Graphic Novels :
A Privilege For Teachers and Students

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Introduction:

There are many ways to communicate a story, one can tell it, sing it, act it, write it, film it and can draw it. Each form of storytelling has its unique characteristics that separate it from the other forms. These distinguishing characteristics of each form does not indicate the superiority of one form over the other, on the contrary, it indicates the human ability to be creative on many levels. As students of literature, only the written form of a story is taken into account. One reason for the negligence of other forms of storytelling might be that singing and filming a story is not related to literature. But there has been a form of storytelling that uses words along with pictures which eventually became a genre of novels called graphic novel[1]. Graphic novels are "book – length, high quality comic books that introduce children's and adults to a wide range of literary fiction and nonfiction subjects."[2] Comic books, on the other hand, are sequential narratives that are supported by graphics and images thus combining words with images to form a narrative.[3] It has a distinctive form compared to other types of literature. Usually comic books tackle light, comic themes printed on glossy magazine – like paper, sold in bookstands and are relatively short.[4] While graphic novels, on the other hand, tackle more mature and dark themes, are printed on book – like papers, are sold in bookstores and they are longer. Thus, the term graphic novel was used to distinguish it from comic books.[5]

This genre of storytelling has been in existence since cave writings for stories, during prehistoric times, were documented in the form of symbolic pictures supported by words.[6] During the medieval period this

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[1] **Graphic Novel** is a type of comic book, usually with a lengthy and complex storyline similar to those of novels."Graphic Novels," Wikipedia, the free Online Encyclopedia. Retrieved at 1/3/2009.
[2] Jack Zipes, chief Editor, *Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, volume two, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p 166
[3] Ibid, Volume One, p 343
[4] "Graphic Novels," Wikipedia.
[5] Zipes, volume two, p 167
[6]" Graphic Novels," Wikipedia

form of storytelling was used to help explain narrations. Yet the most obvious depiction of this form of writing was first introduced by the Romantic Poet William Blake (1757-1826).[7] Blake, in **Marriage of Heaven and Hell** (1790 – 3) for example, introduced a story "in which the pictures and the 'storyline' are inseparable."[8] This type of storytelling became well known during the cold war when superheroes like superman, batman and Spiderman failed to attract people's attention.[9] People started to look for more serious and dark themes hence graphic novels emerged.[10]

Graphic novels started out as illustrated versions of bulky classical novels. Students, escaping from classical novels that are very long and difficult to read, resorted to CliffsNotes[11] and graphic novels for support. CliffsNotes provided students with everything they needed; chapter summaries, plot, setting, characterization, imagery etc and left no room for students to think and the only thing the student had to do is just read them.[12] While illustrated classics backed words with images a matter that attracted students and educators as well. Students were attracted to the new method of depicting a story because they are short, illustrated and intriguing. Educators embraced this type of storytelling because of two main reasons; the students were attracted to it and it required from the student to use their reading skills to read this form of storytelling as well as to think and evaluate. For educators, illustrated classics were the less of two evils.

The twentieth century marked a defining point in the formation of graphic novels.[13] In 1986 Art Spiegelman introduced his graphic novel **Maus: A Survivor's Tale** based on his father's experiences as a Jew during the Nazi's reign. The Nazis were depicted as cats and the Jews were depicted as mice. Then in the same year Alan Moore's **Watchmen** appeared followed by Frank Miller's **The Dark Knight Returns** (1987). These three graphic novels defined graphic novels as a creative literary form and gave this genre of novel its popularity.[14] Soon many graphic novels were adapted into films like The Mask (1994), X – Men (2000),

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[7] Ibid

[8] Ibid

[9] Zipes, Volume two, p 166

[10] Ibid

[11] **CliffsNotes** are a series of student study guides available primarily in the United States. The guides present and explain literary and other works in pamphlet form or online. Endorsers say the guides help readers understand complex works, while detractors say they let students avoid even reading them. "CliffsNotes," Wikipedia the free online Encyclopedia, retrieved at 9/3/2009.

