Visualizing the Romance: Uses of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Narratives in Comics

Derek Parker Royal

Classic works of American literature have been adapted to comics since the medium, especially as delivered in periodical form (i.e., the comic book), first gained a pop cultural foothold. One of the first texts adapted by Classic Comics, which would later become Classics Illustrated, was James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, which appeared in issue #4, published in August 1942. This was immediately followed the next month by a rendering of *Moby-Dick* and then seven issues later by adaptations of two stories by Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Headless Horseman.” As M. Thomas Inge points out, Edgar Allan Poe was one of the first, and most frequent, American authors to be translated into comics form (*Incredible Mr. Poe* 14), having his stories adapted not only in early issues of *Classic Comics*, but also in *Yellow-jacket Comics* (1944–1945) and Will Eisner’s *The Spirit* (1948). What is notable here is that almost all of the earliest adaptations of American literature sprang not only from antebellum texts, but from what we now consider classic examples of literary romance, those narrative spaces between the real and the fantastic where psychological states become the scaffolding of national and historical morality. It is only appropriate that comics, a hybrid medium where image and text often breed an ambiguous yet pliable synthesis, have become such a fertile means of retelling these early American romances.

Given this predominance of early nineteenth-century writers adapted to the graphic narrative form, it is curious how one such author has been underrepresented within the medium, at least when compared to the treatment given to his contemporaries. The work of Nathaniel Hawthorne, unarguably one of the most canonical examples of antebellum American writing, has seen relatively little attention within comics. Outside of a few adaptations of *The Scarlet Letter* and *House of the Seven Gables*, one would be pressed to find significant visual translations of Hawthorne’s fiction. And what comics adaptations there actually are of Hawthorne’s work are uneven at best, especially when
compared to the attention that other nineteenth-century authors have received. In the examples of Poe, Melville, and Mark Twain, their most canonical and anthologized works have all been translated into comics form. “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Pit and the Pendulum,” “The Raven,” Typee, Moby-Dick, Billy Budd, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, just to name a few, have seen multiple adaptations into comics form.

Yet, a survey of the adaptations given to Hawthorne’s narratives would show that those stories that have best defined the author’s oeuvre are represented little, if at all, in comics. Regarding Hawthorne’s many tales and sketches—and one could make the case that the author’s literary reputation is largely built upon these short fictional pieces—almost none of those that critics would consider “canonical” have been adapted to the comics form. There has been one rendering of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” adapted by Lance Tooks in 2008, and a comics translation of “Feathertop” that appeared in a 1974 issue of Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion. But the tales that Hawthorne is best known for, and the ones that are most anthologized and most frequently considered by scholars, have been noticeably absent in comics. Of his short stories, most of what has been adapted have been Hawthorne’s handling of the Greek myths that appeared in A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys (1852) and Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys (1853), and those in comics that were marketed specifically for children. Adaptations of his longer fictional works are likewise skewed. In terms of his novels, The House of the Seven Gables (1851) has, surprisingly, received almost as much attention as has The Scarlet Letter (1850), and the latter has never received a satisfyingly full treatment. Indeed, if we were to look at the entire body of work that comprises the various—and relatively minimal—Hawthorne narratives into comics form, we could divide the adaptations into three primary categories: short fiction for children, major tales, and the novels.

**Short Fiction for Children**

In the fall of 1953, and following the success of the *Classics Illustrated* title—with “sales in the millions” and as ubiquitous “a part of growing up in postwar America as baseball cards, hula hoops, Barbie dolls, or rock ‘n’ roll” (Willam B. Jones 1)—the Gilberton Company launched a
new title specifically targeting a less mature audience. _Classics Illustrated Junior_ included adaptations of folk tales (à la Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm), fables, and myths with uncomplicated themes; these tales were easily accessible and would appeal to a younger readership. Some of the stories adapted included “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (the title’s very first issue), “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” “Johnny Appleseed,” “The Little Mermaid,” “Paul Bunyan,” and “Thumbelina.” Compared to the regular _Classics Illustrated_ title, the art in the _Junior_ series was less detailed or elaborate, and the images were more cartoony or iconic, and the storylines were relatively simple.

Four of Hawthorne’s “Girls and Boys” tales were adapted for this series: “The Golden Touch” (issue #534, January 1957), “The Golden Fleece” (#544, November 1957), “The Magic Pitcher” (#548, March 1958, titled “The Miraculous Pitcher” in _Wonder Book_), and “Three Golden Apples” (#555, October 1958). And, true to the _Junior_ series, the adaptations of these four stories were straightforward, iconic in their art, and free of the narrative leveling that Hawthorne brought to original stories.

Although the actual stories in _A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys_ and _Tanglewood Tales for Girls and Boys_—which, it is important to keep in mind, were Hawthorne’s adaptations of various Greek myths—were basically direct and unambiguous, at least when compared to his earlier “adult” narratives. The author nonetheless complicates the stories’ delivery through the narration. In _Wonder Book_, Hawthorne, or at least his fictional persona, prefaxes his tales by introducing the reader to Eustace Bright, an eighteen-year-old student at Williams College with a penchant for classic myths and who revels in sharing these stories with young children. The entirety of _Wonder Book_ is structured this way, with Bright functioning as a narrative frame for each story, introducing the context of each telling and referencing himself in the first person throughout his tales. What is more, Hawthorne inserts brief “After the Story” interludes following each tale, where Bright and the children interact, comment on the story that has just been told, and draw attention to their narrative events. As a result, the actual tales in _Wonder Book_, as unsophisticated as they might be, are nonetheless placed in multiple frames that give the stories more narrative depth. The outermost frame is that of the book’s narrator, the “Hawthorne” figure, functioning as an extradiegetic narrator, who not only introduces us to Eustace Bright
and the children in the “Tanglewood Porch: Introductory to ‘The Gorgon’s Head’” chapter, but who also contextualizes his retelling of the Greek myths in the book’s Preface. After that comes the narrative frame of Eustace Bright, the actual teller of the tales, and along with him, operating almost as an intermediate structuring device between Bright and the story proper, is Bright’s post-story commentary with the children that places what we’ve just read into narrative context. Then there is the story itself, the retelling of the myth that sits at the heart of this collection. And while *Tanglewood Tales* does not frame the stories in the same manner—the “Hawthorne” narrator introduces Eustace Bright as the tales’ teller at the beginning of the text, in “The Wayside: Introductory” chapter, but Bright does not foreground himself in the stories that follow—there is nonetheless a similar, albeit tempered, narrative framing that takes place.

