

# Comics & Culture Overview & Student Projects F2018

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Part 3: Panel Lottery, March, Time/Space, 3-  
person collaborative

# Panel Lottery – collaborative comics making activity by Abel & Madden

## Panel Lottery

Panel lottery is a collaborative activity where participants create panels, and then, as a group, create a story using those panels.

### Age appropriateness

This activity can work for various age groups. For teens and adults, discussion can delve into fairly sophisticated concepts of storytelling and the effects of panel juxtaposition. For kids, it could simply be a fun way to tell a story together.

### Objectives

1. verbalization of narrative choices
2. understanding of how comics function by juxtaposing panels
3. learning how narrative choices later in a story can affect earlier understanding.
4. understanding panel transitions and the principle of closure (see *Drawing Words & Writing Pictures* chapter 4).

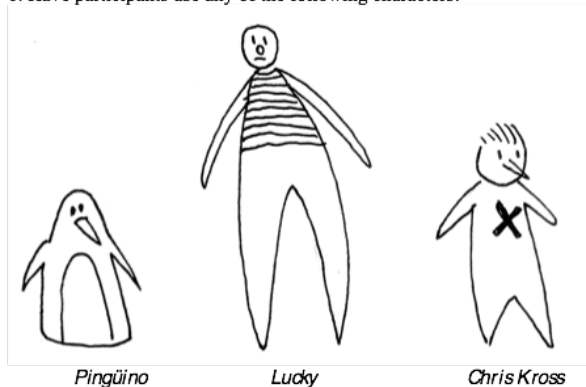
### Materials

- blank 3 x 5 index cards or cut up paper at about the same size
- pencils and/or pens
- a box or bowl
- tape or push pins and a wall to post panels on

### Instructions

Ask participants to draw a few random comics panels on index cards. (They should not tell a story). They don't need to be well-drawn or highly polished drawings. The goal is to produce a big pile of random, unrelated (except for the characters) comics panels.

1. Have participants use any of the following characters:



2. Have participants use either of the two following guidelines to come up with panel content:

- a) They can choose any of the following instructions and use them as the starting point for a panel:

Somebody asking a question (no answer).  
Somebody answering a question (no question).  
Somebody walking through a doorway.  
Somebody looking out of the panel with a surprised expression.  
A punch or kick.  
Somebody looking for someone or something.  
A panel with no people in it.  
A landscape with a single building in it.  
A panel full of sound effects and/or emanata.

- b) Have them take a comic off a shelf, close their eyes, open the book at random and put their finger on the page. Have them draw a new panel using the three characters above based on the panel they have randomly selected. (They shouldn't worry if it's a boring panel, in fact that's better, as they will see.)

3. When people finish their panels ask them to put them in the box or bowl.

### Workshop leaders

Once you have collected a big pile of panels, pick one, and post it on the wall. (You can pull one at random but it might help to select one that suggests a promising beginning for a story.)

Have someone pass out all the rest of the panels to the people in the group. Each person should have a few panels, but ideally not the ones he/she drew.

Everyone should read the first panel on the wall. Then, those who think they have a panel that could follow should offer it. Take 3-5 and post them vertically next to the first panel.

Discuss as a group what each panel proposed does to the narrative. Does it suggest a change of scene? A continuation? Is it a total non-sequitur? Which characters are in your scene, and what is their relationship? Does that relationship change with the second panel?