[12] Rocco Versaci, **This Book Contains Graphic Language: Comics As Literature**, (New York: The continuum publishing group, 2007), p184

[13] Zipes, volume two, p167

[14] Gravett, p 12

Spiderman (2002), Ironman (2007), Batman; the Dark Night Returns (2008), Watchmen (2009).[15]

The popularity of comic books and graphic novels arouse many objections. People who objected to comic books and graphics argued that this form of storytelling encourage illiteracy[16] because readers resort to them instead of classical novels and thus are "handicapped in vocabulary building because in comics all the emphases is on the visual image not on the proper word."[17] Some educators stated that this form of narrative left nothing for the students' imagination, unlike classical novels that encouraged thinking and evaluation.[18] Others argued that comics and graphic novels have negative effects on children and teenagers due to their bleak mature methods of handling difficult issues like sex, aggression, murder, politics etc.[19] For example in 2006 when Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colon introduced *The 9/11 Report: A graphic adaptation* people were furious because those two writers depicted the horrific events of September eleven in comics and graphics novels for all children and teenagers to read arguing that "shielding children from the details of this horrific tragedy is appropriate."[20]

Fortunately all these objections made graphic novels even more popular to the extent that most children and teenagers read them extensively[21] after all the forbidden fruit are the sweetest. This trend forced many educators to take comics and graphic novels more seriously some of them even adapted them in their classrooms to enhance learning.

Graphic novels were first adapted by educators to teach English language. They are considered the first step in teaching reading skills for beginners[22] for many reasons. The first reason is that they are interesting thus immediately engage the students in the reading process. The second reason is that the language used in graphic novels is that of everyday English in contrast to the English found in classical novels.[23] The English of classical novels is out of date in some cases and difficult to comprehend by beginners who lack the basic vocabulary of English.[24]

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[15] "List of films based on English-language comics." Wikipedia the free online encyclopedia, retrieved at 1/3/2009.

[16] Versaci, p 184

[17] Versaci, P7

[18] Paul Gravett, *Graphic Novels:Everthing You Need To Know*, (USA: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), p10

[19] Ibid

[20] Quoted in Versatci, p 9

[21] Versatci, p 1.

[22] Kimberly Campbell, *Less Is More: Teaching Literature With Short Texts, Grades 6 – 12*, (USA: Stenhouse Publishers, 2007), p 209

[23] Terry Thompson, *Adventures In Graphic: Using Comics And Graphic Novels To Teach Comprehension 2 – 6 Grades*, (USA: Stenhouse Publishers, 2008), p 18

[24] Ibid.

Also graphic language is written as it is pronounced a matter that prepares the beginner to spoken words and their difference to written words.[25] For example, when a beginner reads "I WAAN GO" and understand that it means "I want to go" he will gradually come to realize the difference between the two forms thus, able to better identify spoken words. It is like repeating speech by rereading a word. In addition to that, the pictures help in enhancing vocabulary. Beginners will be able to associate meanings with pictures thus learn them better.[26] Visualization is an important element in learning yet academic books, dedicated for older students, suffer from the lack of illustrations and graphics.[27]

Graphic novels are also used in teaching literature and Kanter can be considered the first advocate of this trend. Albert Kanter was a Russian immigrant to America and was a businessman. Failing to force his son to read classics instead of comics, Kanter thought of adapting classics into a medium that attracted young readers the most, graphics. He hoped that reading graphic adaptations of classics will encourage young readers, specially his son, to seek the original texts and in the process gaining some financial profit as well.[28] Publishing many titles, his business prosper then it was adapted by other publishing companies. The term 'Classics Illustrated' (1941 – 71) was first introduced by Kanter then it changed along with the publishing companies till finally it came to be called Classic graphics.[29] The popularity of this trend and it great appeal to children and young adults turned educator's attention to this form of storytelling. Robert Emans, an educator, made a study comparing Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), the original, with its adapted graphic version and concluded that graphic classics are "the solution to our problems of how to make learning painless and lasting."[30] While Ruth Stein, another educator, who compared Mark Twin's *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Fin* (1884) with its graphic adaptation stated that the graphic version of the novel looked "watered down and distorted."[31]