Yet in the *Classics Illustrated Junior* comics, there is no such leveling, no mediating and self-aware presence who is setting up the stories and revealing them to the reader. There is only one narrative level, that of a detached omniscient narrator, or “reciter,” with zero (or non-) focalization. Each of these four adaptations read in a fairy tale-like manner, beginning with such phrases as “Once upon a time . . .” (“The Golden Touch”), “Many years ago . . .” (“The Golden Fleece”), “In times long ago . . .” (“The Magic Pitcher”), and “Long ago . . .” (“Three Golden Apples”), as if these tales were drawn directly from legend and bore no temporal or authorial stamp. Indeed, there is very little of Nathaniel Hawthorne in these *Junior* comics, and if readers were not aware that these stories were taken from *Wonder Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*, they would be at a loss to pinpoint the original text. (In fact, both “The Golden Touch” and “The Golden Fleece,” the two earliest instances of Hawthorne in the *Junior* series, neglect to mention the author as the originating source, so readers could rightly assume that these stores are actually adaptations of the ancient myths themselves.) What further complicates these four adaptations is that Hawthorne himself adapts these stories from myth and legend into his own time—as he points out in his Preface to *Wonder Book*, “No epoch of time can claim a copyright in these immortal fables . . . . [T]hey are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality” (7:3)—so the comic-book translation of
these pieces are just one more attempt to “clothe” the original narrative. But this graphic clothing does nothing to particularize Hawthorne’s use of the myths. In (re)adapting the tales in this manner, the creators behind *Classics Illustrated Junior* whitewash any trace of Hawthorne and in doing so, eliminate any text- or era-specific “garniture of manners and sentiment.”

A similar effect occurs with “The Minotaur,” which was adapted for issue #71 of *Creepy* magazine in 1975.11 While the art in this comic is more sophisticated than that found in the earlier “Girls and Boys” adaptations—they were intended for a more mature audience—the story nonetheless translates in ways similar to those found in *Classics Illustrated Junior*.

Hawthorne is credited as the original author of tale on the title page, yet there are no authorial markers in the comic that would lead the reader to believe that it was based on a Hawthorne narrative. Also like the *Junior* pieces, the story is told from a detached omniscient point of view, narrated in a straightforward manner, and highlights the basic plot points of the original myth: Prince Theseus of Athens travels to Crete to
confront the King Minos and his Minotaur, meets Ariadne who assists him with her ball of silk, and ultimately defeats the Minotaur along with Talos (spelled “Talus” in the Creepy comic). While there is not the overt narrative frame of Eustace Bright in the various Tanglewood Tales, “The Minotaur” being one of those, the narrator of Hawthorne’s version does refer to himself in the first person, placing the tale within some mediating context, however slight. But as with the Junior tales, there is no indication of a particularized narrating presence in the Creepy comic, merely a completely detached reciter of the action. Again, it is as if all traces of Hawthorne have been eliminated, leaving only the kernel of the myth, easily leading the reader to assume (had there been no reference to the author) that this comic is adapted from the myth itself with no addition representation.

**Major Tales**

The effects of adaptation are slightly different in the stories that have come to define Hawthorne as a major American writer. While the number of these tales adapted into comics form is slight, the ones that have been graphically translated bear more of the author’s mark, if not in narrative style, then in theme. Surprisingly there have only been four of these short stories that have been published as comics: “David Swan,” “Feathertop,” “Hollow of the Three Hills,” and “Rappaccini’s Daughter.” The earliest of these appeared in issue #60 of Thrilling Comics (1947). Among the adventure tales of Princess Pantha, the Phantom Detective, and the Commando Cubs is the one-page story, “Little Legends.” Drawn by Jules Steiner, this comic is a very short adaptation of “David Swan.” In Hawthorne’s original, subtitled “A Fantasy,” the framing narrator describes Swan as he makes his way to Boston, stops by the side of the road to take a brief nap, and is visited by several fellow travelers, none of whom awaken him but any of whom could determine his future. Steiner’s adaptation is structured similarly, although the order of the encounters in the original—the wealthy merchant and his wife, the beautiful maiden, and the two bandits—appears differently in the comic. What is more, the sheer paucity of this one-page comic never allows for the kind of philosophizing found in the original story. Whereas Hawthorne posits in his tale, “Could we know all the vicissitudes of our fortunes, life would be too full of hope and
fear, exultation or disappointment, to afford us a single hour of true serenity” (9:183), Steiner’s “Little Legend” gives us a mere skeleton of the narrative, a simple story where the grand message becomes a mere punch line. As Swan wakes up in the comic, he says, “Ho-hum! . . . I guess I’ll go back home . . . ’cause nothin’ exciting ever happens to me!” (n. pag./7–8). Although Steiner does retain some of Hawthorne’s humor, he nonetheless strips the story of its larger message (not to mention, he has David head back home, whereas Hawthorne’s Swan travels on to Boston).

A more faithful treatment is given to “Feathertop,” an adaptation of which appeared in Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion #15 (1974), scripted by Gerry Boudreau and illustrated by Alex Niño. Boudreau’s adaptation more or less follows the storyline of Hawthorne’s tale, and the narrative’s moralizing theme—and the subtitle of the original is “A Moralized Legend”—is retained. As Mother Rigby states in the comic’s final panels, “Poor fellow! Three are thousands of charlatans in the world made up of no more than [Feathertop] was . . . . Yet they live in fair repute and never see themselves for what they are! Aye, it’s a shame my poor puppet be the only one to know himself and perish for it!” (n. pag./6–7), very close to the wording in the final paragraphs of the original. Yet, Boudreau and Niño never employ any graphic embellishments that would suggest any gothic or romantic tone, and never utilize any visual cues that might lead the reader to find ambiguity or uncertainty within the narrative. In Hawthorne’s “Feathertop,” there is a mystery as to the relationship between Mother Rigby and Justice Goodkin, the father of young Polly that Feathertop pursues. There are hints of nefariousness along with possible links to Mother Rigby’s coven. These slight insinuations may suggest a vendetta that Mother Rigby is pursuing and that she sends Feathertop to Polly for vengeance. But such clues are absent from the Forbidden Tales comic. There are no hints of a prior relationship between Mother Rigby and Goodkin, and the graphics—clear close-up and medium framings, mostly at eye level and without any visual obscurities—suggest nothing hidden or veiled.

