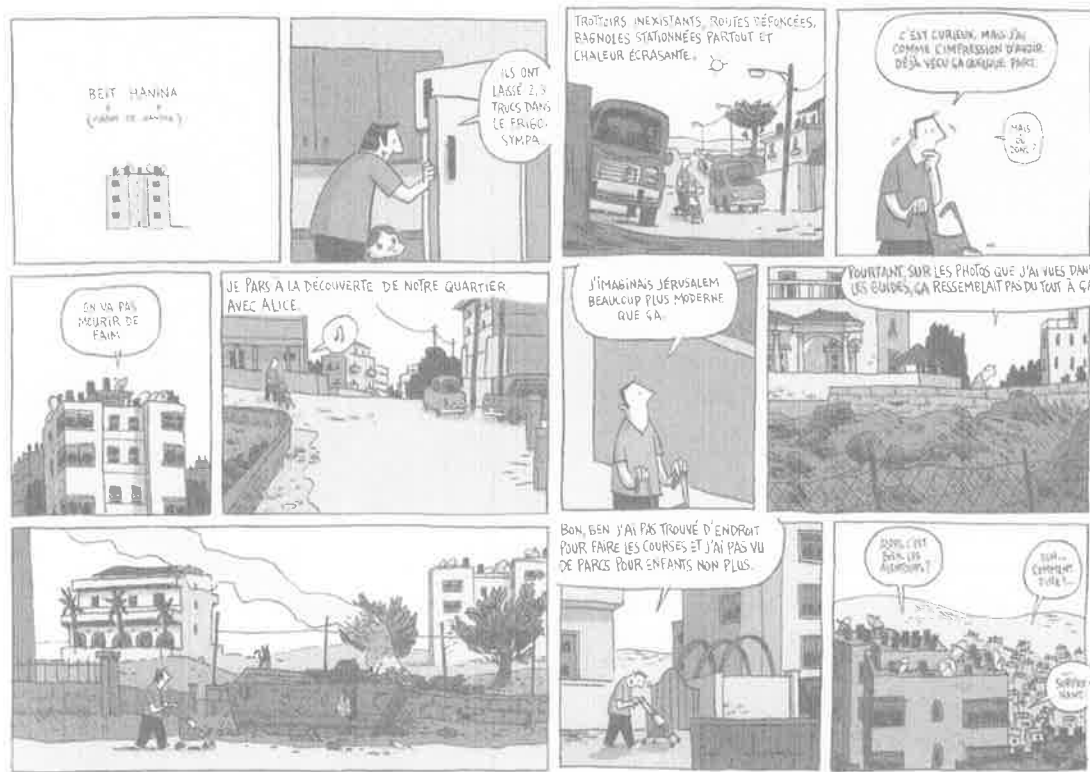


Fig. 26 - Delisle represents the Beit Hanina neighborhood in *Chroniques de Jérusalem*

impressions those unnamed travel guides gave him (although never identified in the text) failed to include the less-desirable parts of Jerusalem. This functions as a warning to which Delisle calls attention when trusting images as canonical.

The landscape, Delisle's neighborhood, allows itself to be explored, viewed, and judged. Smoldering trash, rough streets, and ugly views juxtaposed to

²²² Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 11-12. Trans. "Non-existent sidewalks, cratered roads, random parking, stifling heat [...] I thought Jerusalem would be much more modern. It sure didn't look anything like this in the travel guides." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 13-14.

plantation-style houses adorned with palm trees offer Delisle a complex and conflicting landscape to explore. The landscape and Delisle interact in a limited manner - the landscape permits Delisle to walk and explore freely. The landscape and the reader have a deeper interaction: A second reading of this initial exposure to Beit Hanina reveals that this opening exploration foreshadows Delisle's interpretation of Jerusalem as a whole. Jerusalem is complex and conflicting, modern and ancient, resists any tour guide reduction, is at once attractive and off-putting architecturally, and the varying conditions of its neighborhoods indicate the class of people that reside there.

Delisle interacts with the landscape during his attempt to explore West Jerusalem, constituting the second instance in which landscape plays a major role in the narrative. To get there, Delisle takes a detour through the Old City and gets lost in a few seemingly indistinct neighborhoods; the Christian, Armenian, and Jewish neighborhoods. Although he never explicitly describes the neighborhoods as "indistinct," the drawings he uses to situate the reader in these neighborhoods confirm his inability to comprehend the nuances that distinguish them, an inability that he passes on to the reader through his vague graphic depictions of these Old City neighborhoods (see Fig. 27). Indeed, nothing in any of the panels in which Delisle feels lost testify to the Christian-ness, Armenian-ness, or Jewish-ness of the neighborhoods, as far as an average, untrained eye is concerned. As W.J.T. Mitchell stated, "an appreciation of landscape may well include a reading - or an inability to

read - its narrative tracks or symbolic features."²²³ When Delisle finally arrives at West Jerusalem, his enthusiasm about successfully discovering interesting places for himself and his family reads clearly in his text balloons. Nevertheless, the landscape

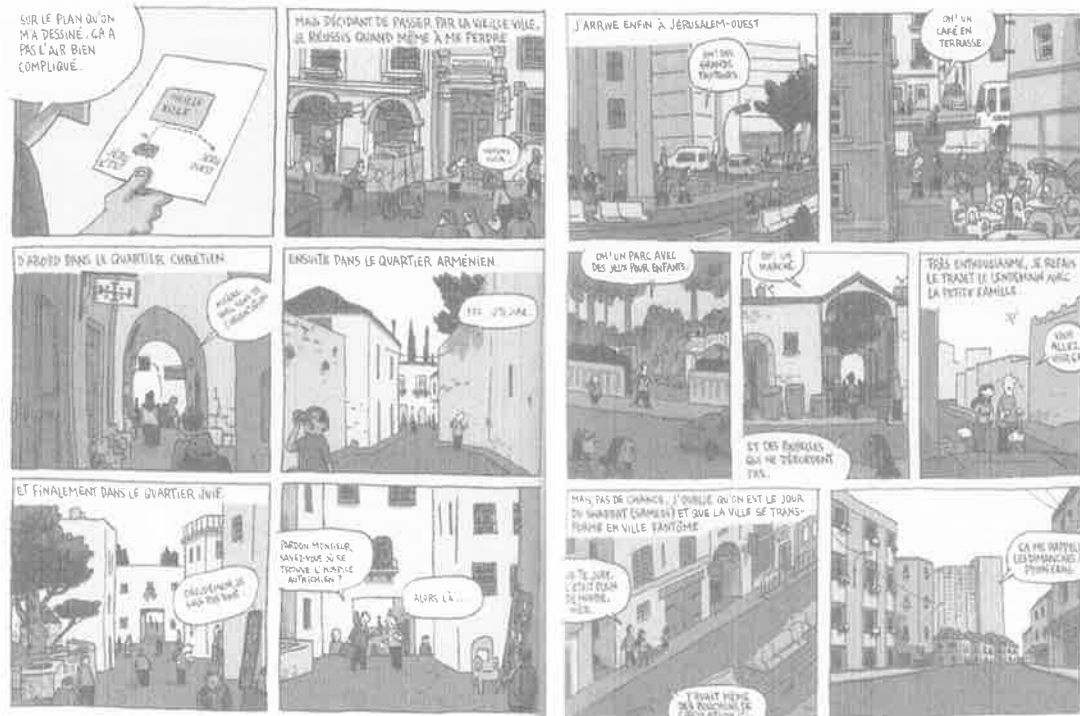


Fig. 27 - Delisle draws the Jewish, Armenian, and Christian neighborhoods in Jerusalem as vaguely distinct from one another. In the final panel, Delisle alludes to *Pyongyang* and his experience of cityscapes void of activity.

of the city is still unfamiliar to him, as it functions on a weekly clock. When he returns to West Jerusalem with his family on a Saturday (the Sabbath), the landscape, although accessible, denies him the enjoyment he expected. He cannot visit the cafe, the park, or the marketplace because they are all closed. In this

²²³ See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Preface to the Second Edition of *Landscape and Power*," in *Landscape and Power, Second Edition*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002 (1994)), x. For autobiographical BDRVs, the revisiting of a given landscape, often under different circumstances, invites the reader to re-interpret the landscape as a narrative property. The effect is similar to that of repetition in poetry. *Supra*, 186n.

example we learn, therefore, that landscape not only restricts or permits *how* it is used, but that it also restricts and permits based on *when* it is used.²²⁴

Delisle's first visit to the Wall of Separation, specifically to the *Qalandiya* checkpoint, exposes just how much landscape truly is a medium.²²⁵ During Ramadan in September of 2008, Delisle accompanied a pair of women who observe and document checkpoint activity, *Machsom Watch*, to the *Qalandiya* checkpoint.²²⁶ There, he observed the process by which people crossing over from Ramallah into Jerusalem (in order to pray at the Great Mosque in Jerusalem) underwent. From inside Jerusalem the checkpoint was extremely easy to pass. Delisle and the two women went through the turnstiles without even being checked. On the other side, however, passports and authorization cards were being checked at a single entry point with hundreds of people waiting to gain access. Three distinct groups of Israeli soldiers (Army, Green Beret, and Special Forces) patrolled the area. Every news organization was in attendance, and everyone filmed everyone. The Wall of Separation, as employed by the military personnel depicted here, serves as a filter, permitting those with the proper authorization and who were of the proper age - men over 50, women over 45 - while restricting the rest. The Wall of Separation is the medium by which this filtration is accomplished; however, it is not the filter itself. The military personnel checking passports and authorizations filter the Palestinians, while the Wall of Separation provides military personnel the means by

²²⁴ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 22-23.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-47.