Yet in an age where cell phones, satellite and internet prevail classical novels are a challenge for any teacher and student. Thus, educators knowing that a student can simply get a thorough analysis of any literary work with one click started to look at graphic novels more seriously. Consequently, educators encourage students to read graphic classics because they knew that students are "frightened by the

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid, p 92.
[27] Ibid, p 49.
[28] Versaci, p 184.
[29] Ibid, p 186.
[30] Quoted in Versaci, p 184
[31] Quoted in versic, p 185.

overwhelming amount of text in traditional literature."[32] This can also help in including more literary works with wide verity in a curriculum because graphic novels are rather short. Graphic novels also teach students the elements of fiction like plot, characterization, setting, imagery, etc. Although the objectors on this type of novels claimed that graphic novels leaves nothing for the imagination, many teachers of literature disagree stating that graphic novels force students to use their imagination more harder. Due to the limited text and length of graphic novels compared to classical novels, much information is left for the reader to induce either from the fusion of words and pictures or from the page's layout.[33] It engages the student in decoding the art to understand the word for this type of novels is filled with symbolism and have a distinctive manner of reading.

All words are written in upper case letters except for the title which is written in mixed case letter.[34]

The title does not necessary comes at the beginning, in many cases the title come after stating the main theme or the appearance of the main character.

Narration takes the form of panels[35] that contains words and images, images only, words only or it can be empty each used to convey different layers of meaning. Usually panels are separated by bold line gutters[36] and the absence of gutters emphasizes the importance of that panel over the other guttered panels. Each page consists of a certain number of panels forming a layout. The page layout provides additional meaning to the separate panels. The most important theme or character usually takes the center focus of a layout.[37]

Words take various forms. Thoughts are placed into boxes while dialogues are placed in speech balloons.[38] Speech balloons are usually circular and end in a tail drawn close to the mouth of the speaker. There are two types of speech balloons; in – panel speech balloon and off – panel speech balloon. In – panel speech balloons are those drawn near the character that is within the panel while off – panel speech balloon is

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[32] Campbell, p 18.

[33] Gravett, p 10

[34] Zipes, volume two, P 166.

[35] A *panel* is an individual frame, or single drawing, in the multiple-panel sequence of a comic strip or comic book. A panel consists of one drawing that depicts a single moment. "Panel," Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, retrieved at 1/3/2009.

[36] Anina Bennett, "VISUAL LANGUAGE: WRITING FOR COMICS" <http://www.bigredhair.com/work/comics.html, retrieved at 1/3/2009

[37] **Page layout** is the part of graphic design that deals in the arrangement and style treatment of elements (content) on a page. "Page layout," Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, retrieved at 1/3/2009.

[38] **Speech balloons** (also **speech bubbles**, **dialogue balloons**, or **word balloons**) are a graphic convention used most commonly in comic books, strips, and cartoons to allow words (and much less often, pictures) to be understood as representing the speech or thoughts of a given character in the comic. "Speech Balloons," Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, retrieved at 1/3/2009.

drawn in a panel with no character and the tail pointing towards one of the edges of a panel. Sometimes information for the reader is provided in captions that are either placed under the panel or extend within it.[39]

Speech balloons are read from left to right and from top to bottom. Multiple word balloons by two characters should be read according to their order from top to bottom. If one takes Pedro Lopez's[40] graphic adaptation of **The Cask Of Amontillado** (1846), Edgar Alan Poe's last short story, the distinctive elements of this form can be almost immediately seen and sensed.