A different tone is struck in Rich Margopoulos and Esteban Maroto’s adaptation of “Hollow of the Three Hills,” which appeared in issue #63 of Eerie.14 There the artists incorporate the original story’s gothic atmosphere, with Maroto using the visuals to create a sense of dreaminess,
uncertainty, and a mixture of the real and the fantastical. Likewise, his black-and-white artwork gives the story a somber feel, and in many ways it retains the tone found in Hawthorne’s original. Indeed, the effects created in this comic—the shadowy lines around the sluggish pool, the overlapping of images from past and present, the bleeding of one visual perspective into another, and the reliance of subjective perspectives—call to mind Hawthorne’s oft quoted concept of the romance. This is perhaps best described in “The Custom-House” section of *The Scarlet Letter*, where the narrator notices the effects of the moonlight on his empty work space, where “the floor of our familiar room [becomes] a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other” (1:36). Elsewhere, in the Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*, he describes this “neutral territory” as a space where the author can “manage his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights and deepen and enrich the shadows of the picture” so as “to mingle the Marvellous” with the actual or the historical (2:1). The *Eerie* adaptation attempts to graphically represent this tone, in the process creating not only a horror/gothic tale, but one where ambiguity resonates. By the end of the comic, we are unsure why the young lady has come to this point in her life, or what has ultimately become of her revelations.

It would be useful here to mention briefly the ambiguous “neutral territory” that has come to define many of Hawthorne’s narratives. This mixture of the real and the imaginary, the worldly with the fantastic—especially as it applies to our interpretation of Hawthorne texts—can usefully be described as a form of romantic irony. In his foundational work on this subject, G. R. Thompson holds out for a more complicated reading of many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American romance writers. In what could be called his “romantic irony thesis,” Thompson defines this narrative posturing as a deliberate breaking of dramatic illusion, frequently through humorous or absurd commentary; a simultaneous interplay between humorous and serious narrative; an extended use of frame-tale sequences that call into question the relationship between text and audience; a blurring of the boundaries between reality and fiction; and an undercutting of cultural and metaphysical presumptions, even while appearing to uphold those same
presumptions (“Development of Romantic Irony” 267). Such a negotiation of conflicting possibilities and the resulting clouded exegesis could help explain Margopoulos and Maroto’s adaptation of “Hollow of the Three Hills,” and to a lesser degree, Boudreau and Niño’s “Feathertop.” These comics reveal the darker and more critical sides of Hawthorne’s storytelling, and they juxtapose gothic images of death and despair without providing any definitive resolution in terms of narrative tone.

The most recent adaptation of one of Hawthorne’s major takes appears in the fifteenth volume of the Graphic Classics series, *Fantasy Classics*. In it, comics artist Lance Tooks takes the text of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” and uses it as the scaffolding around which he employs his illustrations. In fact, one would be hard pressed to call Tooks’s “Rappaccini” a comic in the traditional sense. Most of the piece is comprised of the actual text from Hawthorne’s original story, and the illustrations are not so much sequential—consecutive images, usually confined within panels, that suggest causality and, taken together, create a narrative—as decorative. Still, Tooks adapts Hawthorne’s story in ways that previous creators haven’t. In every case listed above, the artists attempt to be “faithful” to Hawthorne’s original, either in plot, theme, or tone. Tooks, with his sparse illustrations—at least compared to the amount of text that carries the story—takes “Rappaccini’s Daughter” and gives it an added twist, suggesting implications not found in the original narrative. In this comics version of the story, Beatrice is represented as black (Tooks is African American), and as such, she visually stands out in the

---

**Figure 2. Page from “Rappaccini’s Daughter”** in *Fantasy Classics: Graphic Classics Volume 15* (2008), page 66 - Lance Tooks (adapt, a).s
story. Everyone else is white, including her father, which suggests that her dark presence harbors extra meaning. In Hawthorne’s story, as well as in Tooks’s version, Beatrice is a forbidden presence, literally poisonous to Giovanni and others outside of Rappaccini’s garden. What Tooks is doing here is injecting race into Hawthorne’s classic story, linking the various themes and symbols of the story—e.g., uncertainty and ambiguity, perspective and relativity, appearance and reality, good and evil—to matters of ethnicity. Indeed, one could easily read the story’s themes as parallel to the subject of race, an ambiguous, relative, and highly suspect construct that is based more on appearance than on any kind of underlying reality. In this way, and in Tooks’s hands, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” becomes not only a story about distorted perceptions and ill-founded expectations, but also one of race relations and the construction of ethnic identity.

**Novels**

There have been only two Hawthorne novels that have been adapted to the comics form: *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Surprisingly, the latter did not appear as a graphic narrative until 1990, and that was as a part of *Classics Illustrated*’s revived series of the same year. Until that point, the only adaptations of a Hawthorne novel was of *The House of the Seven Gables*. That narrative saw three different adaptations, but it was published in four different works. In October 1948 *Classics Illustrated* published a version of *Seven Gables* (issue #52) adapted by John O’Rourke and illustrated by Harley M. Griffiths. In January of that following year, they released another version of the adapted novel, this one with interior art by George Woodbridge (although adapted, as with the first version, by O’Rourke, and bearing the same issue number). The Woodbridge version would go on to become the most reprinted, and in 1997, Acclaim Books used it as the basis for the interior for their *House of the Seven Gables*, and as part of the publisher’s *Classics Illustrated Study Guide* series (which included reprints of older *Classics Illustrated* titles, along with a critical essay that functioned much like Cliffs Notes). A completely different version was published in 1977 by Pendulum Press as part of their *Now Age Illustrated* Series. Much like Acclaim’s *Study Guide* books, the *Now Age* series was targeted at younger readers, where the comics adaptation of the classic
work of literature functions as an introductory or supplementary text. The volume opens with a note “to the teacher,” stating that their illustrated books should serve as a “pegboard” for further reading, and that “the illustrated panel encourages and supports the student’s desire to read printed words. The combination of words and picture helps the student to a greater understanding of the subject; and understanding, that comes from reading, creates the desire for more reading” (3).