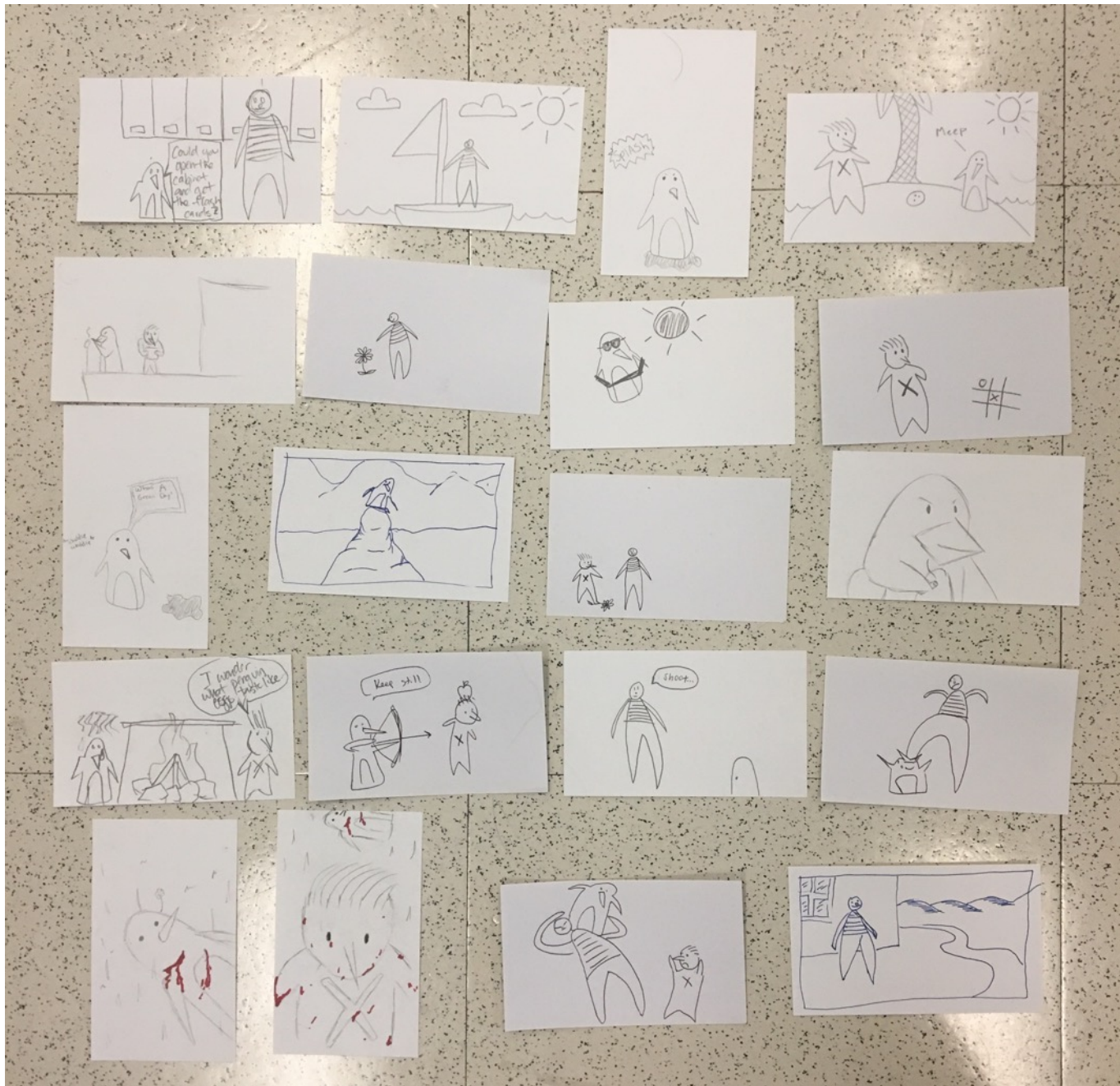
Vote. The most popular choice for second panel goes in (You may exert some executive power if the popular choice will derail any narrative development). The others are returned to their owners.

Repeat. Notice how, as you move along in the story, some choices you make may cast a whole new light on the earlier sequences. Resist any impulse to allow the story to descend into chaos in the name of silliness. Choose panels that come together to make some kind of sense.

When you approach 10-15 panels, try to guide the group to some kind of conclusion, a wrapping up of the drama.





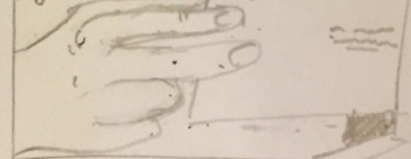


This my group's panel lottery. We didn't really decide on a name but we'll just call it Island Adventure. So the first panel starts off with the penguin asking the tall guy to take out the flash cards. Which starts the story, the tall guy is on the boat and then he come across a small island where he meets his friends cross and penguin. Then they enjoy themselves on the deserted island. Next Cross asks the penguin, "I wonder what penguin eggs tastes like?" Which begins the fighting and betrayal. At the end, you think the penguin is dead but he comes back for a sneak attack from behind. But you don't know who wins since the story ends with the tall guy standing outside a build next to a road.



Quick analysis/annotations of a page from March

BECAUSE IN NASHVILLE I'D MEET  
PEOPLE WHO OPENED MY EYES TO  
A SENSE OF VALUES THAT WOULD  
FOREVER DOMINATE  
MY MORAL PHILOSOPHY



LEWIS

THE WAY OF PEACE

THE WAY OF LOVE



The art breaks  
the delineated  
panels

The camera lens  
quality within this  
scene: the close-up  
of John Lewis's hand,  
then the wide  
"panoramic"  
shot of  
Lewis and  
his family farm