The story starts with a Montresor vowing to revenge from Fortunato because he injured and insulted him. He did not threaten to kill Fortunato, on the contrary, kept smiling at him least not to suspect him. During the crowded carnival at dusk Montresor decided to kill Fortuanto. In order to tempt him, Montresor told Fortunato that he bought a cask of fine wine, Amontillado, and he could not find him to take his advice first. He also told him that he is going to go to Luchesi for advice. Fortuanto was proud of his knowledge of wine thus begged Montresor to take him to his cask in order to judge whether the wine is truly Amontillado or not. Montresor took Fortunato to his house and then to the dark, damp cold vaults below. After walking through the vast vaults and reaching a dead end Montresor chained Fortunato to the wall then walled him in the recess. Fifty years have passed yet no one ever knew that Montresor killed Fortunato thus his bones remained in peace.

The graphic adaptation of this story is going to be studied in details to show the depth of this form of novels in teaching literary elements through reading words as well as pictures.

> **Thought Box**

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[39]Ibid.

[40] Pedro Lopez (1974 -) is a Danish comic artist who is inspired by Italian crime thrillers and dark science fiction movies. Tom Pomplun, **Graphic Classics: Edgar Alan Poe**, volum one, 3rd edition, (Wisconsin: Eureka Productions, 2006), p 144.

The first panel shows the setting. It is well defined by the first panel. Black and white images are used to show contrast in characterization and theme. Furthermore, the panel shows people celebrating during a carnival wearing different costumes. The setting is defined even before the title of the story.

The title is mixed case while the whole text is upper case.
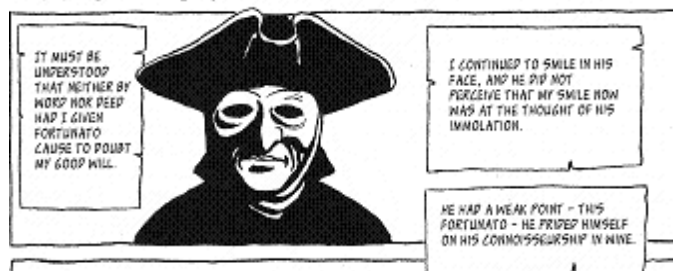
The second panel shows Characterization.

Montresor is wearing a mask that hides his face thus enhances his horrible emotions. He is placed in the central panel to indicate that he is the center f the story.

The third panel shows contrast between the two characters which is vividly pictured through their choice of costumes. Fortunato wearing a clown costume and his first expression is wonder and silliness.

The first page consists of three panels forming the layout of the page. Montresor takes up the central focus of the page's layout indicating his importance and his personality[41] from his choice of costume and dead expression of an eyeless face. Notice in the third panel Montresor's nose is portrayed as being long and pointed as if a dagger positioned at the back of Fortunato to strengthen the thought of stabbing him from behind.

Montresor, in the original story,[42] states the conditions of his revenge while in this adaptation there is no room for these details, thus, the reader has to infer these conditions from the character's choice of time to revenge during a festival where he can disguise himself from others without being suspected. Also the detailed description of Fortunato's clothes is substituted with one single image. In the original story the mask that Montresor wears is black while here it is white.

In the second page the contras between the two characters is reinforced through Montresor's position within each panel.

The first panel focuses on Fortunato. He is portrayed as being thin and small compared to Montrosers. His words and expression in this panel will be consistence through all the panels that follows. Fortunato's surprise and disbelief is strengthened with the use of emotion lines over Fortunato's head.

The second panel focuses on Montrosers. He is portrayed as being tall and huge with a dead face.

The third panel has no gutter to intensify the fact that Fortunato is unconsciously begging for his own death while Montresor is careless and cold.

[41] Versaci, p 16.
[42] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Works Of Edgar Alan Poe in One Volume*, (New York: Black's readers service company, 1927), pp 205 – 9.

The fourth and the last panel shows Montresor's intelligence in seducing Fortunato to his death. The words that Montresor speak are contrasted with his picture. He refuses to take Fortunato to his vaults claiming that he is worried on Fortunato's health while his picture shows a heartless man with two black holes in the place of eyes as if mirroring his black revengeful soul.