While each of these versions of *The House of the Seven Gables* has its strong points, their intended function, to introduce children to and serve as a conduit to classic works of literature, limits them as dynamic and thought-provoking adaptations. What is most notable about these versions of *Seven Gables* is what is typical of most Hawthorne adaptations in general: an attempt to represent the main storyline without any complications of narration or any plot ambiguity, or without any effort to “reinterpret” the novel in unique ways (as, for example, Lance Tooks does with “Rappaccini’s Daughter”). The stories are told from a detached, omniscient point of view, recited or narrated with zero focalization, and presenting visual fields that are mostly limited to eye-level and what would be called in cinema, medium shots.

Both versions of the *Classics Illustrated* adaptation, Griffiths’s and Woodbridge’s, are examples of this. They are both more or less faithful to the original story, beginning with a brief exposition surrounding Matthew Maule, and then move on quickly to the Pyncheon family, the death of Colonel Pyncheon, and then onto Hepzibah and her shop. Griffiths’s version significantly abbreviates parts of the story—e.g., Colonel Pyncheon’s part in Maule’s trail is glossed over, the relationship between Clifford and Jaffrey is never explored, Clifford’s eccentric or childlike behavior has been edited out, and Jaffrey’s death scene is greatly truncated—but his panel layout and composition, including unconventional and irregular gridding as well as circular panels that draw the reader’s attention toward the center of the page, give the tale more of a smooth narrative flow. On the other hand, Woodbridge’s *Seven Gables*, while adhering to a more traditional, and even rigid, rectangle grid layout (with each page containing two or three horizontal strips, and most including a total of five panels), nonetheless reveals more detail about the relationships between Maule and Colonel Pyncheon, as well as
between Clifford and Jaffrey. And while both *Classics Illustrated* versions rely heavily on detached, omniscient narration boxes (usually located at the top of each panel), many times at the expense of diegetic speech balloons present within the panels, the Woodbridge version is more reliant on this mode of storytelling than the Griffiths version. In other words, both *Classics Illustrated* versions of *Seven Gables*, and especially Woodbridge’s, *tell* the story through recitation or voice-overs rather than visually *showing* the action and speech unfold.

Perhaps more significantly, Woodbridge’s version provides more narrative and visual, space for the important death scene that occurs toward the end of Hawthorne’s novel. Here, and after Clifford and Hepzibah flee the house, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon is addressed directly by the narrator—loosely citing Hawthorne’s original text, “Perhaps it is only the quiver of moonbeams—but is it not a figure in a Puritan’s black coat who now places his hand upon the frame? And those others . . . ?” (n. pag./4)—and is visited by the ghosts of Pyncheon’s past. The spectral presences in this panel all line up in a procession, visiting their recently deceased ancestor in a manner that underscores the other-worldliness, the “neutral territory” of shadowy recesses and moonbeams, that mark many of Hawthorne’s narratives. The emphasis on this scene in the Woodbridge version is highly significant, in that Jaffrey’s death is a central event in the novel, and the clearest instance when a narrative presence is made manifest and the element of romance is most noticeable. In the original text, and after describing the procession of ghosts visiting the now dead Jaffrey, Hawthorne (or his narrative persona) states, “The fantastic scene, just hinted at, must by no means be considered as forming an actual portion of our story. We were betrayed into this brief extravagance by the quiver of the moonbeams; they dance hand-in-hand with shadows, and are reflected in the looking-glass, which, you are aware, is always a kind of window or door-way into the spiritual world” (2:281). This brings to mind the “Custom-House” introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* with its moonlight transforming the familiar into a “neutral territory,” a narrative space that commingles the actual and the imaginary into a space not of probability, but of possibility (terms that Hawthorne himself uses in his Preface to *Seven Gables*). So while the Woodbridge version of *Seven Gables* does not allow for much of a
complicated or equivocal reading at any point, it nonetheless highlights a scene in the original that emphasizes what is arguably a defining narrative characteristic of Hawthorne’s.

Griffiths’s version, by contrast, only devotes a single page to this scene. What is more, the ghost that visits Jaffrey is not any dead Pyncheon, as in the original, but the spirit of Matthew Maule. This is significant because in the “Governor Pyncheon” chapter of the novel, where the ghost scene takes place, it is the omniscient narrator—perhaps the narrating persona that Hawthorne establishes in his Preface?—who intrudes upon the story and addresses the dead Jaffrey directly: “Pray, pray, Judge Pyncheon, look at your watch, now! . . . It is within ten minutes of the dinner-hour! It surely cannot have split your memory, that the dinner of to-day is to be the most important, in its consequences, of all the dinners you ever ate. . . . [Y]ou may rise up for the table, virtually governor of the glorious old State! Governor Pyncheon of Massachusetts!” (2:273–74). Yet in the O’Rourke/Griffiths adaptation, it is obviously the ghost of Maule—who makes several appearances earlier in the text, and whose image is prominent on the cover—who says to the deceased judge, “Pray, Judge, look at your watch now—it’s ten minutes of the dinner hour. Most important dinner you ever ate. You may rise up from the table virtually governor of Massachusetts!” (O’Rourke and Griffiths n. pag./3). This interpretive shift changes the tone here from one of romantic or gothic uncertainty, promoted by the omniscient presence—e.g., Is the judge dead? How did he die? Are there ghosts, literal or figurative, that visit the latest cursed Pyncheon?—to one of mere narrative repetition. In the Griffiths version it could just as well be the rumor of Maule calling out, “God will give him blood to drink,” as we see occur many other times in the text.

