Visuals Semiotics in the novel *Coraline*

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Abstract— *"Visuals Semiotics in the novel Coraline", presents the definition of semiotics and visual semiotics. It also discusses the theory of heteroglosia used in graphic novel. This paper also includes components and terminology of graphic novel with examples of visual symbols from Coraline novel by P.Craig Russell.*

Keywords— *Graphic Literature, semiotics, fantasy, horror, comics, iconography, speech bubble, colourist, cartoonist.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The Graphic Literature is one of the most rousing forms of storytelling in recent days. Graphic novels are a type of sequential art that combines text and pictures. They are typically used to tell stories, and often have a more exciting, fun tone than traditional books. The goal of this paper is to examine specific examples from the graphic novel *Coraline* that make use of its unique features to create compelling narratives that could not be told in any other form. This exploration of the graphic novel will begin by discussing the origins of this medium and how it became a popular form of literature.

Visuals Semiotics in the novel *Coraline* :

This paper presents two different versions of the novel *Coraline*. One is the original text written by Neil Gaiman in 2002, and the other is a graphic version adopted & illustrated by P.Craig Russell in 2008.

Neil Gaiman is a well-known author who writes in many different genres, including fantasy, horror, science fiction, and dark fantasy. *Coraline* was adapted by a comics artist, Phillip Craig Russell. His version of the story is different from the movie, but the story itself is the same.

Semiotics is the study of signs. It is the analysis of meaning-making and meaningful communication. Anything that can represent something else like words and numbers on a sign as well as photographs, icons and road signs. A graphic novel uses the interplay of text, images and illustrations in comic strip format. Graphic novels are created using various graphic elements, such as panels, gutter, frame, bleed, graphic weight, speech/word/dialogue balloon/Speech bubble, sound effect balloon, caption, iconography, and comics. These elements help to tell a story, instead of relying only on text. Sequence is an important element in a graphic novel. It gives more pleasure as it has a high vocabulary compared to comic books. For visual learners graphic novel is significant because it is being enlarged form of the comic book.

Fig.2.1: "Cover of spiderman, Lucky Luke and Chick Bill"

In childhood days many people read comic books like Spider-Man, Lucky Luke, Chick Bill Adventures etc... While reading those in the classroom we were caught by our class teachers, but nowadays, time has changed comic books and graphic novels are an important part of education. They have an important place in the syllabus of schools and universities. "The comic book is currently

undergoing a Renaissance...much of the academic discussion surrounding this form would sequester it as belonging to an autonomous discipline and deserving after specialized analytic."(Kuskin, 38)

There are various components and Terminologies in a graphic novel, let us see those with the example from the graphic novel *Coraline* by P.Craig Russell. Graphic novels are made up of different types of layouts, like panels, gutter, frame, bleed, and graphic weight. These elements help tell the narrative. Some of these elements, like Panel, gutter, frame, bleed, graphic weight, speech/word/dialogue balloon /Speech bubble, sound effect balloon, caption, iconography, comics are used to indicate important information, like dialogue and sound effects.

Word panel: In this type of panel only words are used to tell a part of the story.

Fig.2.2A: Russell, Craig.P. Coraline.p.7.

In fig.2.2A, this panel contains only words, there is no appropriate image for these words, and the graphic novel readers know these types of panel.

Image panel: In this type of panel, images are being used to tell a part of the story.

Fig.2.3A: Russell, Craig.P. Coraline.p.28.Press.

In fig.2.3A, this panel contains only images, there are no appropriate words for these images, and the readers can understand the meaning of the images.

Word and image panels: In this type of panel both words and pictures are used to tell a part of the story.
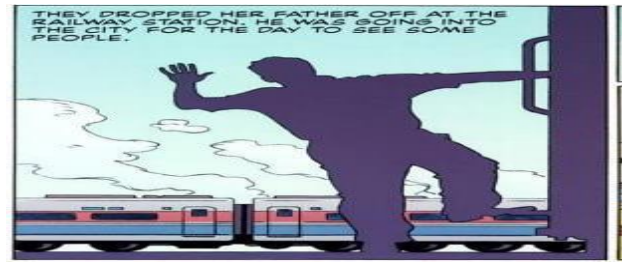

Fig.2.4A: Russell, Craig.P.Coraline.p.25.

Readers read graphic novels in three ways:

Text then picture: Some will read all the text on the page and then go back to look at pictures

The picture then text: Some will look at the picture first and then go back to read the words

Text with image: Some will read words and images simultaneously.

Fig.2.8A: Russell, Craig.P.Coraline.p.180.

Graphic weight:

According to graphic weight, some pictures in the graphic novel attract or make the readers to be more focused on some images, it is because of usage of light or dark shades to explain the emotions of the characters or situation clearly. In the narrative novel, the emotions of the character in the novel are explained through words or text so, there is no use of graphic weight. In graphic novels, emotion of them is explained through expressions or body position this is called graphic weight.

Fig.2.11A:Russell, Craig.P.Coraline.p.108.

Speech balloon:

Through the structure of the speech balloon, we can understand whether is a normal speech or thoughts or whispering, etc…

Fig.2.12A: Russell, Craig.P.Coraline.p.43,39,92,53,9

Balloon sound effect:

There are many patterns in balloon sound effects, the sound created by the characters in the novel.

Fig.2.13: Shows patterns of balloon sound effect.https://www.shutterstock.com/search/balloon-sound-effects-pattern

Fig.2.14A: Russell, Craig.P. Coraline.p.180,151,105,122,6.

Caption:

The caption is the voice that usually comes outside the picture's time frame which represents the voice of the narrator.When there is no speech balloon in the graphic novel the caption makes the situation or happening clear to the reader.

Fig.2.15A: Russell, Craig.P.Coraline.p.108.

Cartoonist / Artist: The Artist in graphic novel is also called as Cartoonist, they are the visual artist who specializes in both drawing and writing cartoons.

Colourist: The role of Colourist is adding colour to black and white line art.

Letterer: They are responsible for drawing the comics books text, typefaces, calligraphy, letter size, and layout. These all contributes best impact to the comics book. A letterer is a member of comic book creators.

SUMMATION

In the graphic version of the novel *Coraline,* P.Craig Russell used many components and terminology. In this chapter we have seen various components and terminology of a graphic novel with examples from novel *Coraline.* Each of these components shows how the unique elements of the graphic novel can be used to shape the narrative of the story and influence the reader's experience of work. Craig Russell has taken full advantage of this from to tell Gaiman's novel *Caroline*, utilise engaged composition, art style, and even the physical design of the text to create meaning.

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