The layout of the page focuses on the position of characters within the panel. Montresor, expect in the first panel, never faces Fortunato, on the contrary he gives him his back in three panels out of four. In the first panel he faces his enemy, throws the bate then he turns his back on him a matter that emphasizes his cleverness and wickedness at the same time. By now the reader infers that Fortunato has two weak points, wine and his pride of knowing wines. In the original story these two weaknesses are stated clearly yet in this adaptation the reader has to infer his love for wine from his repetitions of the word Amontillado, a rare type of wine. His pride in being a professional in wines is inferred from his reaction to the name of Luchesi, who is apparently a wine professional that triggers Fortunato to belittle him saying he cannot differentiate Amontillado from Sherry.

These two pages show the vastness of Montresor's skulled, boned and wined vaults. Reaching his vaults Montresor take off his costume.

The first panel in left page shows a dark vault lighted by a torch in Montresor's hand while Fortunato has no torch. In the original story they both have torches. An image of a skull appears high above fortunate's head as if to show the reader that Fortunato is closer to his death than he knows. The second panel is the black shadow of fortunate coughing. He is portrayed in black color so as his coughing as if coughing his life out. Again the panel has no gutter to emphasize the strength of this image. Fortunato is portrayed as being sickened by the dampness shown through his painful black cough. This sheds light on Montresor's personality for he sees his enemy weak but nevertheless kills him. Montrosers seems to be weak for he chooses to strike his enemy when he is down a fact that overshadows the manner in which he chains Fortuanto and kill him. In the third panel, in which Montresor asks fortunate how long he had this cough, two rats are portrayed from both middle sides of the panel o intensify the evil in Montrosers words for in Christianity the rat is the symbol of the devil.[43]

The layout of the page on the right shows the dominance of wine and Fortuanto. Wine is the product of grape's decay[44] just like skulls are the product of human body's decay. The third panel shows a skull resting between two bottles of wine. The page starts with a wine[45] panel and ends up with Fortuanto holding wine in his hands while translating Montresor's family motto "Ah! None attacks me with impunity. Good!" The last panel shows irony for Fortuanto drinks the wine in celebration for translating Montresor's Latin motto (foreign words are placed in speech balloons that are of a different style than the rest of speech balloons)[46] while the reader knows that Fortuanto is drinking for Montresor's manner of revenge upon him. Montresor will attack him with impunity beyond reason.

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[43]"Rat," *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Animal Symbolism in Art*, (New York: the continuum International Publishing Group), 2003, P 343

[44] 'Wine," Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, retrieved at 9/3/2009.
[45] In Christianity wine is the symbol of Christ's blood. Ibid.
[46] Bannett.

These pages show the horrifying vaults of Montresor that are filled with bones and skills. One might wonder why his family vaults have obvious human remines. By this point of the story the colors of Fortunato's costume seems to darken the closer he gets to his doom. Fortuanto proceeds to the recess to which Montresor led him hoping to see the Amontillado. He walks to his doom intoxicated as clearly shown from his manner of walking.

In the right page Montresor's face is tempered with a faint shadow of a wicked smile for the first time in the story. Fortuanto walks into the recess and is shocked to find nothing. The huge question mark printed in a large bold font to indicate confusion and ignorance.[47] Stunned with confusion Fortuanto was seized by Montresor and chained to the wall. The three last panels have one thing in common, the key in Montresor's hand a matter that indicates his control over Fortuanto and the situation. The first of the three last panels emphasizes Fortunato's bewilderment and lack of resistance. Notice the middle panel has no gutter a matter that

[47]Bannett.

guides the reader that this panel is a zoom on[48] locking Fortunato in chains. Above the lock there is a sound line 'Click' in large letters to indicate the loudness of the sound.[49]

Only when Montresor start building the wall to close the recess that Fortuanto realized that he is being attacked. The horror is clear from his wide open eyes and mouth. Montresor is unable to see Fortunato through the dark deep recess thus is guided by the sounds and words that Fortunato utters. A small black panel follows to indicate the darkness and the silence. Montresor continues to build his wall in a fast tempo indicated by the small panels[50] yet when Fortuanto starts to scream again Montresor takes a rest and only resumes his work when Fortuanto is silent again. Montresor rests on the pile of skulls and bones carelessly and chains are drawn hanging from the top of the panel to the pile of the bones and skulls. This might indicate that Montresor feels he is one with the death the surrounds him, or he is chained to it. The layout of the page is rather darker than the other pages.