²²⁶ It is unclear which Friday during Ramadan this comics sequence depicts. For an alternative view of the same incidents, access the two reports available that treat the first and second Fridays in Ramadan when Delisle was in attendance (although he is not mentioned on the website) by visiting www.machsomwatch.org and searching under 'daily reports' in the month of September of 2008.

which to perform their exclusionary selection. As I stated earlier, the landscape in and around Jerusalem is subject to a clock. This clock, dictates when characters and the landscape interact to a large degree. For Muslims and checkpoint operators, the call to prayer determines a time of interaction. In this example, when the loudspeaker announces the Muslim call to prayer from the Great Mosque, the crowds disperse; some faithful Muslims pray towards the Great Mosque among the rubble, the checkpoint empties slowly, and Delisle returns to his family.

Throughout *Chroniques de Jérusalem* Delisle depicts himself interacting with the Wall of Separation. His depictions of the Wall of Separation (seventeen sequences in total) highlight its imposing presence, its authoritative character, and the degree to which it restricts both movement and vision. Delisle points directly at this obstruction of vision when he discusses the expectation that visitors have of Bethlehem before and after they visit the locale.²²⁷ Many times throughout the reading, Delisle depicts himself drawing the wall. The most intriguing of these sequences is without question during February of 2009. Under a heading entitled "*Au pied du mur*" Delisle informs his reader that he has been doing a series of Wall drawings, because « *graphiquement [il] trouve ça très riche* ». ²²⁸ Once in a while the Israeli Army stops him from drawing the Wall, but for the most part, he accomplishes his drawings somewhat undisturbed. Only a few pages later, in the same chapter, Delisle depicts himself in pursuit of a Rabbi that announces the arrival of the Sabbath to the marketplace by blowing a trumpet. Once the Sabbath is

²²⁷ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 153.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 176-177. Respectively, "The Wall" and "Graphically, it's full of potential." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 178-179.

announced, a massive throng of faithful Jewish men dressed in black make their way to the Wailing Wall, arguably the most sacred site for the Jewish faith after the Temple Mount. By following the trumpet-blowing Rabbi, then the throng of the faithful, Delisle is led to the Wailing Wall. He depicts it twice, once from a distance, and once, close-up. No text accompanies these images.²²⁹ Immediately following this doubled view of the Wailing Wall, Delisle is back in front of the Wall of Separation, this time drawing a guard tower. He is stopped and told to vacate the premises. The text never expresses what the order of these three scenes in images conveys: (1) The Wall of Separation, a modern symbol of Israeli (Zionist) solidarity and Palestinian exclusion; followed by (2) the Wailing Wall, the historical reminder to every Jew that they no longer have a Temple, that they were defeated twice in the past, and that presently the Temple grounds are controlled by Muslims; and finally; (3) the guard tower, jutting itself into the landscape as an ever-watchful surveillance measure, providing its agents (Israeli soldiers) with the means to include and exclude progressively at their behest. In ordering this sequence of scenes narratively, Delisle, to my understanding, suggests a historic and cultural fixation on walls, especially in relation to power, lost, retrieved, and retrievable. With the Wall of Separation's many twists and turns and constantly updated plans for expansion, the reader gets the impression that the Wall is more than just a burdensome obstacle to traverse - it is also a means of progressively dominating a desired territory (see Fig. 28). Both walls are simultaneously walls of separation and lamentation.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

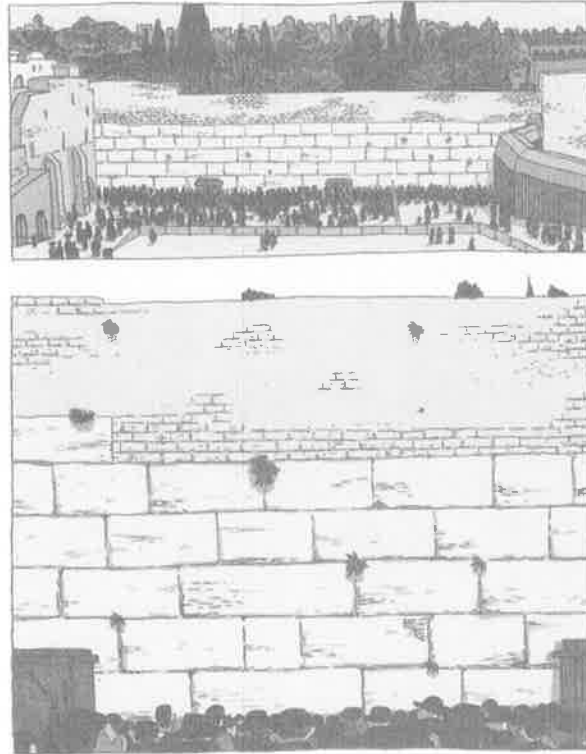


Fig. 28 - Delisle's representation of the Wailing Wall.

Throughout *Chroniques de Jérusalem* Delisle and his family travel to three famous landmarks around Jerusalem - Eilat, Jordan, and Akko (formerly Saint John of Acre). Each of these short vacations distinguish themselves from the rest of the work in two ways; the background color of each panel of these single-page, seven-to-eight panel sequences varies between three different pastel colors, and, except for the naming of the site itself, no text accompanies the images. With as little context as these vacation sequences have, the effect the reader experiences is something akin to suddenly being shown a family album in the middle of a captivating, yet sobering, tale (see Fig. 29). I have to admit, here, that during my first reading, I quickly glanced over these seemingly unimportant sequences,

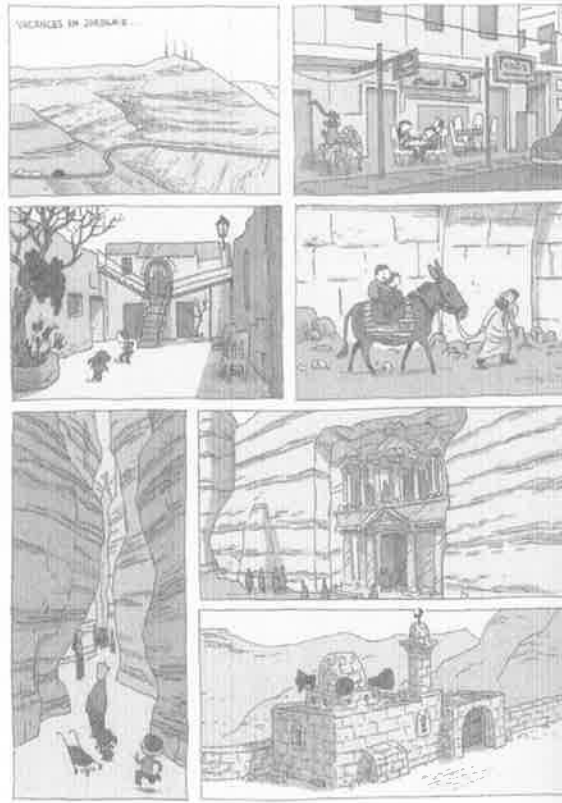


Fig. 29 - Delisle's visit to Jordan. Note the sharp contrast in color.

considering them only enough to count them as part of the landscape's overall allure. Upon further consideration, I realized they were of a far greater importance. The insertion of these vacation scenes deflates the narrative - that is, it lightens the intensity of the content. It is worth noting that the second vacation scene, in which Delisle's family travels to Jordan and visits the city of Petra, amongst other places, directly precedes the narrative instance in which Delisle follows the trumpeting Rabbi through the market and witnesses a gathering of Jews at the Wailing Wall. As I stated earlier, I believe that Delisle underscores what appears to be an Israeli fixation on walls (and division in general) throughout that chapter; however, we read Delisle's account, generally in undated pieces, as sort of a narrative collage, in an assumed chronological order. Although it is uncertain if Delisle uses the lack of

chronology as a narrative strategy, it would seem quite advantageous for an author to leave the majority of his *récit de voyage* dateless, as he could very easily and creatively alter the order of events (if not entirely then at least month-by-month) at his whim, undetected.²³⁰ Coming back to the three vacation sequences, I interpret their inclusion as one that distracts from the serious nature of *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. It can be exhausting reading about atrocity, injustice, and shame *ad infinitum*. The pause in the pace gives the reader a respite from the intensity of what is depicted. It also masks the presence of a unified narrative, creating the appearance of a travelogue-style journal, when the reality is that the narrative is controlled. Landscape, in this instance, is a narrative sleight-of-hand, a distraction aimed at drawing attention away from what is actually happening.