In the Now Age version of Seven Gables, Jaffrey Pyncheon’s death scene is completely absent. We see Hepzibah enter the dark parlor to confront her seated cousin, but then the subsequent panels whisk us off to follow her and Clifford as they escape the family manse. The comic never returns to the dead judge, and readers of the story—especially those who are not familiar with the original novel—are left to wonder about this narrative severance.
By refusing to grant the reader access to the aftermath of Jaffrey’s death, the creators of the *Now Age* edition have unfortunately made the decision, perhaps unknowingly, to bleach out any narrated nuance and remove what is clearly a defining stamp of Hawthorne’s stylistic presence. The Acclaim version of *Seven Gables* is a simple reprint of the Woodbridge *Classics Illustrated* comic, so the death scene is there as in the original. At the same time, this reprint is a highly problematic reproduction that is notable for a couple of reasons. First, the dialog balloons and the narration boxes are all computer generated, replacing the hand-drawn lettering and word balloons in the original. This gives the Acclaim comic a sterile, impersonal feel, as if this were a tale generated by a machine with little regard for the visual subtleties. On top of that, the reproduced linework and the digitized recoloring appear uneven and stripped down. Indeed, the coloring in the Acclaim reprint is noticeably darker, and to the point that characters such as Hepzibah and Uncle Venner come
across as racially ambiguous.\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{Now Age} version of \textit{Seven Gables} is more detailed and artfully conceived, although it likewise suffers from a simple and adynamic retelling of Hawthorne’s novel. There is no attempt to reinterpret the story in any way; neither are there any complications that would detract from a straightforward, and equivocal, reading. While certain segments of the story in the \textit{Now Age} adaptation are considerably more decompressed than in the other comics adaptations—for example, the exposition with Maule and Colonel Pyncheon is given a much larger page count—other parts of the narrative, such as the exchanges between Phoebe and Holgrave, as well as the aforementioned death of Jaffrey, are significantly abridged.

Although adaptations of \textit{The Scarlet Letter} have been a relatively late phenomenon in comics, the creators’ handling of this classic text has been much more varied, and much more sophisticated, than those of \textit{The House of the Seven Gables}. There have been four attempts to translate the romance of Hester, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Pearl into comics form, each of these bearing a distinctive mark that distinguishes it, one from the other.\textsuperscript{22} When First Publishing revived the \textit{Classics Illustrated} line in 1990, one of the first texts that they produced was \textit{The Scarlet Letter} (it was volume 6 in the series).\textsuperscript{23} Adapted by P. Craig Russell and illustrated by Jill Thompson, this version of Hawthorne’s masterpiece is arguably the most intricate and the most artistically rendered of any Hawthorne adaptation in comics, novels as well as short stories. What is most striking about this version is Thompson’s artwork, which visually retells the story through fully painted watercolor layouts. Her graphic perspectives are varied and dynamic, at times giving us high-angle shots or wide canvas composition to accentuate or underscore a particular moment in the story. In addition, her images are not temporally limited, with each panel representing a single moment in time. In many instances, Thompson represents action and temporal connectedness through a single panel or full-page spread, where multiple representations of characters appear in a single landscape (as is in the early conversation between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth on the topic of confession), or through superimposed images that suggest memories and emotional turmoil (such as the way she paints Hester in the first scaffold scene).
Yet while Thompson’s art creates a greater sense of narrative pliability, Russell’s translation of the story is more static. His is a fairly straightforward version of *The Scarlet Letter*, leaving little room for romantic irony or scenic uncertainty. This is primarily due to his decision to eliminate the narrative frame of the tale and his choice to make certain key scenes in the novel unequivocal. This version begins outside the Boston jail where Hester is being held. There is no reference to the “Custom-House” prologue, nor is there any reference to a narrator, the custom house surveyor, that would contextualize or qualify the story being told. The narration or recitation is detached and omniscient, presented through a series of text boxes that appear in most of the book’s sequential panels, and there is no link at all between the teller of the tale and his investment or connection to any of the story’s contents (such as the discovery of the tattered scarlet A, and one that burns the narrator’s chest when pressed against it, that appears in the original). Similarly, Russell
translates a couple of key scenes in the novel that leave little room for interpretation. The second scaffold scene, where Dimmesdale is joined by Hester and Pearl, does not reveal any complicated reading with the meteor that appears in the late night sky (in Hawthorne’s novel there is a question surrounding the appearance of the light as an illuminated A). Jill Thompson’s illustration presents it as a simple streaking light, and there is no mention of others perceiving the phenomenon as a bright A linked, perhaps, to the concurrent death of John Winthrop. Likewise, in the final scaffold scene that appears at the end of the book, the red A carved on Dimmesdale’s chest is made visually manifest, leaving no question as to its reality. In Hawthorne’s original text, there is a difficulty in pinpointing what parishioners actually witnessed during those final moments of the minister’s confession. As the novelist writes, “Most of the spectators testified to having seen, on the breast of the unhappy minister, a SCARLET LETTER. . . . [While] certain persons, who were spectators of the whole scene, and professed never once to have removed their eyes from the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, denied that there was any mark whatever on his breast” (1:258–59). Alluding back to G. R. Thompson’s concept of romantic irony, both possibilities are entertained, yet neither is finalized.

A completely different tone is struck in Saddleback’s Illustrated Classics version of The Scarlet Letter. Much like the aforementioned adaptations of The House of the Seven Gables, the Acclaim and the Now Age versions, the Saddleback volumes are marketed to educators and librarians for the purpose of introducing young readers to classic literature. As the editors of Saddleback’s Illustrated Classics editions put it, these books are “designed specifically for the classroom to introduce readers to many of the great classics in literature. . . [They] will help you to develop confidence and a sense of accomplishment as you finish each novel. The stories . . . are fun to read. And remember, fun motivates!” (Saddleback 3). More significantly, and also like the Acclaim and Now Age books, the Saddleback adaptation is simply drawn, appears visually formulaic and rigid in its format, contains a condensed and straightforward story, and is without any complications or ambiguities. In other words, the creators may have retained the basic storyline, but they have drained any possible romance out of the narrative. Although they do preface Hester’s story
with that of the surveyor/narrator finding the old cloth A—only one page and one image is devoted to the “Custom-House” chapter—the creators nonetheless strip the story of any narrative uncertainty. For example, with the second scaffold scene the meteor in the sky isn’t so much a streaking light that might resemble an A; it literally is the letter A. And the final event with Dimmesdale’s bearing his scarlet mark is not only unambiguous, but quite cartoonish. The A on his chest appears as a clean (and outlined) stamp, resembling uncomfortably the mark that Hester bears on her dress.

