

# Comics Forum

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT COMICS FORUM](#)

[COMICS FORUM 2018](#)

News Review: September 2013

Literary Impressionism and Chris  
*Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on*

## Vertigo's Archival Impulse as Memorious Discourse by Christophe Dony

Vertigo, DC's adult-oriented imprint, has been repeatedly praised for having 'fully joined the readers' in the early 1990s (Weiner 2010: 10). It has been noted that this "fight" coincided with 'adoption of the graphic novel format' as well as 'a new self-awareness and literary style' which brought the scope and structure of the Vertigo comics closer to the notion of literary text' (Round 2010). Little attention has been devoted to the very cultural identity of the imprint, even if Vertigo has in its days engaged in an intro- and retrospective discourse on the American comics form, its historical power relations inherent to its industry. This short essay intends to start filling that gap by exploring Vertigo's archival impulse. It argues that in deploying various rewriting strategies which reference specific past (comics) traditions, the label has activated a unique memorious discourse that functions as a reflexive and critical commentary on the structuring forces of the American comics field, its historical domination and exclusion, and hence its canons.

Inter- and hypertextuality have been central to Vertigo's cultural identity since its debut. When it launched the imprint in the early 1990s (*Animal Man*, *Doom Patrol*, *Hellblazer*, *Sandman*, *Shade the Man*, and *Swamp Thing*), for example, are all reinterpretations of earlier horror and supernatural titles in the DC universe. Of course, the common "reinvention" denominator that characterizes this era and the early years of the imprint did not take place in a vacuum. Many comics had paved the way before the creation of the imprint in 1993. Alternative comics from the 1980s such as *Love and Rockets*, *The Rocketeer*, for instance, were very influential re-imagined sci-fi comics. Superhero comics like *Watchmen* (1986-1987) and *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) also engaged in genre revision and problematized issues of continuity as well as complicated the mythology of long-running characters (cf. Klock 2002). However, as Round (2010) has argued, proto and early Vertigo

from revisionist superhero titles of the 1980s and their “grim and gritty style.” The titles that label were ‘reconceived [...] not simply as “more realistic” superheroics,’ but instead a ‘mythological, surreal, religious, and metafictional commentaries on the comics medium (Round 2010: 16). Round maintains in fact that these early Vertigo series ‘absorbed and surpassed previous [DC] incarnations’ (2013: 327) and that therefore ‘[t]he notion behind Vertigo’s redefinition’ (ibid.).

I couldn’t agree more. However, I wish to point out that because all of these early Vertigo titles revolved around what I prefer to describe as “rewriting” [1] insofar as they dislocate characters from their original contexts and rearticulate them into new ones that notably explore horror and the occult as well as metafictional reflexivity with generic subversion, they brought coherence and credibility to the label’s early output. The fact that the Vertigo label was retro-actively applied to, for example, texts such as *Albion* and *Swamp Thing* (1984-1987) and the first 46 issues of *Sandman* (1989-1993) is not innocent since they carried the seeds that would later establish the cultural identity of the imprint, namely subversive narrative strategies, metafictional elements, and an *illogic* of fantastic and uncanny worlds semanticized together, the early Vertigo titles’ obsession with specific past (comics) traditions and their reconstruction of these traditions founded the label’s poetics of demarcation through a partial commemoration. Although sharing some similarities with the movement of revisionist superhero narratives, this politics of commemoration highlights the imprint’s willingness to engage with hypertextual strategies beyond the superhero genre. Since its debut, the label has indeed been revisiting the DC archive with a fascination for the heritage of the pulps and the cherished tropes and motifs, a polymorphous (postmodernist) rewriting ethos that still animates the core identity of the label today.

Vertigo’s revisiting of the DC archive, for instance, can be seen in the imprint’s reinterpretation of *Mystery* (2010-2011) and *House of Secrets* (1996-1998) DC anthologies, its reprises of old characters (*Unknown Soldier* (1997, 2008-2011), *Haunted Tank* (2009), *Uncle Sam* (1997), as well as titles published under the sub-imprint “Vertigo Visions” (1993-1998)), or else in the serial comic *Our Army at War* in Rick Veitch’s *Army@Love* (2007-2008). The label also clearly reclaimed the heritage of the pulps with its strong focus on popular genres. Serial narratives such as *Saturn*, *Theatre* (1993-1999), *100 Bullets* (1999-2009), and *Scalped* (2007-2012), the whole “Vertigo Visions” imprint (2009-2011), and the collections of short graphic stories *Strange Adventures* (2011) and *Vertigo Visions* (2013) clearly resonate thematically or otherwise with many successful pulp genres such as westerns and crime stories, as well as with pulp magazines such as *Amazing Stories*, *Marvel Tales*, and *Black Magic*. [2] Finally, the imprint’s fascination for terror and horror stories can be observed in numerous titles such as *Sandman* (1989-1996) and its many spin-offs, *In the Shadow of Edgar Allan Poe* (2003), *Iron Fists* (1995-1996) and *The House on the Borderland* (2004) which is adapted from William Hope Fisher’s eponymous supernatural horror novel. More specifically, these Vertigo texts and others articulated the dominant features of Gothic fiction such as the fragmentation of identity, the blurring of boundaries between fiction and reality, the interplay between the supernatural and the metafictional, the presence of ghosts and *doppelgängers*.