The most obvious manipulation of landscape, in my opinion, is found in the September chapter. The heading, "*Rue Jaffa*" situates the reader geographically.²³¹ The title panel features only a bulldozer, and the sequence follows Delisle walking his son to a shoe store in West Jerusalem. The narration mentions *Rue Jaffa* in a sort of stream-of-conscious manner, which propels Delisle's inner-monologue to consider that the street was the site of bulldozer terrorism in July of 2008, when a Palestinian used a bulldozer to overturn a bus and crush several cars before finally being stopped by an armed civilian.²³² The impression the text gives the reader is

²³⁰ Delisle does use specific dates for some incidents that are verifiable through other sources (the *Machsom Watch* website, <http://www.machsomwatch.org>, provides videos, photographs and narratives of the events that take place on specific days at checkpoints, and from the twenty seventh to the thirty first of December, Delisle identifies bombings that took place in Gaza, verifiable through media outlet, Al Jazeera.)

²³¹ Delisle, *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, 50-1. Translation - "Jaffa Road."

²³² According to Delisle's account three people were killed and forty-six were injured during the incident. *Ibid.*, 51.

that Delisle had some memory of this particular space before the incident occurred.²³³ We see a landscape of Jaffa Road as Delisle sees it, and the accompanying narration states that « *La rue Jaffa s'est transformée en un vaste chantier depuis que les travaux du tramway ont commencé* », as if to suggest that Delisle had observed the widening of the street from the beginning of construction, even though no precursor to this scene mentioning *Rue Jaffa* or a bulldozer exists in the text (see Fig. 30).²³⁴ Temporal displacement occurs in the thought balloon at the bottom of the left page and in the narration of the first three panels on the right page. Since Delisle did not arrive in Jerusalem until August of 2008, it is as though



Fig. 30 - Delisle's two-page spread regarding 'Jaffa Road.' Temporal displacement occurs in the thought balloon at the bottom of the left page and in the narration of the first three panels on the right page.

²³³ The term 'impression' is important here because the text never expressly states that he has or does not have a memory of the street before the incident. The register in which he writes merely suggests it, for his nonchalant presentation of the event, the matter-of-fact statement of facts, and his memory of the month in which the incident occurred (the month before his arrival) give the reading of this passage a "headlines" feel, as though it were extracted from another source.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 50. Translation - "Jaffa Road has been one big construction zone ever since the tram work started." Delisle, *Jerusalem, Chronicles*, 52-53.

some temporal displacement has occurred, in which Delisle's memory, and by association, the memory of the reader, extends beyond the scope of the work as it is organized. The 'landscape as space' is created textually through narration. The reader's imagination alters the visual reading of the calmness portrayed in the accompanying images. The 'landscape as character' is created through the images of non-eventful, regular activity being conducted on that street. Delisle is interacting with the calm *rue Jaffa*; however, he recalls that the landscape was devastated by a violent event.

Authorial Self-Impressions and *Othering*: *L'Intruse*

Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse* is a curious work of activism in the comics medium. Within the first few pages, the reader comes to understand that Roannie, the protagonist, was not aware of the injustice of the expansion of Israel's boundaries into Palestinian territory, and that, once she became cognizant of that fact her entire life developed a new, overriding purpose. Roannie, pen-name for Marie Jo-Parbot, has two children and worked as a pediatrician before her retirement. Her religious roots, as she indicates in the text, are Judeo-Christian. In her retirement, she dedicates herself to the Palestinian cause. Her apparent ignorance of Palestine, as depicted in her work, appears to be the source of a powerful guilt that drives Roannie to take up the Palestinian banner under the pretext of combatting human rights violations. Indeed, Roannie develops this guilt as the driving narrative force behind her activism, having grown up in peace and having believed what she had always heard, that which she suggests are pro-Israel

propagandistic statements, like, « *Une terre sans peuple pour un peuple sans terre* », « *Les maisons étaient vides, les Arabes sont partis d'eux-mêmes* », and « *Israël fait fleurir le desert* ». ²³⁵ The event that she identifies as pivotal in making her aware of the Palestinian situation was the Munich Summer Olympics massacre, in which eleven Israeli Olympians were taken hostage and eventually killed by members of a Palestinian group called Black September.²³⁶ Strangely, Roannie gives absolutely no context as to why this event was important. Depicted in front of her television set, watching the Munich Massacre news, the text reads,

Survient alors Munich, en 1972. [exclaiming to herself in a thought balloon] Mais alors, il y a des Palestiniens! [return to narration] Pour la première fois mon aveuglement n'est plus total. Je réalise que toute ma jeunesse j'avais cru à cette histoire. Que j'entrais dans la catégorie des « Sionistes qui s'ignorent ». Je pensais: « Ce peuple qui a tant souffert, c'est formidable qu'il ait enfin un pays ». Cette fois les Palestiniens existent enfin. Sauf que l'idéologie dominante est efficace et les qualifie de terroristes.²³⁷

²³⁵ See Roannie and Oko, *L'Intruse – tome 1, Palestine, la découverte* (Paris: Vertige Graphic, 2010), 8. My translation - "A land without people for a people without a land," "The houses were empty, the Arabs left by themselves," and Israel makes the desert bloom."

²³⁶ Roannie only identifies the date and location of an event that heightened her awareness. The image that corresponds to the text « *Survient alors Munich, en 1972* » is that of a masked man looking down from what appears to be a balcony. A Google search of 'Munich 1972' revealed the image of the masked man to be a Palestinian looking down from the Munich Olympic Village apartment balcony in which several members of the Israeli Olympic team were housed during the 1972 Summer Games. Roannie neglects to mention that the event was a hostage taking and subsequent massacre of unarmed Israeli athletes. *Ibid.*, 8.

²³⁷ My translation - "Enter Munich, 1972. [exclaiming to herself in a thought balloon] Hold up, there are Palestinians! [return to narration] For the first time I am no longer totally blind. I realize that during my entire youth I had believed this story. That I was part of the category, "Unconscious Zionists." I thought: "Those poor people who have suffered so much. It's important that they finally have a country." Except that the dominant ideology is efficient and labels them as terrorists." *Ibid.*, 8-9.

She describes the pivotal incident responsible for her decision to implicate herself in the Palestinian cause as the 2001 annexation of Palestinian land (see Fig. 31).²³⁸



Fig. 31 - Pages 8 and 9 of *L'Intruse - tome 1*. This excerpt constitutes Roannie's impetus for self-implication in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

She states, « *Mais en 2001, c'est le choc! Je découvre la violence de l'annexion. Et je me dis que si je ne fais rien, je serai complice, de fait...* ».²³⁹ Roannie continues her description of her progression into activism, expressing a certain hesitation at her individual capacity to influence the Israel/Palestine conflict:

Mais on ne se lâche pas seule dans une telle affaire. Mise en contact avec une organisation de solidarité avec la Palestine, j'interroge ses membres. Je vérifie que leurs motivations sont indemnes de tout antisémitisme, qu'ils se battent pour faire respecter les droits

²³⁸ Again, Roannie does not specify the precise report that informed her of Israel's annexation of Palestine, however it can be assumed that it was post-Oslo Accords in 2001 in which the establishment of any Palestinian Authority activity was prohibited in Jerusalem.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10. My translation - "But in 2001 I was shocked! I discovered the violence of annexation. And I told myself that if I did nothing, I'd be a de facto accomplice..."

humains fondamentaux...et que moi, je resterai à la place qui est la mienne: témoin de la dignité d'un peuple.²⁴⁰

Summarizing her first steps towards activism, at the dinner table with her family, Roannie thinks to herself, « *Ils doivent quand même me trouver un peu « allumée », se demander ce qui me pousse à partir là-bas...»*.²⁴¹ When her adult sons ask her why she is going, she simply states that she wants to know what is actually happening and to bear witness, despite the danger.

This opening excerpt, a total of five pages, is Roannie's total diegetic account of why she gives herself to the Palestinian cause. What it attempts to show the reader appears to be a woman in pursuit of the truth and spreading it. Roannie's five-page explanation for why she joined the cause fails to show the reader the massive history of conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and it does so by selectively identifying two disparate events in their history.²⁴² The first event, the 1972 Munich Summer Olympics massacre, is completely veiled from the reader, and without searching the iconic image of a masked Palestinian, the reader gets the impression that Roannie is witnessing some atrocity committed against the Palestinians. The second event, the 2001 annexation, depicts a grief-stricken Palestinian woman and a couple of children in the rubble of what is assumed to be their former houses. The conflict itself is far too old and complex to be reduced to

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10. My translation - "But one doesn't dive head first into such an affair. Put in contact with an organization in solidarity with Palestine, I question its members. I verify that their motivations are free from any anti-Semitism, that they fight for fundamental human rights...and that I may remain in my place: witness of a people's dignity."