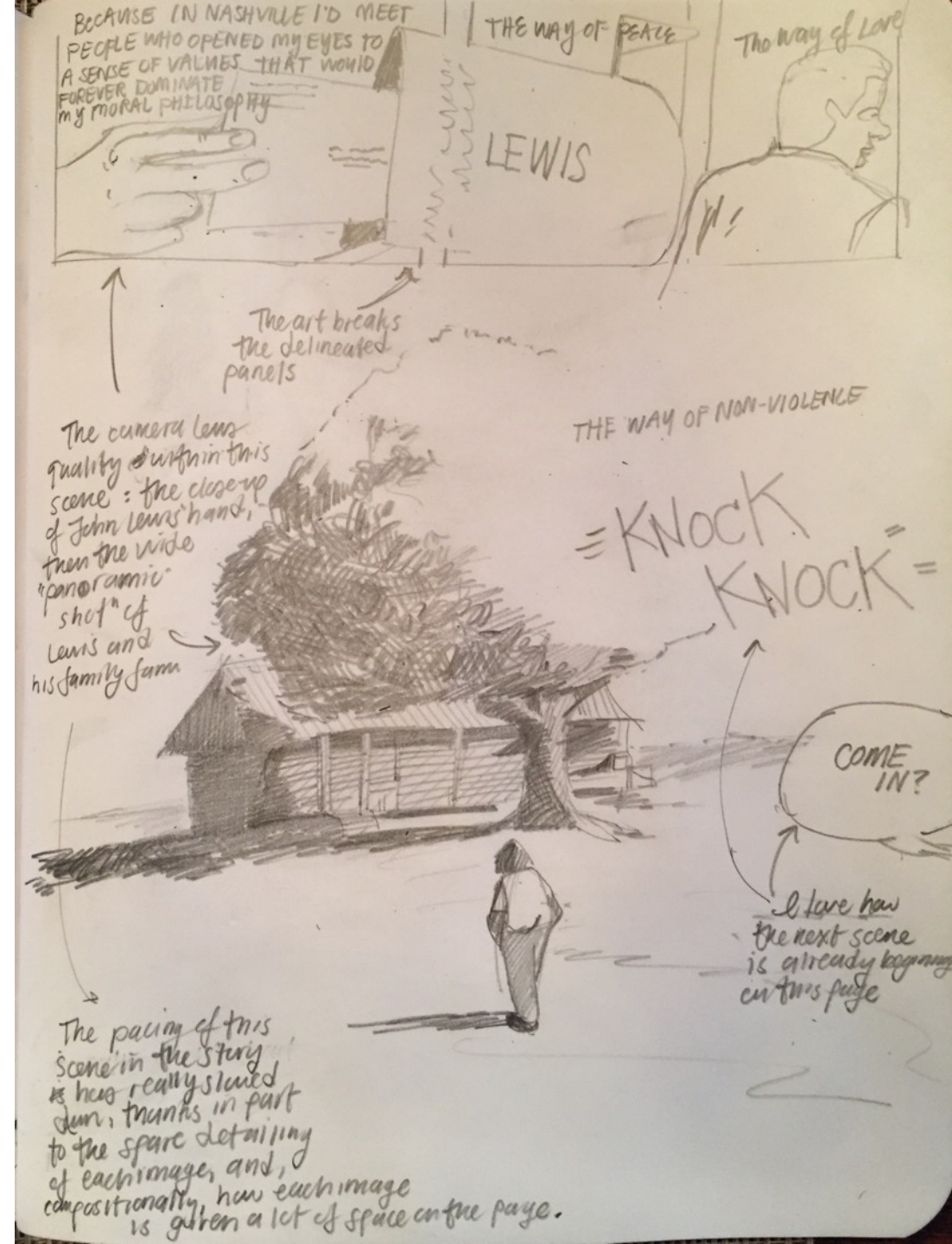
THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE

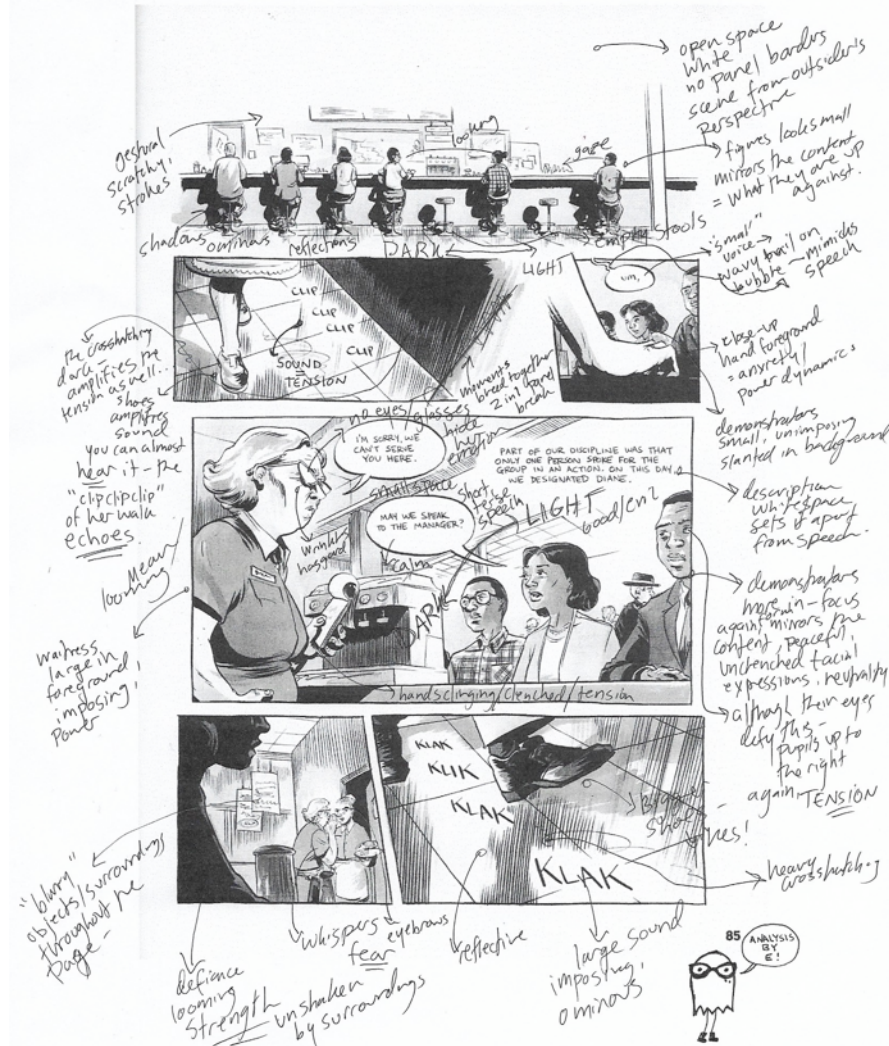
= KNOCK  
KNOCK =

COME  
IN?

I love how  
the next scene  
is already beginning  
in this page

The pacing of this  
scene in the story  
is here really slowed  
down, thanks in part  
to the spare detailing  
of each image, and,  
compositionally, how each image  
is given a lot of space on the page.





- Questions for Andrew Aydin: 1. Comics are uniquely adept at conveying emotion and empathy. How do you feel this story would have been different if it were not a comic? Why did you choose to tell this story in comic form?
2. As a comics-author, how much influence did you have on what appears visually in the comic? Can you speak about the writing process and how that gets translated by the artist into what is drawn? Do you have an image in your mind while you are writing?
3. The “Martin Luther King and The Montgomery Story” comic played a major role in influencing the civil rights activists and students. What do you feel gives comics this power? How do you feel our connection to comics is different/similar to other mediums? Do you think the MLK Montgomery story would have had such an impact if it were not a comic?

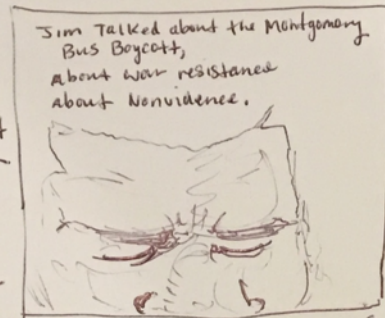


... Jim Lawson was a graduate student in the divinity school at Vanderbilt... He also represented... F.O.R. (Fellowship of Reconciliation)...

In thought

Paneling is creative and aids in explanation

\* Narrative Flows



Story is historically Relevant

He Spoke of Gandhi, This Little Brown Man from India using the way of nonviolence to free an entire nation of people.



Superimposed

Gandhi is a symbol of peace

AND HOW we could Apply nonviolence Just as Dr. King Did in Montgomery, All across America -- South AND North to eradicate some of the evils we all faced

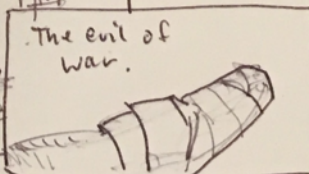


The evil of Racism,

Creative panels offer quick ideas

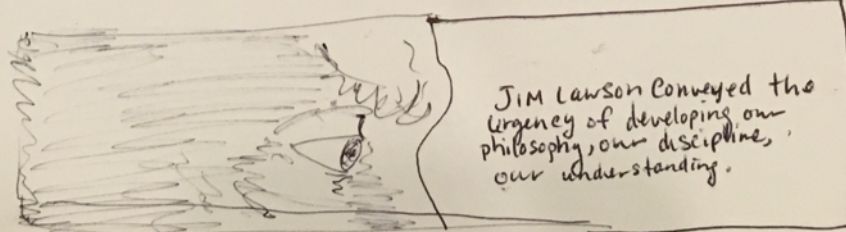


The evil of Poverty,



The evil of War.

sets emotional Tone



close up @ eye view emphasizes text

This assignment helped me delve into what the author and illustrator are conveying. Redrawing this page was nice in the act, and the process promoted further understanding panelling. I comprehend and take in more from comics since responding to these galleries.

Questions for Andrew Aydin:

1. What was the most favorable experience in writing *March* with John Lewis?
2. How did you become an Author?
3. What are your thoughts about comics?

## Tagged Panels:

these show that these moments/scenes are action scenes similar to fight scenes in traditional super hero comics, it Exaggerates how intense the panel fight scene is.