[48] Versaci, p 75.

[49] Bannett.

[50] Versaci, p 15.

IT WAS NOW MIDNIGHT, AND MY TASK WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. I HAD COMPLETED THE TENTH TIER, AND I HAD FINISHED A PORTION OF THE LAST; THERE REMAINED BUT A SINGLE STONE TO BE FITTED AND PLASTERED IN. I STRUGGLED WITH ITS WEIGHT; I PLACED IT PARTIALLY IN ITS DESTINED POSITION.

HA! HA! HA! – HE! HE! A VERY GOOD JOKE INDEED!

AN EXCELLENT JEST!

In the right page, darkness prevails both in events and in color. The face of Montresor peeking through the space as if peeping through the reader's soul then the terrified eyes of silent Fortunato, then the last stone that Montresor struggled with its weight. Was it possible that he struggled with its weight because killing Fortunato is finally weighing on his conscience or he just became tired? Two black panels follow to indicate the length of Fortunato's silence and the utter darkness he is in. but instead of a cry he laughs thinking that Montresor is joking with him. Notice the lines around the speech balloon's tail that indicate talking through an object, in Fortunato's case, talking through his grave. The reader is locked with Fortuanto within his grave thus the darkness and inability to see.

The last page takes the reader out of Fortunato's grave and places him beside Montresor. Thus the reader is able to see and the first thing to be seen is the large immune wall and hears Fortunato's words then, Montresor's cold face and his careless repetition of words. Feeling Montresor's coldness Fortunato screams in a loud terrified voice indicated by the lightening speech balloon with large bold letters[51] and once again

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[51] "Speech Balloons," Wikipedia.

Montresor only repeats the words. He is out of the panel as if he is out of his guilt and crime.

Half a century has past since Montresor killed Fortunato yet no one ever knew his crime. Guiltless Montresor hopes that Fortunato's bones will lay in peace as the have been for fifty years. A reader might wonder if all the bones and skulls found in the vaults belong to other victims that Montresor chose not to tell the reader about. The story ends with Fortunato's skeleton in clown's costume, a skull like the crypt that hides his grave.

Conclusion

Graphic novels are a complex form of storytelling that should not be ignored or dismissed as trivial. True some graphic novels are below standards but so are some classical novels, films, songs and plays. Having bad examples does not mean dismissing the whole medium as being unworthy for if that is the case then most things in life should be dismissed as well. Apparently both the pictures and the words can form a complex piece of literary work and it can be beneficial on many levels. As mentioned earlier, graphic novels can be used to teach language for beginners due to the simple everyday language that they use, supporting a word with a picture can enhance learning vocabulary as well as developing reading skills.

Graphic novels can also be used to teach the elements of literature like plot, theme and characterization as well as introducing students to a wide variety of literary works in an academic syllabus. Graphic novels, being shorter than traditional texts and are of great appeal to students, give the teachers the ability to include variety of literary works wither graphic novels or graphic classics. The short story of Edger Allan Poe,

The Cask of Amontillado (1946) proves the case. The graphic adaptation of the story provides the reader with the same information that the original text provide yet different at the same time. The reader, upon reading the original, feels the wickedness on Montresor through his repeated pleas for Fortunato to go back least his illness increases. He helps Fortunato to walk by holding his hands and feels hesitant for a moment. A reader, who is reading the adaptation also feels Montresor's wickedness yet not through the same acts. Montresor never holds Fortunato's hand in the graphic, he is never hesitant and his face is dead thus his wickedness. Graphic novels also encourage reading literary text instead of resorting to notes and pamphlets that hands information to students on golden plates.