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11. My translation - "They must be thinking I'm a little crazy, and asking themselves what it is that is pushing me to go there..."

²⁴² Roannie's travels and education on the Israel/Palestine conflict progressively reveal a more complex history of conflict; however, this is not manifest until the third book, *Les Israéliens*, in which Roannie confronts her Israeli friends about the subject.

Israel's annexation of lands and houses. The Palestinian terrorism at Munich's Olympic Village in 1972 is not an event that places Palestine in a positive light. How is it that Roannie came to the conclusions about Israel and Palestine? Curiously, she describes herself as "*allumée*" when she imagines what her family thinks of her. Likewise, In spite of her far-fetched rationale, she acknowledges this 'crazy' desire to pursue this path, essentially positioning herself as an *other* to both her family and her readers.

As stated earlier, Roannie's work is topical and predominantly journalistic. By putting herself forward as an eyewitness to the treatment of Palestinians in and around Jerusalem, she establishes an authorial position that deflects attention from her. She minimizes her usage of the first-person '*je*' when representing herself in both speech and narration, mostly to the impressions she has of the people and the environment and to simple narrative context. Consequently, Roannie is less of a primary subject in her work (with the exception of her introductory remarks in the first volume, discussed above). The effect of this strategy creates a documentary-like text wherein the pages are filled with images and the text serves to elucidate those images. While Roannie occupies a space in those images, her position is as a recurrent background personage, a sort of constant reminder that she bears witness to what she saw and did.

There are very few instances in which Roannie depicts herself as out of place, or as not belonging in the place she explores. In almost every scene of her four-volume *L'Intruse* she is accompanied by a guide, in a group where she is accepted, or participating in the activities of the group with which she travels. Aside from the

initial scene where she expresses an uncomfortable feeling about what her family will think of her decision, only two other scenes really place Roannie in the position of 'outsider' or *other*. Both scenes are essentially the same, as Roannie and her Jewish friend, Héléna, visit Jewish Israelis, eat in their homes and share conversations with them. Roannie, ever confrontational, steers the conversation towards the ethical question of whether or not Israelis have the right to treat Palestinians the way they do. In both instances, Roannie positions herself as the target of critical insults, once in which she is called a "*sainte nitouche*" (trans. – self-righteous) and another in which she is informed outright that her alleged testimony is a failure because she is not objective. She is not honest in her testimony because she is too implicated in the Palestinian cause to bring any peace to the discussion, and that she is basically naive.²⁴³ While on the surface the verbiage appears to be composed of attacks, it must be restated that Roannie was a guest in these peoples' homes and ate food at their table. If she was insulted, or felt like an outcast or an *other*, she was still treated hospitably and, at the very most, it can be stated that she and her hosts simply had differences of opinion.

Landscape as Space and Character: *L'Intruse*

It bears repeating that *L'Intruse* is a topical work with an autobiographical element, and as such, its focus is not the protagonist and her evolution (although, that also figures in the narrative) but rather the subjects she explores. As we observed in our analysis of *Chroniques de Jérusalem*, the Holy Land is a rather

²⁴³ See Roannie and Oko, *L'Intruse - tome 3, Les Israéliens* (Paris: Vertige Graphic, 2010), 65-67 and 138-140.

complex landscape. Individuals are granted or denied access according to circumstance, time, and appearance. The Holy Land resists reductive labels.

In the second chapter of the first book, Roannie situates the reader in Jerusalem through a series of picturesque landscapes of the Old City. During a period which can be interpreted as her first day in Jerusalem, Roannie wanders the streets of the Christian, Jewish, and Arab neighborhoods, pauses for a moment at the Wailing Wall, relaxes in front of the Grand Mosque, and takes photographs of the Mount of Olives. Almost as though she realizes she is enjoying herself too much, Roannie abruptly shifts her focus, identifying aspects of life in Jerusalem that she finds disturbing. She takes pictures of police vehicles, army personnel and civilians brandishing weapons in open view, and a long Israeli flag hanging "arrogantly" from an Israeli minister's house in the middle of an old Arab neighborhood.²⁴⁴

Juxtaposed to this image of armed Israelis, Roannie directs the reader's attention to a "refugee camp" named *Sh'uffat*, her next destination. From the contextual images, this "refugee camp" has the appearance of a French slum, with moderate sized buildings of simple architectural construction, functional at best, with heaps of rubble and debris littering the streets. Her guide, Laïla, describes the manners in which the Palestinians are mistreated, stating; « *Ici, il y a beaucoup d'handicapés, à cause des affrontements [...] ça fait maintenant dix ans que nous demandons un permis de construire aux autorités Israéliennes...en vain! Les Palestiniens n'obtiennent jamais*

²⁴⁴ Roannie, *L'Intruse* - tome 1, 14-20.

de permis de construire ». ²⁴⁵ The juxtaposition of these two contrasting landscapes reveals the disparity between the two groups of residents (see Fig. 32). As spaces,

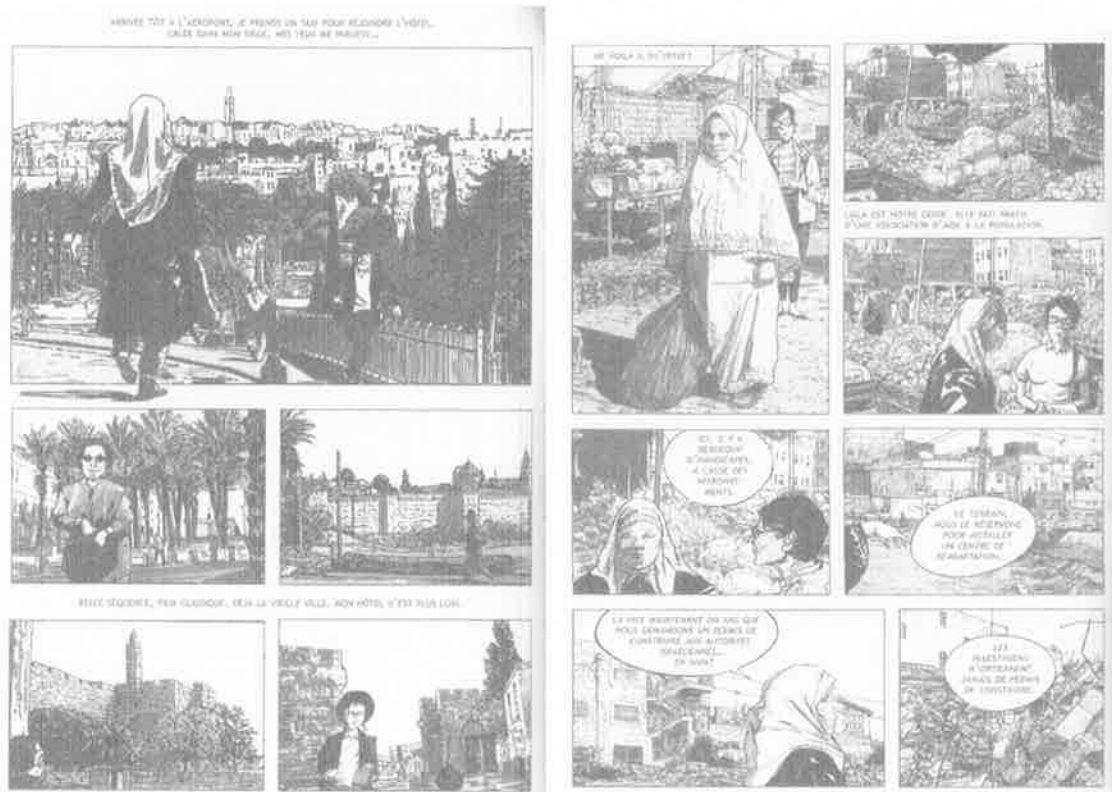


Fig. 32 - Jerusalem's manicured landscapes versus Sh'uffat's rubble-filled ones in Roannie and Oko's *L'Intruse* - tome 1.

the uninitiated reader obtains a certain feel for the social and architectural climate that the two groups generally inhabit. The mood is established and foreshadowed as one of misery for the Palestinians and one of arrogant provocation for the Israelis. The 'picturesque Israel' and 'hellish Palestine' visual theme remains constant for the duration of the work.