## Size of Panels:

By changing the sizes of Each panel it tells the reader what is the more important moment and amplifies the fear that is happening in the comic

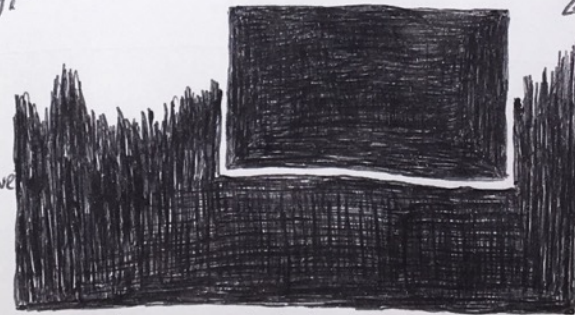
## Negative Space:

Makes the Comic look more fluid  
Allowing Space for the reader to imagine what is happening in between Panels



## Panel Breaking:

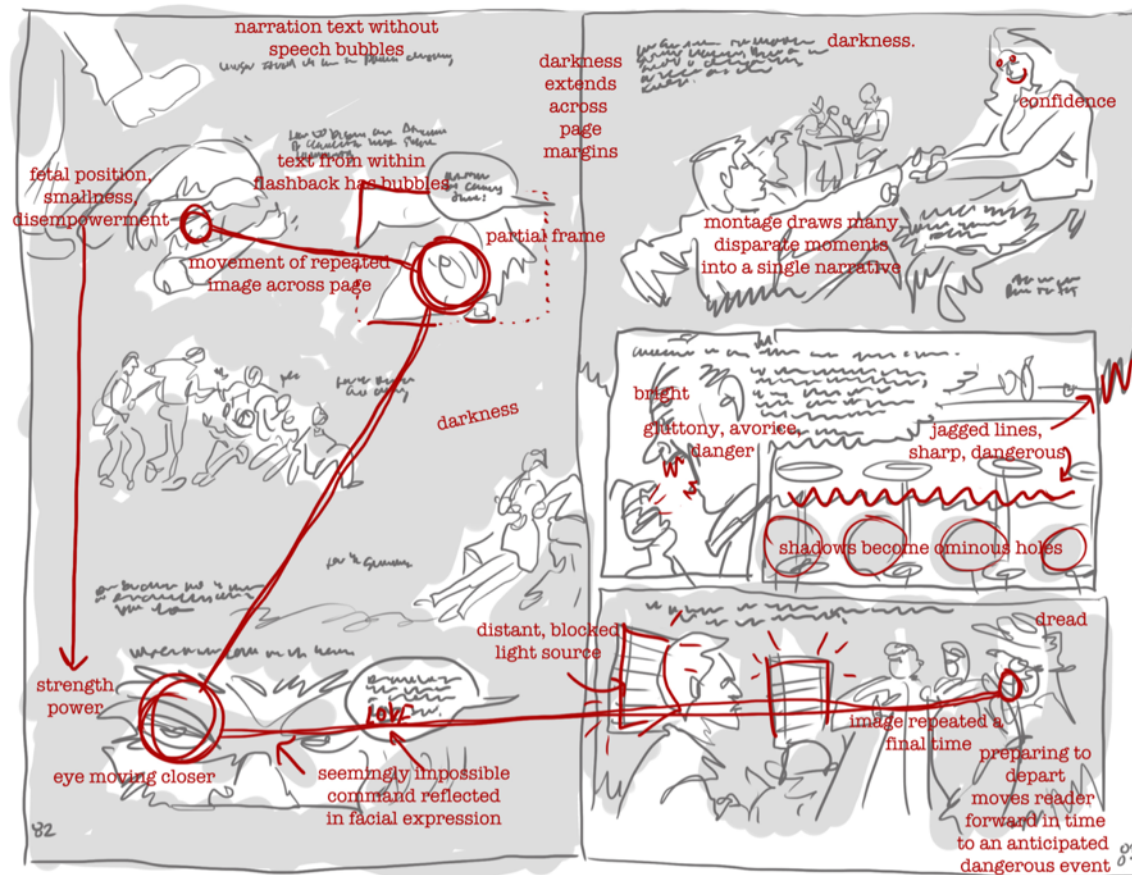
Arms Break through panel to put reader in the perspective of the person about to be knocked out by the shadow holding the Baton behind them.



## Fade to Black:

Resets the story; Also represents the character being Knocked out and falling into a deep slumber





Sometimes as a creator, one has a moment of "I nailed it!" -- knowing that you've done exactly what you set out to do. But when a creator produces a work that is not only someone else's memoir, but also deals with life experiences that are difficult or impossible for the creator to really comprehend, it must be difficult to ever really achieve that feeling. The affirmation, I assume, must come from others (i.e. from John Lewis). Can you talk about writing into the unknown without being able to rely on your own senses in this way?