Adam Sexton and Yali Lin present a much more nuanced interpretation of *The Scarlet Letter* in their manga version. While their adaptation is faithful to the original in terms of story—and given the length of this book, 181 pages of story, Sexton and Lin are able to represent more of the detail embedded in the original—the manner in which they visualize the various events is largely dependent on their adopted form, shōjo manga (Japanese comics targeted at young girls between the ages of ten and eighteen). As Sexton points out in his introduction to the volume, the shōjo style is perfectly suited to Hawthorne’s classic because it usually focuses on a strong female protagonist, emphasizes romantic and fantastic themes, and is cinematic in its scope. All of these characteristics, Sexton argues, could be defined as the essential features of *The Scarlet Letter* (2–4). And as Thierry Groensteen states in his study of comics and narration, “shōjo is less concerned with portraying an action than with creating an emotional climate in which the expression of feelings is uninhibited.” Such a definition goes a long way in contextualizing Hawthorne’s classic tale. Groensteen goes on to argue that with shōjo, “the reader is constantly invited to scrutinize the heroine’s face and to decipher from it . . . evidence of the passions that ravage her heart and soul. It is for this reason that the eyes, ‘mirrors of the soul,’ are doubly highlighted, both by recurring close-ups on them . . . and by the graphic convention of enlarging them, transforming them into deep wells of blazing lamps” (59). What Groensteen is referring to here is the convention, not only in shōjo, but in most forms of manga (as well as in their animated sister medium, anime), to accentuate the eyes in unrealistic and non-representational ways.
Another common feature of shojo manga is the superimposition of graphic elements, where one image appears layered over another (Groensteen 62). This becomes significant with emotionally driven narratives, where non-realistic juxtaposed images suggest a kind of airiness or dreaminess, as if the female protagonist’s thoughts and feelings become visually manifest in the world around her, her preoccupations appearing to float around her like an aura. We find this in Sexton and Lin’s adaptation when Hester exits the jail and, as she approaches the scaffold, accompanied by a giant script A floating above her head (16/2); when Pearl adorns her mother’s embroidered A with the prickly burrs she finds on the ground (77/4); during Dimmesdale’s “penance” of fasting and self-flagellation, where images of Hester and Pearl flow together with that of the minister to create a dream-like one-page tableau (88); and the story’s final scenes, where Hester returns to her cottage, pensive
(suggested by her superimposed portrait), and is once again accompanied by a “floating” embroidered A (181/1, 3). All of these visual strategies that help define manga—the superimpositions, the fantastic layering, and the unnaturally accentuated eyes—emphasize the romantic quality of Hawthorne’s novel, foregrounding the “neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land” that the novelist describes in “The Custom-House” (1:36). Indeed, Sexton and Lin dedicate a significant amount of space to the “Custom-House” narrative frame, devoting seven pages to it before getting to Hester’s story, and even ending their version with a reappearance of the surveyor, looking down on the graves of Dimmesdale and Hester (“On a field, sable, the letter A, gules”) which appear on the last two pages. Of all the adaptations of The Scarlet Letter, the shōjo manga version is the one that attends most closely to Hawthorne’s original text, narrative frame and all. What is more, it does so in a rather “silent” manner, with no omniscient narration boxes telling the story—in other words, the reciter is absent, and there is no textual narration—letting the images and diegetic dialogue (speech balloons) show the events unfolding, another defining feature of manga. In this way, the reader is required to take a more active role in interpretation since there is no overt narrative presence guiding our understanding of the events unfolding.

The final, and most recent, adaptation of The Scarlet Letter into comics form is not only the most unorthodox, but also the funniest. In his book, Masterpiece Comics, a collection of various literary adaptations, R. Sikoryak uses the very history of comics as a springboard into the classics. He pairs the works of literature with specific comics characters, styles, or conventions that best represent the adapted text, letting the historical comic itself carry much of the message. In this way, Sikoryak is like a chameleon in his art, employing the styles of canonical comics artists to best suit the story being told. For example, in Masterpiece Comics, Sikoryak uses the bumbling exploits of Chic Young’s Blondie and Dagwood to retell the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (“Blond Eve”); Charles Schulz’s perennially alienated Charlie Brown to adapt Kafka’s Metamorphosis (“Good ol’ Gregor Brown”); the horror styles of such EC Comics illustrators as Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, and Johnny Craig to retell Brontë’s Wuthering Heights (“The Crypt of Brontë”); and the dark, double life of Bob Kane’s Batman to represent the
tortured dilemmas in *Crime and Punishment* ("Dostoyevsky Comics"). For *The Scarlet Letter*, Sikoryak employs the style of John Stanely, the artist behind some of the earliest, and the most highly regarded, *Little Lulu* comics.27 *(See the full comic that is part of this special issue and follows my essay.)* *Little Lulu* centers around the adventures of Lulu Moppett, a happy-go-lucky little girl whose exploits often turn mischievous, and her buddy, Tubby, who is even more prone to trouble. Although good friends, the two are often in conflict or at loggerheads. Such a premise is apropos for Hawthorne’s classic tale, for Sikoryak uses Lulu as the impish Pearl—with Lulu’s mother, Martha, playing Hester, actually a secondary character in Sikoryak’s adaptation—and Tubby plays the role of the disguised outcast, Chillingworth (complete with a comedic strap-on beard that he wears to appear older).

“Hester’s Little Pearl” is a twelve-page comic that follows only a skeleton plot of the original novel. The story is stripped down to the primary events, and the “Custom-House” frame is nowhere to be found. But unlike most other adaptations of Hawthorne’s narratives, Sikoryak’s does not attempt to take on the romance in a faithful or representative manner. His is more of a parody that uses Stanley’s minimalist style to bring out the cartoonishly dramatic undertones that could be read into the original. It is as if Sikoryak is asking us to temporarily step out from under the revered shadow of the American Canon and see *The Scarlet Letter* from a more simple, and child-like—after all, the emphasis here is not on Hester, but on Pearl—perspective: a story about three adults and one child who are unable to get their acts together, and who fumble about in trying to make sense of their predicaments. And “Hester’s Little Pearl” is cartoony in the fullest sense. Sikoryak’s comedic treatment is complete with exaggerated actions and punch lines, and it utilizes the various symbolia that have come to define *Little Lulu* and other classic comics, such as the emanata, agitrons, squeans, and hites as defined by Mort Walker.28 Much like Lance Took does with his adaptation of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” Sikoryak takes the original Hawthorne narrative and sets it within a different context, allowing us to read the story in ways that we would not have normally considered. In this way, “Hester’s Little Pearl” does not so much adapt *The Scarlet Letter* as it does reimage it.
While the examples of comics adaptations of Hawthorne’s narratives are relatively small, especially when compared to the number of times other and comparable authors have been adapted, they nonetheless demonstrated the multifaceted nature of this most important nineteenth-century American writer. Not only have his two most popular novels been given repeated visual treatment, but a number of his gothic tales and children stories have also found their way into comics. What is needed, now, is for creators, writer/adaptors as well as artists, to fully grasp the narrative potential of Hawthorne’s most notable tales—e.g., “Young Goodman Brown,” “The Minister’s Black Veil,” “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and “Wakefield”—and realize how their romantic qualities, creating a combustible “neutral territory” where the real is infused with the fantastic, are fertile ground for a medium based on an equally uneasy (yet pregnant) mixture of image and text. Indeed, what Scott McCloud calls “the invisible art” could become for Hawthorne’s stories a means to reveal meaning below the threshold of awareness, showing us “the truth of the human heart” (Hawthorne 2:1) through the simple use of drawn lines and juxtaposed text. For publishers of comics adaptations—such as Eureka and its Graphic Classics series, or Papercutz and its revived Classics Illustrated line, or any number of independent and mainstream publishers with a history in adapting classic literature—29—the challenge is to take on the full weight of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s stories without simplifying their thematic or narrative import.