Throughout *L'Intruse*, the landscape is less represented as a character that acts than it is depicted as acted upon, as a victim of deformative construction at the

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 22. My translation – "Here there are many handicapped people as a result of the confrontations [...] it has been ten years since we first requested a construction permit from the Israeli authorities... in vain! Palestinians never get a construction permit."

hands of imperialistic Zionists bent on the destruction, suppression, and eventual total occupation of the Palestinian state. Nowhere is that more evident in the narrative than in the second book, *Les Palestiniens, peuple invisible?*, when Roannie and Oko reveal the destruction of a large row of olive trees that will pave the way for the ever-expanding construction of the Wall of Separation (see Fig. 33). Roannie narrates, « *Le spectacle est terrifiant! Des engins arrachent méthodiquement une*

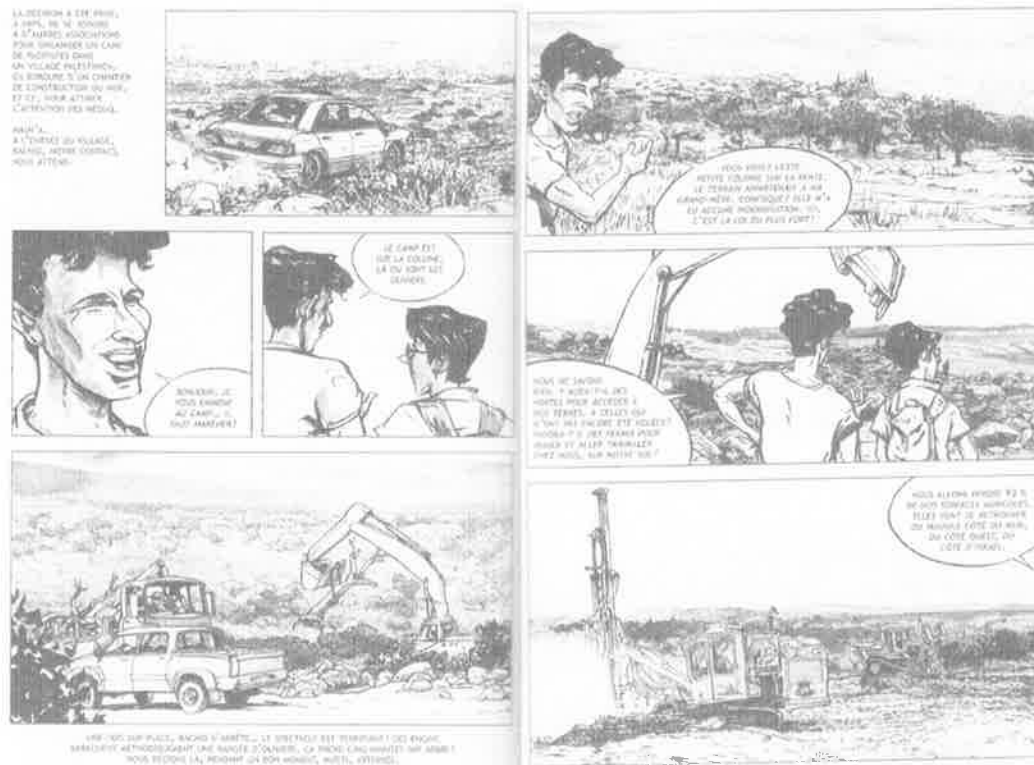


Fig. 33 - Destruction of olive trees in *L'Intruse* - tome 2.

*rangée d'oliviers. Ça prend cinq minutes par arbre! Nous restons là, pendant un bon moment, muets, atterrés ».*²⁴⁶ The destruction of these trees, along with the construction of the wall, according to her text, represents the loss of ninety-three

²⁴⁶ Roannie and Oko, *L'Intruse - tome 2, Les Palestiniens, peuple invisible?* (Paris: Vertige Graphic, 2008), 68. My transl. - "The spectacle is terrifying! Methodically, heavy machinery tore out a row of olive trees. It only took five minutes per tree! We stood there for a while, silent, floored."

percent of one Palestinian family's agricultural land. Here we observe an exception to the statements I made earlier concerning landscape and the manner in which it molds the people who inhabit it. The degree to which a *BDRV autobiographique* is topical *in presentia* may determine, in part, the way in which landscape is used. Indeed, the subject of *L'Intruse* is not Roannie herself; it is the Israel/Palestine conflict. The word 'subject' implies submission to the subjectifier, in the case of *L'Intruse*, Roannie, who narratively determines how each aspect of her work will be employed. As a narrative subject, landscape is confined to the role it is given by the author. Whether a work is topical or not, the author's narrative imperialism will necessarily determine the manner in which all narrative components are used.

Another remarkable usage of landscape as a space and a character is found throughout the fourth volume *Gaza, carnet de non-voyage*, in which Roannie uses images of the Mediterranean sea to situate the reader on the Freedom Flotilla 2. There is no point in describing the seascape that Roannie sets for her fourth and final installation of *L'Intruse*. The image of a sea's horizon line is exceedingly easy to imagine. What it represents, on the other hand, is extremely variable. For Roannie and the Freedom Flotilla 2, the empty horizon line, where the water meets the sky, represents both hope and fear; hope for a successful mission as the ship embarks from Greece, fear for their lives once they encounter the Israeli Defense Force. As the flotilla approaches Gaza and Israeli interceptor boats appear. The horizon line represents a threat, both to the success of their mission and their lives. As a space, the seascape offers the Freedom Flotilla 2 an environment in which to operate. As a

Fig. 34 - Seascape, approaching Gaza in *L'Intruse* - tome 4.



cannot be possessed or dominated). Nevertheless, a portion of the sea, ironically, is entirely controlled and patrolled by Israeli Defense Forces (see Fig. 34). Certain coastlines, like that of Greece, are easily accessible, while the coast along the Gaza Strip is impassable. Even as the annexation of Palestinian land occurs on shore, and the covetous territorial conflict between Jews, Christians, and Muslims rages on in Jerusalem, the sea itself offers no quarter for desire. Even though parts of it can be occupied, the sea resists possession. The shoreline, however, does not. As a provider of both a passageway to land and a passageway away from it, the sea is the medium through which Roannie recounts the entire volume, *Gaza, carnet de non-voyage*. The title of this fourth episode in the *L'Intruse* series is sarcastically appropriate; the ship never reached the Gaza shoreline. While travel may have occurred, neither goal of docking a vessel in Gaza nor breaking up the blockade was achieved.

Authorial Self-Impressions and Othering: *Le Photographe*

As indicated earlier in this dissertation, Emmanuel Guibert and Didier Lefèvre share authorship of *Le Photographe*. While Guibert is most certainly responsible for the actual writing, organization, and drawing of the narrative, Lefèvre is the only co-author whose identity can be considered all at once author, narrator, and personage. On the visual plane, both men contributed to the narration of *Le Photographe*; Lefèvre did so with his photographs and Guibert with his drawings. Both men also contributed to the narrative textually. Lefèvre's story provided Guibert the content necessary to create the narrative. Guibert constructed

his narrative around Lefèvre's story. Therefore, when referring to a narrative aspect specifically related to textual contributions, no distinction between Guibert or Lefèvre will be made, unless it is overwhelmingly clear which of them is responsible for the statement.

From the outset of *Le Photographe* Didier is depicted as an *other*. He is completely unaware of Pakistani and Afghani customs. He doesn't speak the language; his appearance is entirely Western, and, carrying a camera with him everywhere he goes gives him the added appearance of a tourist. As soon as he arrives in Peshawar he is taken to a tailor so that he can be measured for a set of clothes that will help him fit in and conform to Afghani standards of decency. It is not just his clothes that identify him as foreign. He has the shortest beard of everyone in his group. These superficial details make him stand out; however, Didier's association with *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) positions him in a very well-respected group, an advantage that keeps him from feeling like an *other* for the larger part of the narrative. It is not until the second book that Didier notices that he has changed since he arrived in Pakistan. Near a town called Maïdan, the caravan Didier has accompanied decides to stop for a bath in a shallow river torrent. Didier hardly recognizes himself, « [...] *me voyant à poil pour la première fois depuis Germsheshma, je peine à me reconnaître. Mon corps est décharné, mon visage, mes mains et mes poignets sont noirs, tout le reste est blême, chaque fibre musculaire est*

visible comme sur un écorché de cire ». ²⁴⁷ It is important to note that this narrative excerpt takes place over two panels, both of which are hand-drawn, and, therefore, Guibert's contribution. In the first we see a long-distance image of three naked men entering the torrent. The reader assumes, but cannot be certain that one of them is Didier; however, none of them are drawn so as to be recognizable from the narrative. All three of them have similar complexions - pale bodies with dark faces. The following panel is assumedly a close-up depiction of Didier's legs, arms, and hands while he is taking a bath, but again, the reader cannot state that it is actually a depiction of him because his face is not visible and the reader has not seen Didier's bare arms and legs previously in the narrative (so there is no way to guarantee iconic solidarity in order to assure Didier's identity). In the panel immediately following this we see a man with half a shirt over his head, and again his face is not visible. We naturally assume it is Didier, because the narration aligns with the image, « *En me rhabillant de frais, l'odeur du tissu propre me saisit* ». ²⁴⁸ It is also important to note that Didier is not visible or distinguishable on the entire page (see Fig. 35). Essentially, this passage informs the reader that Didier no longer appears to be an *other* amongst the caravan members. He has become one of them, indistinguishable, faceless, with uniform features of body coloring. Having retained his memory of who he was before going on this mission, he no longer recognizes himself as himself.