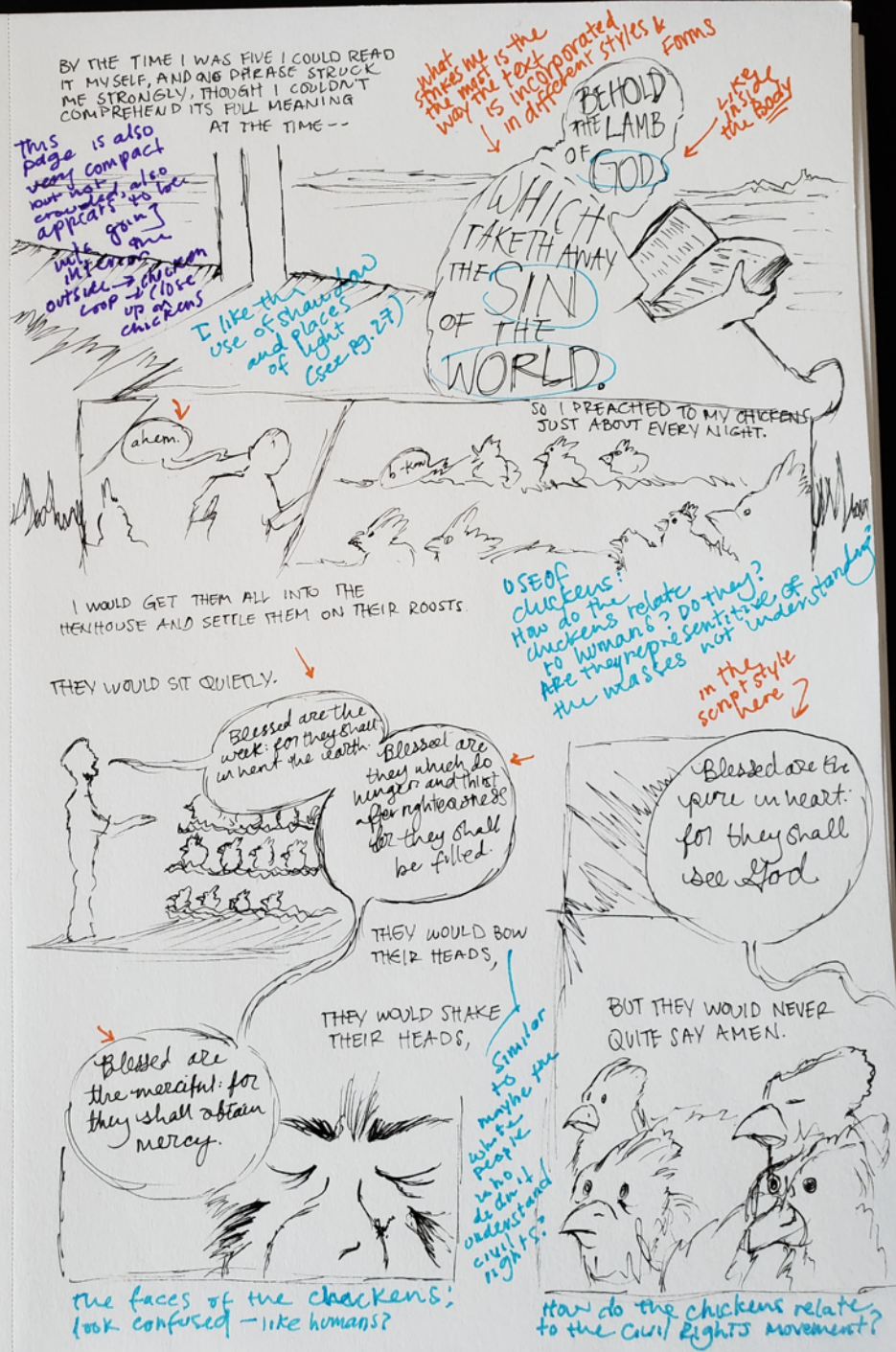
I'm curious how much Nate Powell's images differ from your original ideas when you were writing the text. How much do the drawings change your words? When were you pleasantly surprised by this? When was it a struggle?

I assume the text of this work was compiled from audio recordings of interviews. How much is word-for-word transcription? How much did you feel comfortable altering his words? Were there moments when Lewis insisted on a different wording that you found less impactful, or otherwise "better"? And how many hours of interviews did you have to take?

Can you speak about the way that MLK posthumously influenced this work? How much did you have to ask yourself, "Would MLK be okay with this?" And what an intense question to have to ask yourself!

Can you speak about the way that "MLK and the Montgomery Story" has influenced revolt and change in Latin America, South Africa, and the Middle East? Can you speak about the way it has influenced this work? Do you see March as a successor to that work? Can you speak about the role of comics in social change?





I found this page really creative with the use of different text styles and forms. Also throughout *March*, I kept thinking back to the significance of chickens and the symbolism they hold.

