**My Essay**

For my essay I’m going to be diving into the world of comic books and talk mainly about the evolution of graphics/illustrations.

*The first drawing*

About 73,000 years ago, sometime in the stone age the first ever drawing was recorded in history by a primitive man and as humans we want and or need to express emotion in some type of way. It was a matter of time before humanity would discover the ability to draw because it can be argued the it is in our nature to express our emotion in a physical way.

The drawing was made inside a South Africa Bobos cave and it appeared to have been created by a crayon-on-stone piece that took on the design of a lentil-shaped rock flake named Red Ochre. The find was recorded by an archaeologist by the name Christopher Henshilwood accompanied by his colleagues. I would like to point out that I am specifying cave drawing instead of cave painting since the two are different and drawings is what relates to comic books. (Nature.com,2018)

*Books*

Dated all the way back around 500 BC the first ever ‘book’ was created, of course I use the term book loosely since it all started by hand written scrolls as a source of advancing knowledge to future generation or recording history to give future generations insight to important events to show the growth of humanity through words. If people were to exclusively transfer information through means of chatter or to pass around the information, somewhere down the chain someone would misinterpret or misremember certain events that were told to them so writing down those events are the only solid form of recording history and so on. Soon writing became a necessary practice as today’s generation being the biggest example, eventually the scrolls became too small and clunky in a way to record anything lengthy so soon after books were created and are now the best form of recording anything to be remembered.

*The first comics*

It is believed that the first comic book was created in the year 1837 by Switzerland's Rudolphe Töpffer but when America first found out about the creation they viewed as more of a paper book than a comic book but in doing so made Rudolphe became the creator of the picture story, comic strip and graphic novel/comic book. Later down the line a couple of hundreds of years America then published its first American comic book in 1933, Funnies of Parade, however it was composed of reprinted comic strips from newspapers such as Mutt and Jeff, Joe Palooka and Skippy. But Comic books have come a long way since their first official introduction into the word in the early 1930s. The early comic books were known as “funny books.” They were collections of newspaper comic strips that were reprinted and bound together in a book format. While initially viewed as a cheap form of entertainment for children, comic books have evolved into a respected art form that has spawned blockbuster movies, TV shows, and merchandise. It wasn't until 1938 that comic books began to take on their own identity with the introduction of Superman in Action Comics #1. Superman was the first comic book superhero and his success spawned a slew of imitators. Other popular superheroes of the time included Batman, Captain America, and Wonder Woman. (wonderopolis.org,2022)

*Comics through the 90s*

Around the 1930s when World War II started, comic books became a popular form of entertainment for soldiers. The popularity of comic books became wide spread after the war, as they became more affordable and accessible to the general public. Comics featuring superheroes were used as propaganda to promote American values and support the war effort, giving authors to adapt the history of war in their comics. More creators began to appear diving into the world of comic books and depicting how they saw World War II through their work. (Daily jstor.org,2021)

In the 1950s, comic books began to face criticism from parents, teachers, and religious groups who believed that they were corrupting the morals of children. Soon after morals were questioned the formation of the Comics Code Authority, a self-regulatory organization that enforced a strict set of guidelines for comic book content. The Comics Code Authority wanted to change a lot of rules with comic books so they banned the depiction of violence, sex, and drug use in comic books. The Comics Code Authority had a massive impact on the comic book industry stopping many publishers and their vision and soon went out of business, the remaining publishers were forced follow the guidelines and it impacted the quality of comic books to how the authors wanted to depict their ideas. This led to a hole in the comic book industry, as publishers were limited in expressing their ideas and portraying any stories they grew to expressing. (libguides.nypl.org,2023)

In the 1960s, Marvel Comics introduced a new breed of superhero. Marvel's superheroes were more complex and relatable than their predecessors. Characters like Spider-Man, the X-Men, and the Fantastic Four had real-world problems and flaws that readers could identify with. Marvel's success paved the way for other publishers to experiment with more mature and sophisticated comic book content. (marvel.com,2019)

Eventually leading to the 1990s saw the rise of the “Image Revolution,” which was led by a group of former Marvel artists who formed their own company, Image Comics. Image Comics was known for its edgy and violent content, and its success forced the other major publishers to take notice. The 1990s also saw the introduction of new characters like Spawn and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, who became incredibly popular and spawned their own multimedia empires. (Wikipedia,2023)

*Comics in the early 2000s*

The early 2000s was a pivotal time for the comic book industry, as it saw a significant evolution in terms of storytelling, art styles, and the introduction of new characters. In this article, we will take a detailed look into the evolution of comic books in the early 2000s.