²⁴⁷ See Emmanuel Guibert, Didier Lefèvre, Frédéric Lemerrier, *Le Photographe - Tome 2* (Belgique: Dupuis, Aire Libre, 2004), 9. English trans. - "[...] seeing myself naked for the first time since Germsheshma, I barely recognize my body. I'm emaciated. Besides my face, hands, and wrists, which are tanned a deep brown, everything else is pallid. You can see every muscle fiber, like on an anatomical drawing." See Guibert, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel, 89.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9. English trans. - "As I put on a fresh shirt, the smell of clean cloth jumps out at me." See Guibert, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel, 89.

Didier fits in comfortably with the MSF group. They travel from remote village to remote village, stopping along the way to provide medical assistance for those they encounter, until they finally reach their destination, Zaragandara, a mountain village closer to the war zone, where the MSF group will establish a hospital (basically, a dusty wooden structure with a roof just overlooking a cliff).

After three months with them, he feels he is ready to go home. In an attempt to expedite the process, Didier informs the MSF leader, Juliette, that he will not continue with them. Those around him warn him of the dangers; nevertheless, Didier resists their efforts to dissuade him. A small group of escorts is assigned to him for his return trip. Other than having the physical presence of the escorts, and unable to communicate effectively with them, Didier purposely isolates himself in Afghanistan. In doing so, Didier sets the stage for his transformation back into an *other*.

Despite being a stranger in a foreign land among people who do not understand him, Didier does not perceive himself as an *other*. In a road-side mosque, Didier converses with several curious men, most of whom have never seen a foreigner. Although he feels stupid because he can't find the words he needs fast enough in his dictionary, he doesn't feel uncomfortable. However, being a foreigner and not participating in certain local customs, particularly those of a religious nature, inspires curiosity and demands explanation. At the mosque, the faithful Muslims who come in to do their evening prayer become aware that Didier is both a foreigner and will not pray with them. After the prayer, they immediately sit down near him and ask him questions about his faith. Didier lies, and replies, "*Isawi*" or

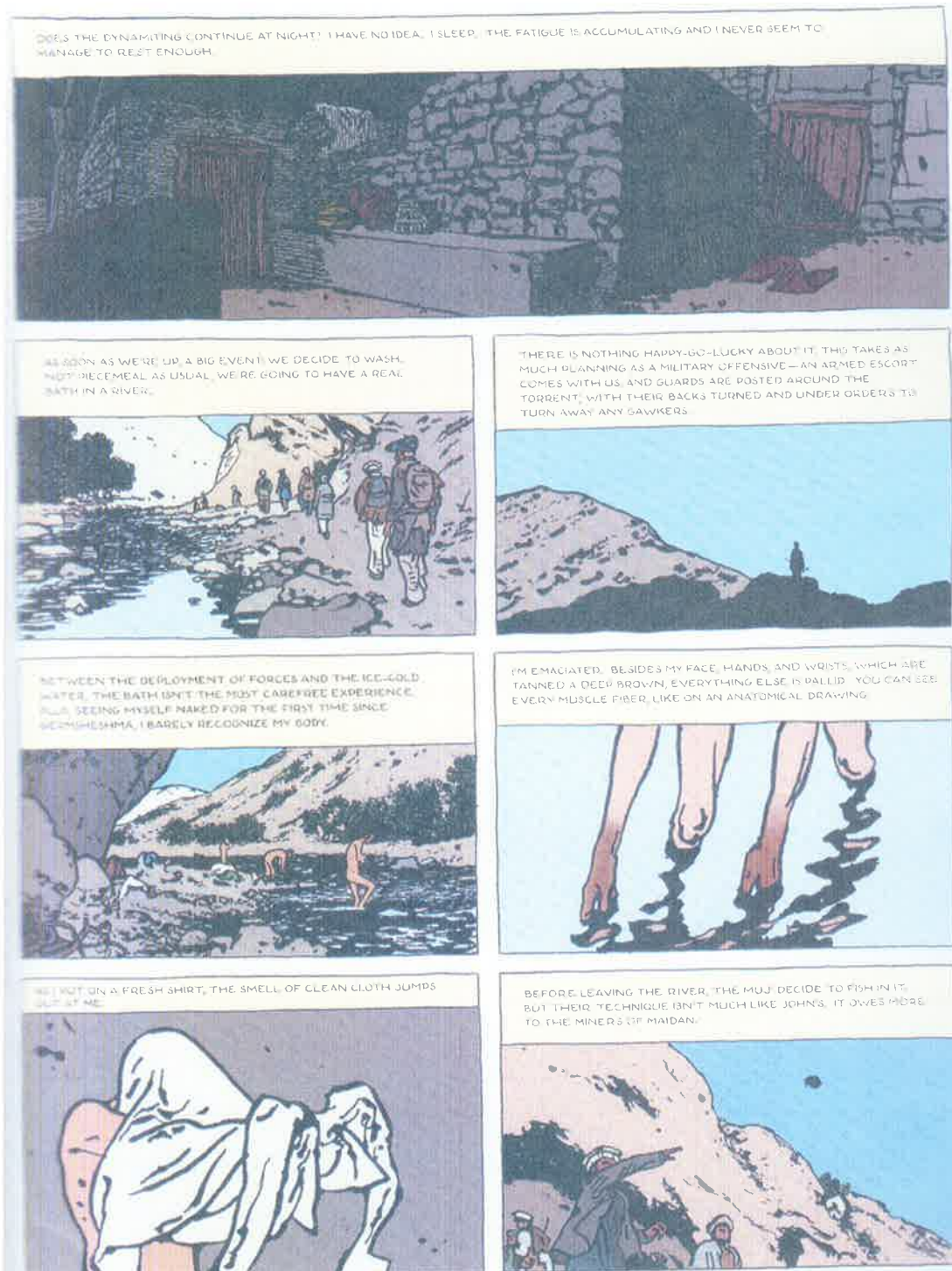


Fig. 35 - River bath scene from *Le Photographe*. Note that Didier is not visibly distinguishable.

"Christian," avoiding the potentially fatal blunder of saying that he is non-practicing. He causes one awkward moment when he tells the men that he is not married and has no children, but for the most part he passes muster. This religious theme, where Afghans question him about his religion occurs twice more. The second time occurs in a group not dissimilar to the first, however, Didier's narration indicates the penalties of stating the wrong answer:

Leur curiosité est insatiable. Est-ce qu'un chrétien doit faire la prière? Combien de fois par jour? Je donne une réponse simple: le chrétien doit faire la prière une fois par semaine à l'église [...] ça corrobore le fait qu'être chrétien, c'est moins bien qu'être musulman. Je les caresse dans le sens de la barbe. Faut toujours. Le but, là c'est quand même de rentrer au Pakistan, pas d'avoir des ennuis. Le pire serait de dire que je ne suis pas croyant et que tout ça ne compte pas pour moi. Expliquer, par exemple, que je suis catholique baptisé mais que je n'ai pas fait baptiser mon enfant. Ça se terminerait par une balle dans la tête.²⁴⁹

The third instance in which Didier's religion comes into question is when he has walked faster than his guide up a mountain path and has a chance encounter with what appears to be a traveling scholar. The scholar approaches him and asks straight away to what religion he belongs. When Didier responds, "Christian," the scholar says « *Isawi, c'est khub, c'est bien. Musulman, c'est bissior khub, c'est beaucoup mieux. [J'irai] au paradis et pas [toi]. Par contre il ne s'agirait pas que [tu] sois Yahud. Yahud, c'est khalop,*

²⁴⁹ Guibert, *Le Photographe* - Tome 3, 14. English trans. - "Their curiosity is endless. Does a Christian have to do prayers? How many times a day? I give a simple answer: A Christian prays once a week in church [...] That confirms that being Christian isn't as good as being Muslim. I go with the flow. That's the smart thing to do. The goal here is to return to Pakistan, not to stir up trouble. The worst thing to say would be that I'm a non-believer and that none of this matters to me. For example, explaining that I was baptized as a Catholic but that I don't have my child baptized would be big trouble, with a bullet to the head as the likely outcome." See Guibert, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel, 176.

c'est vraiment mal ». ²⁵⁰ After saying this to Didier the man walks away, as though he must continue to spread the message (see Fig. 36). When Didier



Fig. 36 - Travelling preacher scene from *Le Photographe*.

looks up the word 'Yahud' he is not surprised to find that it means "Jewish."

