



## Editorial ? November 2010

By *Richard Hill*

Created Nov '10

Article Author:

[Rosemary Stones](#) [1]

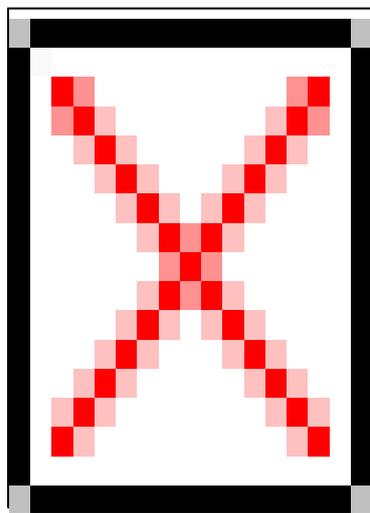
[185](#) [2]

Article Category:

Editorial

Byline:

News and comment from the Editor.



Go to a Fnac bookshop in Paris and you will find a whole section devoted to graphic novels. And it will not just be children browsing the shelves ? in many European countries as well as in Japan, adults too read comic books. Many attempts have been made over the years to publish such books in the UK but with the honourable exceptions of Asterix and Tintin, until now they have had difficulty establishing themselves as an accepted genre to be taken as seriously as other kinds of illustrated books.

Since comic books first appeared 75 years ago, prejudice against them has continued to exist to a greater or lesser extent attracting both scorn and censorship. They have been accused of moral turpitude, of being badly written and drawn, of being preoccupied with violence, of being of use only to people who are illiterate and of being something children should grow out of. Their very popularity with young readers has been used in evidence against them with some adults fearing that children engrossed in them are wasting their time.

Now, however, a study conducted by the Canadian Council on Learning has found that comics have ?untapped potential?, particularly for boys who still lag behind girls in achieving prose literacy. Their report, ?More Than Just Funny Books? cites a 2002 study which found that comics are the second most popular reading choice for boys after newspapers and magazines with 75% of boys reading them. ?One common myth about comics,? say the researchers, ?is that reading them can replace the reading of other genres.? In fact, the study discovered that boys who read comic books regularly also tend to read more text-based material and report higher levels of enjoyment in reading. Such books also help readers develop visual literacy.

In addition, the CCL report found that comics can help young people make the transition between the way they chat to each other and writing formal English. Dr Paul Cappon of the CCL says that: ?considering the evidence, it is time that

educators and parents embraced comics as a positive teaching and learning tool.?

In recent years comic books and graphic novels have begun to shake off their 'low culture' label with Art Spiegelman's **Maus** even winning a Pulitzer Prize. The very term 'graphic novel' which is now used rather than 'comic book' seems to indicate that there is now greater acceptance of the genre and an openness to what it has to offer.

In this issue of **BfK** Clive Barnes chooses his 'Ten of the Best Graphic Novels' which include a range of very different titles and for different ages. His selection demonstrates the incredible variety of accessible, entertaining and challenging graphic novels now available.

Rosemary Stones

Page Number:

2

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Dec '21):** <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/185/childrens-books/articles/editorial/editorial-%E2%80%93-november-2010>

**Links:**

[1] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/rosemary-stones>

[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/185>