Reading graphics not only develop reading skills and literary evolution, for they can develop the ability to read and appreciate art through the graphics. This aspect widens the horizon of the reader to include fine arts in his interests. Formed as a film on paper graphic novels enables the reader to slowdown and repeat the narration at demand. This resemblance to films helps readers develop their ability to understand films even better.

Since there are many styles for learning and each student is endowed with certain type or types of intelligence that needs to be addressed in order for learning to be effective. Graphic novels address many styles in one form thus they should not go unnoticed.

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Abstract

English language teachers suffer from the student's lack of reading skills while literature teachers suffers from the students' abandonment of original texts and turning to notes and pamphlets instead. These problems were solved more than thirty years ago yet failed to attract our attention.

Educators found the solution is to use graphic novels to teach English and literature in their classrooms. English language students did not have reading skills due to the complexity of the texts offered to them. Thus students were introduced to graphic novels for four main reasons; they are interesting, short, the language is that of everyday life and words are supported with pictures making vocabulary easier to learn.

Literature teachers, on the other hand, found in graphic novels their salvation from notes that handed the students information on a golden plate. Graphic novels can teach the basic elements of literature like any bulky classical novel. Their shortness is another positive element for teacher for they can include more texts and a wider verity in any curriculum.

The aim of every teacher is to improve his students and his styles in teaching. Graphic novels can achieve this aim. A comparison is made between the original text of Poe's ***The Cask of Amontillado*** (1946) and its graphic adaption. The results showed that both literary works can achieve the same aims and even more.

الخلاصة

ان اساتذة اللغة الانكليزية يعانون من المستوى المتدني لقراءة الطلاب وكذلك الحال عند اساتذة الادب الانكليزي الذين يعانون من اهمال الطلاب للنصوص الادبية الاصلية و الاستعاضة عنها بملخصات او ملازم. ان هذه المشاكل تم حلها منذ ثلاثين سنة ولكن الحل فشل في جذب اهتمامنا الى وقتنا الحاضر.

لقد وجد التربويون الحل في استخدام الروايات المصورة لتدريس اللغة والادب الانكليزي في دروسهم. حيث ان طلاب اللغة الانكليزية مستوى قراءتهم متدنى بسبب صعوبة النصوص المعطاة لهم. لذا تم تدريسهم الروايات المصورة لاربعة اسباب رئيسة: كونها مثيرة للاهتمام، قصيرة و اللغة فيها هي اللغة المتداولة والكلمات مدعومة بالصور مما يجعل عملية تعلم المفردات اسهل.

اما مدرسو الادب الانكليزي فقد وجدوا في الروايات المصورة انقاذ لهم وبديل مناسب عن الملخصات والملازم التي عادة ما يلجا اليها الطلاب والتي تقدم لهم المعلومات جاهزة على طبق من ذهب ودون الحاجة الى التفكير. ان الروايات المصورة يمكنها ان تعلم العناصر الاساسية للرواية بنفس كفاءة الروايات الكلاسيكية الضخمة الحجم. حيث ان قلة عدد صفحات الروايات المصورة مقارنة بالروايات الكلاسيكية يعطي للمدرس امكانية تضمين نصوص اكثر وذات تنوع اكبر في اي فصل دراسي.

ان هدف كل مدرس هو تطوير اساليبه في التدريس بالاظافة الى قدرات طلابه. ان الروايات المصورة تحقق هذا الهدف. لقد تم اجراء مقارنة بين النص الاصلي لقصة الكاتب ادغار الن بو   *صندوق الامنتلادو* (1946) مع النص المصور. لقد اظهرت المقارنة بان كلا النصين يحققان نفس الهدف الا ان النص المصور يحققه بصورة مختلفة بالاظافة الى تحقيقه لاهداف اخرى.