Astounded that a man walks along paths spreading this message, Didier

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 35. English trans. - "Isawi, that's khub, that good. Muslim is bissior khub, much better. [I'll] go to heaven and [you] won't. But [you'd] better not be Yahud. Yahud is khalop, really bad." See Guibert, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel, 197.

reflects for a moment on the three religions of the Book and the conflicts that have arisen because of them. It merits stating that before this final instance, no mention of the word 'Jewish' or 'Jew' appears in the text.

This three-part example demonstrates a duality in perception. While Didier has been told that he should never say that he is 'non-practicing', the reader never observes the consequences of stating that one is 'non-practicing'. While Didier's narration may point out that it is better to lie in order to avoid awkward moments that could potentially lead to trouble, the reader never sees the consequences of telling the truth. What the reader does see is a traveling preacher of sorts who spreads an anti-Semitic message to those he passes. There exists, therefore, according to this passage, a degree of exclusion, underlining the *otherness* of the individual, that occurs depending on the religion to which one belongs. According to the logic presented in the text, Christians, Jews, and atheists are all considered *others* by Muslims, but only Christians are the acceptable *other*.

Landscape as Space and Character: *Le Photographe*

Landscape in *Le Photographe* plays a major role as character. As a portend of things to come, the first encounter with the severity of Afghanistan's landscape appears in the form of a dying horse. Didier states:

On dépasse un cheval mourant [...] Les chevaux de caravane, eux, vivent un martyre. Ils sont surchargés, tirés à hue et à dia, perclus de froid et blessés par les pierres. Il's s'épuisent et on les abandonne au

environment. Later in the narrative, the reader learns that the environment is not limited to weather and rocks in its capacity to kill. Landmines are hidden throughout the mountains on either side of the trail. The only way to avoid them is to stay on the path.

Landscape has more than one capacity as a character in *Le Photographe*. In addition to threatening travellers, the landscape has agency, at least as far as the narrative is concerned. When Didier and the MSF team arrive in Palandara (midway through the mission) a horrifically wounded sixteen year-old male is brought to them on a stretcher straight from the battlefield. The teen's jaw has been completely torn off by an artillery shell, and the doctors scramble to treat him. After an extremely long operation, the boy's condition stabilizes. The next day, Didier takes several pictures of the landscape that he sees from the crude operating table upon which the teen underwent surgery. Didier remarks; « *Un paysage magnifique et immuable qui se fout de la guerre* ». ²⁵² Clearly, in real life, a landscape cannot express opinion, at least not in a way that we can understand. Narratively, however, this landscape is given to evaluate or appraise human affairs (see Fig. 38). Up to this moment in the narrative, the landscape has only been portrayed as a threatening space, as something that, in cases of neglectful behavior, can inflict mortal damage to those that traverse it. Once this narrative instance occurs, the landscape is, in fact, indirectly identified as a major character in *Le Photographe*.

²⁵² Guibert, *Le Photographe - Tome 2*, 42. English trans. - "This magnificent and unchanging landscape doesn't give a damn about war." See Guibert, *The Photographer*, trans. Alexis Siegel, 122.

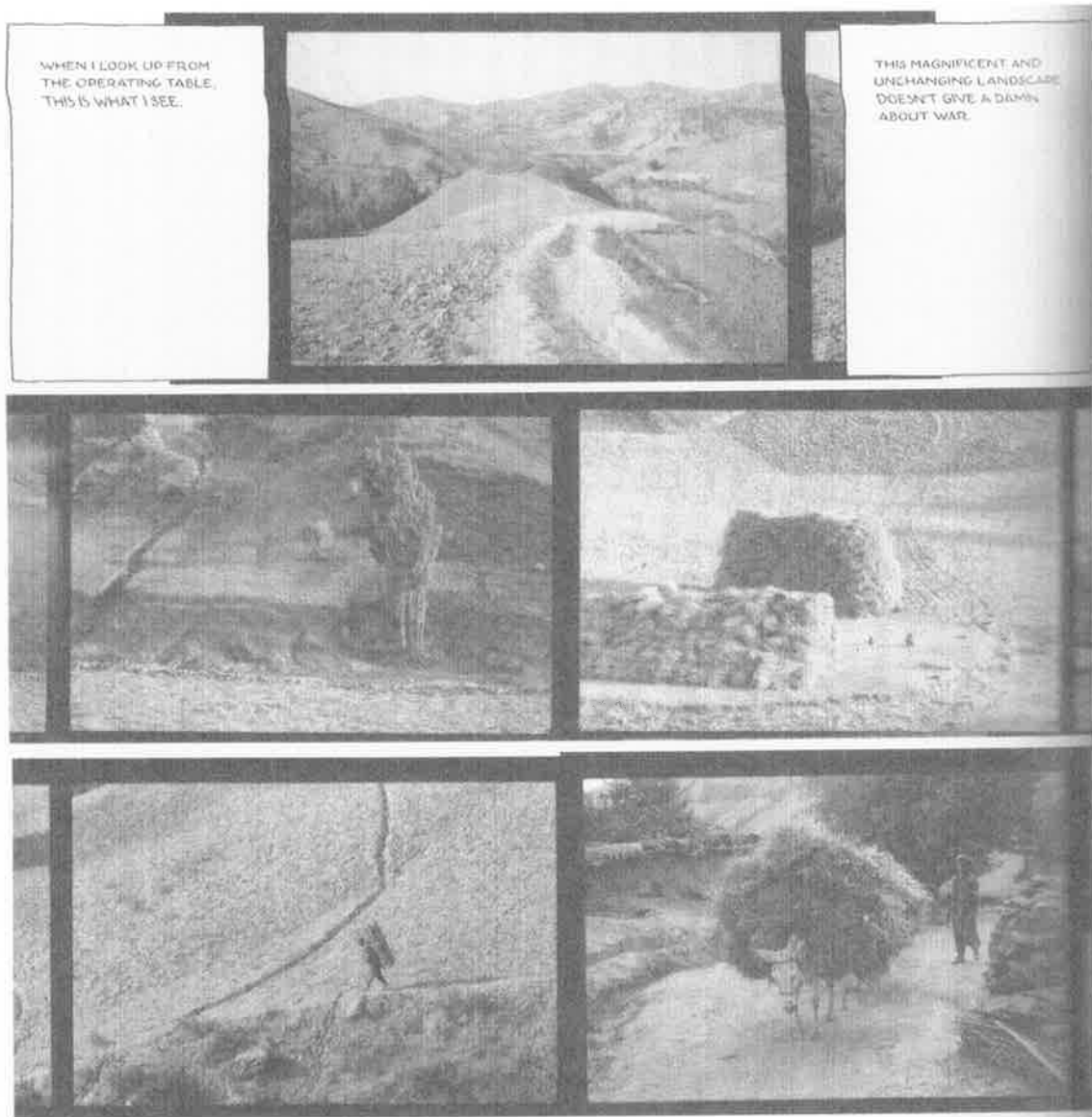


Fig. 38 - Here, narratively, the landscape bears the human trait of "not giving a damn," in *Le Photographe*.

Earlier in this study I described the climactic scene from this work in which Didier finds himself alone at the top of the Kalotac mountain pass, where he had the sensation that his death was imminent. I demonstrated how the landscape appeared to have a sinister face, drawing a comparison between the lines of a human face to those found in Didier's photograph (see Fig. 20, again). The frame of

the photograph itself could be said to have appeared like a head, while the details of the landscape could be understood to represent the features of a face. I used this image as an example of how anthropomorphism and subjectivity create the impression that landscape itself could be relatable to the human experience.

As a character, the landscape atop the Kalotac pass offers Didier his most frightening interaction with the characters in the narrative. Before arriving at the summit of the pass, Didier experiences the frustration of not having a reliable escort. Through his own fault, he never properly learns how to affix his pack to his horse, a mistake that costs him valuable energy, time, and emotional stress. But the pass itself, much like the permissive and restrictive natures of the Jerusalem's three observed sacred days, opens and closes itself to travellers according to the conditions around it. Depending on the circumstances, therefore, the landscape facilitates or impedes. For Didier, these conditions are two-fold. The first is the precaution of travelling with a group, for without a group, one slip could mean injury or death, and with no one to help him, his life is at the mercy of chance. The second is the weather. If conditions are too dangerous, the pass becomes impassable. Didier's escort has the experience to know the right time to ascend. When Didier fails to conform to the group's decision, he is abandoned to his own devices. When Didier arrives at the top of the pass, it is clear why the group abandoned him; to avoid the storm's full force, the men had to act quickly. Now directly in its path, Didier must confront the storm and his fear of death. Up to this point, Didier has experienced a somewhat superficial effect of interacting with the landscape. Traversing Afghanistan has altered his body to the point that he barely

recognizes himself naked, and he received several minor discomforts from exposure, including boils, and a developing case of furunculosis. He has also come into contact with the landscape's perspective on human affairs. The temperamental nature of landscape, its ability to inspire the fear of death, is a fear that has remained in the back of Didier's mind.