Notes

1The citation style in this essay is based on MLA with slight variations as laid out on the website, “Comic Art in Scholarly Writing: A Citation Guide,” produced by the Popular Culture Association’s Comic Art and Comics Area (http://www.comics-research.org/CAC/cite.html). As such, writers (w) are distinguished from artists (a) in the Works Cited, and adaptors are noted as (adapt). For comic books, issue numbers as well as month of publication are included in the citation. References to specific comics passages are made parenthetically within the text, citing both the page number and the panel number, separated by a slash.

2Classics Illustrated was published by the Gilberton Company, Inc., under the direction of Albert Lewis Kanter. Before that, Kanter had created the Classic Comics title for the Eliot Publishing Company. The comic book ran under the Classic Comics banner until issue #34 in 1947, and then with issue #35 (featuring The Last Days of Pompeii)
Kanter changed the title to *Classics Illustrated*. When reprinting the early issues of his comic—and due to the popularity of the title, there were multiple reprints of most issues—the publisher changed the title from *Classic Comics* to *Classics Illustrated*. None of the Hawthorne adaptations appeared under the original *Classic Comics* title.

3 *The Last of the Mohicans*, appearing in issue #4 (August 1942) including interior and cover art by Ray Ramsey. *Moby Dick* (and without the hyphen) was adapted and illustrated by Louis Zansky, and appeared in issue #5 (September 1943). The Irving comics, adapted by Dan Levin and illustrated by Roland Livingston, appeared in issue #12 of *Classic Comics*. For more information on these issues, their subsequent reprints, and all other *Classics Illustrated* comics, see William B. Jones, Jr.’s, *Classics Illustrated: A Cultural History*, 2nd edition.

4 Under the feature heading “Famous Tales of Terror,” adaptations of Poe’s “The Black Cat,” “The Murder in the Rue Morgue,” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” were collected along side the heroic adventure tales of the Yellowjacket and Diana the Huntress in Charlton Comics’ *Yellowjacket Comics*, which ran for ten issues beginning in September 1944. Will Eisner, along with Jerry Grandenetti, adapted “The Fall of the House of Usher” for his 22 August 1948 *The Spirit* newspaper insert, framing the story by having the Spirit read the tale to his sidekick, Ebony White, one dark night. For the most complete listing of comics adaptations of Poe’s works, see Inge’s *The Incredible Mr. Poe: Comic Book Adaptations of the Works of Edgar Allan Poe, 1943–2007*. See also his earlier essay, “Poe and the Comics Connection.” Inge is, without question, the leading scholar on comics and the medium’s adaptation of American literature, especially as it relates to the works of Poe, Mark Twain, and Herman Melville.

5 The sentimental novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was adapted in early issues of *Classic Comics* (#15, 1943) as well as postbellum realist narratives, such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (#19, 1944). However, the vast majority of American literature first translated into comics form was produced by practitioners of the romance, historical or otherwise, including additional works by Cooper (*The Deerslayer*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, *The Spy*, and *The Prairie*), Poe (“Annabel Lee,” “The Bells,” “The Murder in the Rue Morgue,” and “The Pit and the Pendulum”), and Herman Melville (*Typee*), all through *Classic Comics* and *Classics Illustrated* in the 1940s.

6 Of Hawthorne’s most significant stories, in addition to the aforementioned “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” I would place the following titles: “Young Goodman Brown,” “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” “Wakefield,” “The Minister’s Black Veil,” “The Birth-mark,” “Egotism; or the Bosom-Serpent,” “The Celestial Rail-road,” “Roger Malvin’s Burial,” “The Artist of the Beautiful,” “The May-Pole of Merry Mount,” “Doctor Heidegger’s Experiment,” and “Ethan Brand.” I am aware that this list may be partly informed by subjective interests, and that various other titles may equally stand out as Hawthorne at his best, but my point here is that almost all of those stories, anthologized and otherwise, that Hawthorne scholars consider as essential are given no treatment in the comics medium.
By “major tales,” I do not necessarily mean the most significant or the most anthologized of Hawthorne’s oeuvre, such as “Young Goodman Brown” or “The Minister’s Black Veil.” I am referring here to the various stories found in *Twice-told Tales* (1837), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), and *The Snow-Image, and Other Twice-told Tales* (1852). By “major” I am also distinguishing these tales from those told in the “Girls and Boys” collections.

By “cartoony” I do not mean to be pejorative—as the word is often used—but to describe a more simplified or stripped down style of illustration that does not aspire to a more realistic representation. In *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud distinguishes between an extremely iconic image, exemplified by something like a smiley face (a circle, two dots for eyes, and a line for a mouth), and a more realistic image that approximates a photograph. McCloud proposes a continuum spanning these two extreme types of images—between the complex (photorealistic) and the simple (cartoon), between the realistic and the iconic, between the specific and the universal—and places or defines comics art along that scale (45–49).

William A. Walsh was the illustrator of “The Gold Touch,” “The Golden Fleece,” and “The Magic Pitcher.” “Three Golden Apples” was drawn by Mike Sekowsky.