One of the most significant changes in comic books during this time was the introduction of more complex and mature storylines. There was a shift away from the traditional hero vs. villain narrative towards more nuanced stories that explored complex themes such as politics, social issues, and personal struggles. This change was largely driven by the success of graphic novels like Watchmen and The Dark Knight Returns, which showed that comic books could be a legitimate form of literature. Comic books continued to evolve, the success of movies like Spider-Man and X-Men brought new readers to the medium, and publishers began to experiment with new formats and genres. Manga, a style of Japanese comic books, became increasingly popular in the United States, and publishers like Viz Media and Tokyo pop began to translate and publish manga for American audiences.

Another major development in the early 2000s was the introduction of new characters, many of whom were more diverse than the traditional white male superheroes. Characters like Miles Morales (Spider-Man), Kamala Khan (Ms. Marvel), and Jessica Jones (Alias) broke new ground by offering representation for marginalized groups and telling stories that were previously untold. These characters were also more relatable to modern readers, as they dealt with issues like identity, family, and relationships. (Wikipedia, 2023)

In terms of art styles, the early 2000s saw a move towards more realistic and detailed illustrations. Artists like Alex Ross and Jim Lee pushed the boundaries of what was possible with their hyper-realistic depictions of superheroes, while others like Frank Quitely and J.H. Williams III experimented with non-traditional layouts and panel designs. This focus on art helped to elevate comics as an art form and attracted new readers who were drawn to the medium's visual storytelling. Finally, the early 2000s also saw a rise in independent and creator-owned comics. Publishers like Image Comics and Dark Horse Comics offered alternative voices and unique perspectives, while creators like Brian K. Vaughan (Y: The Last Man) and Neil Gaiman (The Sandman) used the medium to tell stories that were more personal and reflective of their own experiences.

Today, comic books continue to be a popular and respected art form. The medium has evolved to include a wide range of genres and formats, from superhero comics to graphic novels to webcomics. Comic books have also become more diverse, with more representation of women, people of colour, and LGBTQ characters.

*Conclusion*

In conclusion, comic books have come a long way since their early days as “funny books.” They have evolved from a cheap form of entertainment for children to a respected art form that has influenced movies, TV shows, and pop culture. While the medium has faced its share of criticism and controversy, it has also provided a platform for creative expression and storytelling. The evolution of comic books is a testament to the power of imagination and the enduring appeal of good storytelling.

**Bibliography**

Ahrens, J. and Meteling, A. (2010). *Comics and the City: Urban Space in Print, Picture and Sequence*. [online] *Google Books*. A&C Black. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UE90gtf3444C&oi=fnd&pg=PA32&dq=early+comic+strip&ots=ewFPKP8FlO&sig=7EhL9UputoaqQ9\_d3\_Z1tWFBkJ8&redir\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=early%20comic%20strip&f=false [Accessed 9 May 2023].

Friedenthal, A. (2019). *The World of DC Comics*. [online] *Google Books*. Routledge. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=TSGVDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT9&dq=DC+comics+history&ots=KBJ3Jk-N1K&sig=auKnqrTxQcELS0vanqvmjUZIURg&redir\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=DC%20comics%20history&f=false [Accessed 9 May 2023].

Greenberg, M. (2022). *Censoring creativity, the Comics Code Authority and the birth of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund*. [online] *www.elgaronline.com*. Edward Elgar Publishing. Available at: https://www.elgaronline.com/display/book/9781802202557/book-part-9781802202557-19.xml [Accessed 9 May 2023].

Hosler, J. and Boomer, K.B. (2011). Are Comic Books an Effective Way to Engage Nonmajors in Learning and Appreciating Science?1. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, [online] 10(3), pp.309–317. doi:https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.10-07-0090.

Lopes, P. (2006). Culture and Stigma: Popular Culture and the Case of Comic Books. *Sociological Forum*, [online] 21(3), pp.387–414. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11206-006-9022-6.

McGrath, K. (2007). Gender, Race, and Latina Identity: An Examination of Marvel Comics’ Amazing Fantasy and Araña. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, [online] 15(4), pp.268–283. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870701483599.

Palmer, D. (2010). The Evolution of the American Comic Book Industry: Are We Entering the Third Wave? *Advances in Business Research*, [online] 1(1), pp.232–239. Available at: https://journals.sfu.ca/abr/index.php/abr/article/view/32 [Accessed 9 May 2023].

Robb, B.J. (2014). *A Brief History of Superheroes: From Superman to the Avengers, the Evolution of Comic Book Legends*. [online] *Google Books*. Little, Brown Book Group. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=wCSfBAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT7&dq=evolution+of+marvel+comics+history&ots=b8ZUQfyKGp&sig=JwAAu2pu1sGoo6gH6RXyOAK8XGw&redir\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=evolution%20of%20marvel%20comics%20history&f=false [Accessed 9 May 2023].

Wright, G. (1979). The Comic Book: A Forgotten Medium in the Classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, [online] 33(2), pp.158–161. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/20194973 [Accessed 9 May 2023].

https://www.mybib.com/b/rGY7dd