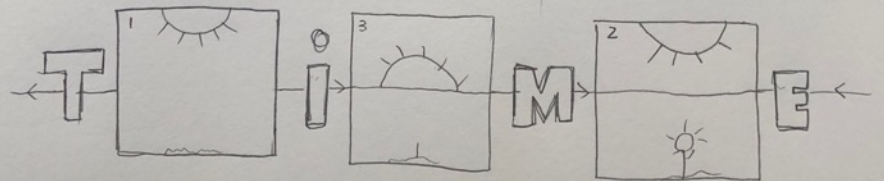
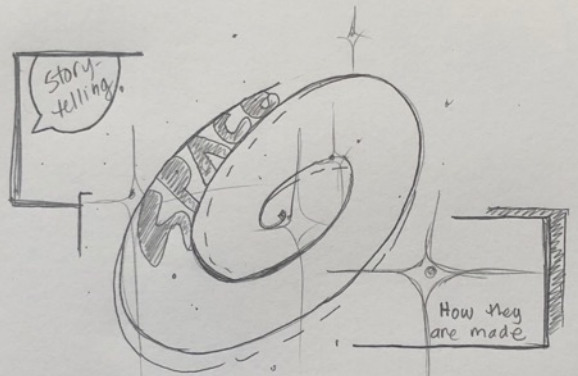
Questions:

1. While working and publishing *March*, what obstacles did you face?
2. Is there a page or a panel that is your favorite?
3. Do you consider *March* a comic or a graphic novel? Both? Why?

Sketchnote response to readings on comics time/space

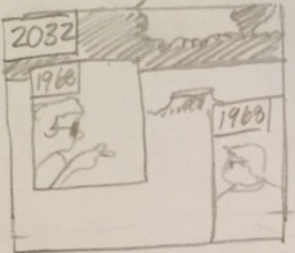


# JUXT/POSE



time is the comic  
(aspect to aspect)

Richard McGuire's  
"Here"



Encapsulating  
Einstein's  
Theory of Relativity?

(For McLand =  
Time is written  
in space)

interweaving timelines?  
or showcasing separate timelines  
as equal to one another?

Thierry Grobstein  
"The System of Comics"

"comic art is a  
combination of elements  
and codes, of which some  
are specific and others are  
not... it is the mobilization  
of all these components that  
constitutes the unique language  
of comics."

"Decoupage"

proportional and positional relationships  
amongst the panels

the character speaking, the frame of the panel,  
the neighboring balloons.

Moore & Veitch

- took a few readings  
to get a handle on the  
narrative, and its play  
on time

The comic seems to suggest  
something about karma  
and retribution  
and justice

## What Comics Do

By  
SPIROS  
TSAOUSIS



How do you discuss and  
theorize any artwork let alone  
comics when the artwork's power  
and force happens between the  
maker's and the receiver's ears?  
when it's such a subjective thing.

I feel  
Grobstein  
largely rewrites  
McLand's definition  
in more a theoretical,  
doctrinal tone



September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## HOW THINGS WORK OUT

- Alan Moore + Rick Veitch



Time: each panel has "window" in building. look into each year

shows us how comics, even though they are "flat", can play/distort/mold our perception of time in the story...

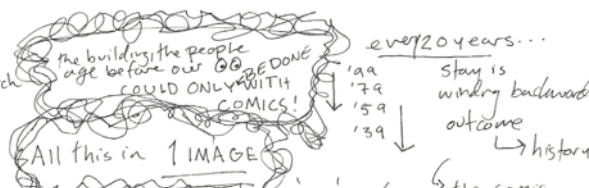
each panel has to correlate to the next in the sequence as well as its continuation on adjacent page! whoa!

what we know what we don't know time panels art dialogue background color structures

How does reading comic by each page (top to bottom) differ from reading straight across ("timeline")? Plays with how we receive Comics-information - how does knowing change our perception?

"unfinished symphonies"  
↳ "how the melody worked out"

COMICS  
↓  
"see the whole picture"



HERE

- Richard McGuire

Comics time-travel!  
one place, different times.  
Sometimes in the same panel.

Plus all this stuff!

comics are not always linear → exciting!  
(like time... duuuude...)

Thierry Groenstee

THE SYSTEM OF COMICS

Panel frame  
balloon  
strip  
page

What is the language of comics? "Qm Art"

Comics are an organic totality, parameters, procedures, elements + codes specific... and unspecific!



theoretical analytical

WHAT COMICS DO

- Spiros Tsoumis

Do Comics need to be defined?

CLOSURE in Comics

COMICS can be in different places, times, dimensions, moments...  
SIMULTANEOUSLY

comics can bridge these gaps in time/place

(spatialization)

Does this make sense?

another angle

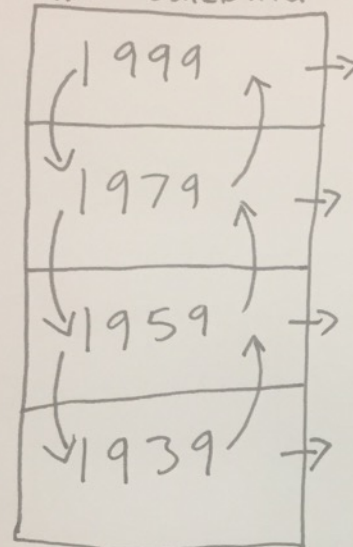
not what comics are but what comics do

not what comics are but what comics do

not what comics are but what comics do

## Time & Space in Comics

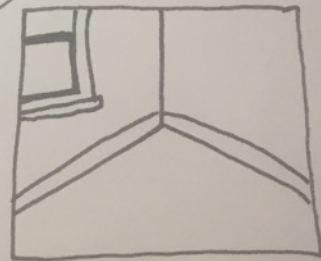
### KATZ BUILDING



"How Things Work Out" is amazing because it can be read in so many different ways and tell the same story. You can Read all the panels from the same year, Sequential time, Reverse: Future to Past, Or all at once how the page is drawn.