In his study of comics and narration, Thierry Groensteen uses the term “reciter” to refer to the textual “voice-overs” that function diegetically in comics, usually placed within rectangular boxes at the top of a comics panel, set apart from the visuals that compose the majority of the panel. He distinguishes this narrative function from that of the “monstrator,” which he defines as the drawn or illustrated aspect of a comic’s narration, including speech balloons. Both the reciter (narration in text) and the monstrator (narration in image) are thus different arms of a comic’s overarching or more formal narrator (88).

This story was adapted by Rich Margopoulos, and with art by Luis Bermejo. *Creepy*, put out by Warren Publishing, was a black-and-white anthology and primarily included horror comics. It was published in magazine format, not the smaller comic-book size, so as to avoid many of the restrictions imposed by the Comics Code Authority.

In 2009, the independent publisher Powerpop Comics was working on an adaptation of “Young Goodman Brown,” part of their short-lived Powerpop Comics Classics series, but failed to complete the story and, as a result, never printed the comic (Hobby Jones).

*Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion* was one of several horror-suspense comics anthologies published by DC Comics in the 1970s, and as with *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*, the stories in *Forbidden Tales* were introduced by a macabre host, in this case Charity.

As with *Creepy*, one of its sister publications (the other being *Vampirella*), *Eerie* was a black-and-white horror comic book published by Warren in magazine format.
Since 2001, Eureka Productions has been publishing comics adaptations as part of their Graphic Classics series. Overseen by Tom Pomplun, each volume includes contemporary visual translations of classic writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Jack London, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. P. Lovecraft, Mark Twain, Mary Shelley, H. G. Wells, Louisa May Alcott, and Oscar Wilde, among many others. And given the publisher's penchant for horror and gothic narratives—well over half of the volumes are composed of these kind of stories—it is rather surprising that there has never been a volume devoted to Hawthorne . . . and that only one Hawthorne story has been adapted in one of their thematic collections, Fantasy Classics.

Tooks does something quite similar with Mark Twain’s “A Dog’s Tale,” where he uses the visuals to make it a narrative about race. See my essay, “Meddling with “hifalut’n foolishness”: Capturing Mark Twain in Recent Comics.”

The last issue of Classics Illustrated in the U.S. was published in Spring 1969. It was not until 1990 that a second series of the title was launched, and that lasted less than two years. It was revived by First Publishing, and the series included twenty-seven titles. The Scarlet Letter was its sixth. For more on the second series of Classics Illustrated, see William B. Jones.

According to William B. Jones, the Griffiths adaptation was first serialized in Gilberton’s newspaper series, Illustrated Classic, in September and October 1947.

The comics published in Pendulum’s Now Age series were later republished, in smaller-sized format, by Academic Industries for their Pocket Classics series in 1984. Some of these Pocket Classic titles were later colorized and republished, once again, by Saddleback Educational Publishing. I thank R. Sikoryak for pointing out to me the publishing trajectory of the Pendulum Press comics.

The Now Age and Acclaim titles are overtly intended as supplementary texts. As for Classics Illustrated, the title’s founder, Albert Kanter, intended his comics to serve as a means of introducing young readers to classic works of literature, and not as ends to themselves (William B. Jones 9).

William B. Jones discusses this problem of reproduction in his history of Classics Illustrated (291–92). In my essay on adaptations of Mark Twain, I point out that the reissuing of Pudd’nhead Wilson by Acclaim, with its dark recoloring, becomes highly problematic concerning the narrative’s larger message. Roxy appears much darker than she did in the original Classics Illustrated #93, and as such, Twain’s critique of racial construction in America is nearly undermined.

Most recently, Russ Kick published an illustration based on Hawthorne’s famous novel in his book, The Graphic Canon, Volume 2. While some may consider this a comics translation (albeit a greatly abbreviated) of The Scarlet Letter, it is actually more of an inspired illustration than it is an adaptation. Artist Ali J. draws and colors a contemporary version of Hester, complete with a scarlet A on her shirt, described by
HAWTHORNE IN THE COMICS

Kick as “intriguingly modern and stylish but with a retro-Puritan dress that hearkens back to the bad old days of mid-1600s New England (186). Indeed, many of the comics published in Kick’s Graphic Canon, now up to three thick volumes, are either inspired art as is the case with The Scarlet Letter, or illustrated stories as you would find in children’s literature or nineteenth-century illustrated volumes. In other words, not all “adaptations” in Russ Kick’s edited works are primarily image-based sequential narratives reliant upon multi-panel arrangement, a minimal criteria in defining comics.

23In 2009, the publisher Papercutz reprinted the Russell and Thompson adaptation originally released by First Publishing. I am referencing the Papercutz edition in this essay.

24Along with this, and on the final page of the Russell and Thompson version, the omniscient narrator never entertains the possibility that the red A had never been on Dimmesdale’s chest. There is a question as to the origins of the carved A—inflicted by self torture, produced by the medicines of Chillingworth, or the result of inner emotional turmoil—as there is in Hawthorne’s original text, but there is no mention of witnesses denying the appearance of any red A on his chest.

25This Scarlet Letter comics adaptation was originally published in black and white as a part of the Now Age series from Pendulum Press in 1974, republished in a smaller-sized format by Academic Industries (for their Pocket Classics series) in 1984, and then republished once again as a colorized version by Saddleback in 2006.

26The artist and the adaptor of the Saddleback edition are uncredited. This is a practice that is fairly common with such “educational” comics adaptations, where the story, not the creators, is most significant to the publishers.

27The character of Little Lulu was created by Marjorie Henderson Buell in the 1930s. Stanley worked on the art, as well as much of the scripting, of Little Lulu comic between 1945 and 1959. Little Lulu was also the subject of theatrical animated shorts between 1943 to 1948, produced by Famous Studios for Paramount Pictures, and then later featured in television cartoons during the 1970s.

28Walker, creator of Beetle Baily and Hi and Lois, wrote a tongue-in-cheek lexicon of comics’ visual language in 1980, The Lexicon of Comicana. In it he defines the various “symbolia,” graphic symbols that cartoonists used to represent a host of physical and psychological conditions, such as shock and surprise (emanate, or lines drawn around the head), shakiness (agitrons, squiggly lines suggesting instability), dizziness or sickness (squeans, small circles or starbursts around the head), and fast movement (hites, horizontal lines trailing after someone).

29These include, but are certainly not limited to, SelfMadeHero, Dark Horse Comics, NBM, Classical Comics, Boom! Studios, and even the mainstream Marvel Comics.
Works Cited