Summation

Studies like Hillary Chute's analysis of graphic representation in *Maus* and my own reveal the dual nature of temporality in *bande dessinée*. While her exegesis informs us that various temporal settings may be presented and integrated simultaneously in a *bande dessinée*, authors of autobiographical *BDRV*s tend to construct temporality in a linear fashion. Regarding representation of the self and landscape in autobiographical *BDRV*, what I have attempted to demonstrate here are fundamental practices of authorial self-representation and the usage of landscape as both a space and an integral character. As I have shown in my analysis, the author(s) control(s) every aspect of the narration and ultimately determine(s) the manner in which the constituent parts of the travel narrative (self, landscape, secondary characters) are used. As a consequence of the imperial nature of the author, the reader's interpretation of how those parts are used will be determined only by their sensitivity to the codices (textual and pictorial) within the text.

CONCLUSION

As a sub-genre of comics and travel literature, *Bande dessinée récit de voyage autobiographique* both legitimizes the comics medium further in professional and academic circles as well as expands the horizons of travel literature generally.

The works that I selected were of a particularly unique nature in the field of comics. Satrapi's memoir, of course, has been the most critically acclaimed comic since Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. I believe that this is due, in part, to the complexity of her subject, but may also be in part due to the timeliness of her publication after the 9/11 attacks. Delisle's "travelogues" stretch the boundaries by which the travelogue is defined, and at the same time, widen the spheres of influence maintained through journalism and tourism. In Delisle's works the two genres are somewhat difficult to distinguish. Roannie and Oko's contribution to the body of travel comics pushes the boundaries of documentary and exemplifies the degree of passionate activism that the comics image may handily incorporate. Emmanuel Guibert and his collaborators are unique in the manner in which they have expanded the fields of comics, literature and *photo-roman*, autobiography and biography, as well as travel writing and photojournalism simultaneously.

While the vogue for this genre of graphic narrative appears to be rising, the ones discussed in this study, in particular, are the innovators who laid the groundwork for their contemporaries. Their examples guide the next generation of comics writers on how to represent one's self, *others*, and landscapes in a variety of ways that accomplish a representational goal. They mark another transitional

phase in the history of the *bande dessinée* and a new branch of study in the field of travel literature.

The next phase of this study is necessarily a massive expansion. In this study we examined Francophone authors travelling to the Near East, the Middle East, and the Far East; the most logical course of action would be to conduct a parallel study of comics from those regions, in which the authors travel to Francophone communities. Geographic expansion into autobiographical comics travel narratives written by Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Africans, and others, would certainly prove valuable to this study as well. An examination of travel as a theme in fictional comics would benefit this study, especially in terms of landscape depiction and cultural confrontation. It is my belief that an examination of fictional comics divided thematically (i.e. science fiction, fantasy, detective themes) would demonstrate tendencies in representing *others* and one's own culture that parallel current events, and, therefore, inspire political debate. Departing somewhat from queries into representation, since numerous schools exist that teach comics production (Scuola Internazionale di Comics, The Kubert School, Cesan, École Pivaut, École européenne supérieure de l'image, and soon to open, the Académie Brassart Delcourt, to name only a few) it would benefit this study to examine comics creators at the level of artistic and literary education, in order to expand the concept of allusive arthrology to formative influences.

In my next study I will assemble a corpus of all comics treatments of Jerusalem to date, both fictional and non-fictional, in strip and narrative form, and explore representation in the many perspectives offered by outsiders and residents

alike. I will focus on three subjects: (1) the history of Israel and Palestine in the comics medium; (2) textual and visual representation of armed civilians; and (3) the the semiotics of religious confrontation in comics.

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APPENDIX 1

The following table is a selective quantitative analysis of Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*. The first column represents the chapter division (by months). The X-axis indicates the number and percentage of four categories as defined below:

'Delisle' - number of instances in which panels in a given chapter feature some or all of Delisle's personage

'Landsca.' - number of instances in which panels in a given chapter feature a landscape or cityscape

'Dialogue' - number of instances in which panels in a given chapter contain dialogue in speech balloons

'Narration' - number of instances in which panels in a given chapter contain narration (usually in a box, sometimes, however rarely, as a thought balloon)

Other important considerations for this table are:

'% total' - percentage of the category immediately to the left based on the total number of panels in a chapter

'AVGS' - represents the average number or average percentage of instances featuring a given category

Here, I have purposely omitted the presence of image-only panels because it is not expedient to the example I have chosen (the final example from the 'authorial self-impressions' section devoted to Delisle's *Chroniques de Jérusalem*).

Month	Delisle	% total	Landsca.	% total	Dialogue	% total	Narration	% total	Total Panels
Aug.	148	78.7	52	27.7	91	48.4	79	42	188
Sept.	164	70.4	62	26.6	89	38.2	133	57.1	233
Oct.	149	75.6	62	31.5	88	44.7	89	45.2	197
Nov.	129	56.3	61	26.6	111	48.5	113	49.3	229
Déc.	134	61.2	44	20.1	71	32.4	132	60.3	219
Janv.	40	46	10	11.5	32	36.8	46	52.9	87
Févr.	106	65	59	36.2	91	55.8	87	53.4	163
Mars	114	70.8	38	23.6	59	36.6	97	60.2	161
Avril	121	57.3	62	29.4	73	34.6	84	39.8	211
Mai	142	60.4	57	24.3	126	53.6	95	40.4	235
Juin	107	56.3	60	31.6	93	48.9	108	56.8	190
Juillet	107	66.9	31	19.4	101	63.1	54	33.8	160
AVGS.	121.75	63.74	49.8	26.3	85.4	43.8	93.1	49.1	189.4

APPENDIX 2

The following text is anachronically time-stamped copy of my correspondence with Guy Delisle concerning his emotional and geneological connection to the Christian faith and that community at large (IP addresses removed).

-----Original Message-----

From: gdelisle@free.fr [mailto:gdelisle@free.fr]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2014 2:17 PM
To: Thomas, Brandon M.
Subject: Re: [Guy Delisle] Contact

Bonjour Brandon,

Pour répondre à votre question, c'est votre premier énoncé qui est le bon. Je suis devenu athée avec le temps mais mes racines chrétiennes existent et malgré tout je me sens un représentant de cette "culture" alors, oui, je ressens de la honte face aux agissements des prêtres qui se battent dans le Saint-Sépulchre.

Cordialement,

Guy

----- Mail original -----

Name: brandon thomas
Email: brandon.thomas@ubs.com
Comment: Question concernant Chroniques de Jerusalem

Bonjour Guy,

A ce moment, j'étudie la BD a Louisiana State University et je fais une dissertation sur la bande dessinée récit de voyage autobiographique. Votre travail est l'un des plus importants aspects de mon essai, surtout les détails de Chroniques de Jérusalem. A cet instant, j'écris une partie de la dissertation qui traite les représentations de soi, et j'aimerais trop si vous pouviez me préciser quelque chose. A la page 112, vous donnez une perspective athée de la situation chrétienne par rapport a l'église du saint-sépulchre. En lisant cet extrait, il m'est parvenu a l'esprit que vous exprimez une certaine honte pour la chrétienté pour une raison non-expliquée dans le texte. Est-ce parce que les origines religieuses de vos parents sont liées a la chrétienté et que vous en soyez déjà familier, sachant bien que les chrétiens a saint-sépulchre font mauvais exemple de leur foi? Si non, est-ce que je me trompe en disant que votre culture d'origine est prédominé e par les chrétiens et pour ca vous exprimez cette honte? Mon but en posant cette question est de comprendre pourquoi vous vous representez comme athée tout en tenant un sentiment quoique ce soit envers un religion. Votre réponse m'indiquera si j'utiliserai cet exemple dans mon travail.

Merci de votre réponse et pour votre temps et considération,

Brandon Thomas

Time: 02/14/2014 at 20:33

Contact Form URL: <http://www.guydelisle.com/contact/>

VITA

Brandon Matthew Thomas, a native of Beaumont, Texas, received his bachelor's degree at the University of Texas at Austin in 2006 and majored in French with a minor in Spanish. He then moved home, where he worked as a teacher and basketball coach at All Saints School. Wishing to maintain and develop his skills in the French language, he applied for graduate school in the Department of French Studies at Louisiana State University. He worked as a research assistant under Dr. Adelaide Russo prior to teaching Introductory and Intermediate French. He earned his master's degree in 2010, and his master's essay, *Representation and Stereotype in the Comics: Images of Near and Middle Eastern Arabs in the Franco-Belgian Bande Dessinée*, was published in Germany by VDM Verlag Dr. Müller in 2010. He published an article concerning the poetry of Sharon Olds in *le Dictionnaire des femmes créatrices*. He presented a portion of his work on 'anthropomorphic landscape in *bande dessinée*' at a colloquium at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, as well as at Louisiana State University's annual French conference in 2013. He will receive his PhD in French Studies with a minor in Comparative Literature in August of 2014.