What Comics Do



Scott McCloud  
Very influential  
in explaining all the never ending possibilities  
With comics through  
Time & Space

"Here" is also great because the story is suppose to all take place in this one corner and depending on what time or year it is different things and people occupy the space.



MOORE  
&  
Veitch

"How Things Work  
out"

It's about time  
you took care of that

Richard McGuire  
"Here"

different  
time

living memory  
of a space

same

location

Thierry Groensteen "system of Comics"

TOOLS

panel panel solidarity panel panel  
BASIC unit of language of comics



décalpage

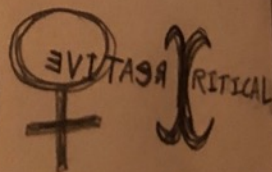
+ mise en page  
layout

PROPORTION

=  
materiality of the page

"An image is always an ~~utterable~~ ... it is  
also a describable and an interpretable." (91)

LANGUAGE/ART/CULTURAL PHENOMENON  
HOW ITS MADE/READ



CRITICAL FOCUS: Understanding  
comics

What Comics DO by: Spiros Tsaousis

R.C. Harvey

HYBRID  
FORM

But isolated,  
compartmentalized  
set properties of  
the medium  
- outside  
other media

vs. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Understanding comics as



McCloud

Understanding  
comics

[what they DO]

Space = time

see similarities in other media  
wider context

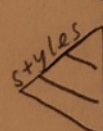
space =  
time in  
comics

1. Each  
Frame  
different  
space

2. def-Juxtaposed  
spatially

3. Whole  
page  
compositions

abstract = universal  
realistic = particular



closure  
presence/absence  
Gutter

6 types  
panels  
gutter + closure



1939

TOOK ME TILL THE SECOND PANEL TO SEE THE DATES

NOT OR BUT ALSO

\*ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO ENTIRE SCENES

COMICS CAN VALIDATE THE IDEA OF TIME BEING SPACE?

MADE vs READ

COMICS.

trying to define comics reminds me of trying to find the shadows to life. Is there really one answer? And can that ever really capture everything

ONE ASPECT W/ LAYERING OF TIME

→ MAKES ME GO BACK & FORWARD CONSTANTLY

1944 1960 1960 1960

"description of every constituent of the medium (the panel, the frame, the ball, the strip, the page...) is as rigorous as possible"

→ SEEMS TO APPLY TO MANY COMICS

One thing that really stuck with me is how time is different for everyone. There isn't one definition of time. And comics have a similar existence to them. When trying to come up with a concrete definition it seems as though you can't since they mean something different to each of us.

HOW THINGS WORK OUT

1999
1979
1959
1939

Movement to movement?

Action to Action?

Subject to subject?

Scene to scene?

Aspect to Aspect?

Twenty year gap From panel to panel

Illustrated in every page

THE MUSIC'S OVER, BABY

"Different moods of a snowman"

HERE

COMICS

EXPANSIVE

A little tougher to read

The dates were all over the panels

AESTHETICS !!

2029 2027 1997 1850

Each Panel has different sub panels with different scenes



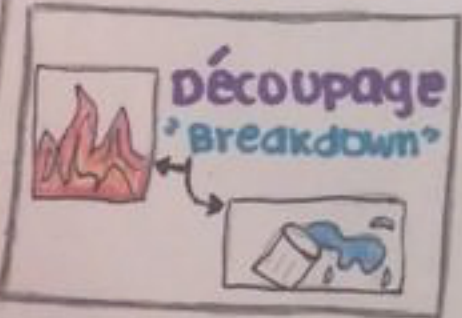
subject verb direct object



"picture cannot be broken down into discrete, stable, elementary units in the way that language can" (p690)

"System of comics"

THIERRY GROENSTEEN



partly refers to selective framing like in Richard McGuire's 'Here'



Diversity of Comics

Diversity of comics needs to be highlighted and not judged entirely based off the work of one person

Time = space ????

'here' and 'how things work out' actually uniquely play with time in space



**3-Person Collaborative Comic:** For this exercise, first person draws a blank page composition/panel layout, the second person adds the words and word supports (balloons, thought bubbles, caption boxes, sound effects, ...) - and third person took it home to draw whatever is going on in your comic. (I have done this with the drawing being second – it is for reasons I can speculate on, not as successful.)