As suggested earlier, the implications of these rewriting strategies and the archival impulses

should not be underestimated. As Henry Jenkins reminds us in a recent essay exploring the residual, and the ephemeral in Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004): 'collective memory and the residual are both ways of managing memory' (2013: 303). Therefore, according to Jenkins, processes of 'this memory work' (ibid.) should not and 'cannot be separated from [...] the formation of canon' (2013: 302). In other words, Vertigo's rewriting and archival ethos functions as a memorial discourse that is able to disrupt the canon-formation practices that permeate the structuring of the American comics field. And in distancing itself from the mnemonic and residual strategies of the mainstream and alternative poles of the industry,[3] Vertigo has adopted a subversive position in regards to the mainstream/alternative dialectic.[4]

For example, Vertigo revisions of older DC material – including the revisiting of less popular or long-forgotten characters and/or series – draw attention to the heritage of mainstream comic book and superhero genre. In fact, Vertigo's "archaeological excavation" of previous DC texts that do not explicitly refer to the superhero tradition or ambiguously refer to the superhero can be said to function as a spatialization, one that "writes back" to the canon-making practices of the mainstream industry. Vertigo, quite unsurprisingly, has relied on its most enduring genre to engage with the history and publishing lines but, in so doing, has strongly overshadowed other comics traditions and narrative worlds. It is true that this "excavation" has very much depended on the artists' knowledge of past comics – which were the ones they read in their youth – and that, therefore, a certain nostalgia inevitably permeates the comics of Moore, Gaiman, and other early Vertigo artists associated with the so-called "British invasion." Nevertheless, the nostalgic approach of Vertigo has always been an informed, critical, and self-reflexive one which called into question some of the generic codes of the industry, particularly that of superheroics.

In a similar fashion, the imprint's fascination with the pulp tradition not only illustrates how it distances itself from the mainstream press, it also challenges the sometimes elitist and didactic aesthetics of the alternative pole of the industry. The label implicitly mocks, it seems, the alternative artists and editors' rejection of genre-based comics, and more generally, the denigrating discourse surrounding pulp fiction and comics.[5] Moreover, in embracing the pulp tradition, Vertigo seeks out the ones developed by alternative artists such as Chris Ware and Art Spiegelman who regularly refer to early 20th century comics, including *Krazy Kat*, *The Katzenjammer Kids*, and *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. It is true that although they most likely attracted different audiences, both early 20th century pulp magazines were deeply commercial and popular. Nevertheless, alternative artists' reception of early 20th century strips is very specific. More often than not, alternative artists focus on the *rêverie* and (self-)reflexivity that were central to these past cartoonists' works. Additionally, by drawing our attention to some of the structuring units of the comics form (panels, pages, strips) and comparing and/or connecting architecture to and with the fragmented nature of comics as a form of memory,[6] alternative artists pay tribute to how early 20th century cartoonists inventive moment-to-moment transitions, geometric plotting, and what Scott Bukatman describes as 'temporal spatio-temporal illogic' in discussing *Krazy Kat* (2012: 45, italics in the original). In contrast, Vertigo's intertextual engaging with the pulp tradition revolves around the exploring of genre boundaries, "thrills," and provocative as well as exploitative storytelling techniques. Thus, at the risk of overstatement, whereas alternative artists 'aim at giving their works,' as Jeet Heer puts it in discussing Chris

'a pedigree and lineage' that is arguably rooted in formal experimentation and aesthetic innovation (4), in focusing on violence and in re-exploring crime- as well as sci-fi-related contents with twists, Vertigo comics not only acknowledge the populist and sensational origins of comic book culture but also ironically play with and comment on the "low-brow" status marker that is often associated with the pulp tradition. Arguably, Vertigo's cherishing of pulp themes and aesthetics may also be read as a reaction against alternative comics' 'dominant narrative modes,' i.e. 'tragedy, farce, and picaresque' (111), and how in favoring these modes, the alternative pole of the industry may have emphasized a more low and highbrow tone and aesthetics, thereby 'sustain[ing] some of the hierarchies of literary and cultural values that have long marginalized comics,' as Marc Singer puts it analyzing Ware's oeuvre (2010: 29).

Finally, Vertigo's Gothic inclinations also participate in the label's specific logic of commensurate attendant politics of demarcation in regards to the mainstream/alternative dichotomy. After all, the act of canon-making, according to Harold Bloom, implies 'strangeness [and] uncanny startlement' (1994: 3). Vertigo's de- and reconstructionist take on many popular genres is well illustrated in titles such as *Animal Man*, *Flex Mentallo* (1996), and *Fables* (2002-) certainly each of which involves a transgression that is so characteristic of the Gothic. So too does the thematization of monstrous forms, the carnivalesque, and the carnivalesque in narratives such as *Preacher* (1995-2000) and *Enigma* (1998-2000). The trope of haunting' so characteristic of the Gothic, Round contends (2012: 336), is also rendered in Vertigo's strategy of 'retconning' at work in titles such as *Sandman* and *Swamp Thing* (2012: 338). Retconning as 'retroactive continuity, whereby past events are expunged or characterized differently' (ibid.). More generally, however, her argument speaks to how countless Vertigo comics they inspired from older DC material, pulp fiction, and/or other traditions – are haunted by the same 'visitations.'" In other words, many Vertigo comics operate as "counterfictions" that oddly transform the traditional Gothic enclosure, i.e. the haunted house. Moreover, the multi-path and branching narrative strategies that Vertigo series such as *Jack of Fables* (2006-2011), *The Unwritten* (2009-), and *Air* (2009-2011) articulate find echo with the recurrent use of sinuous and cryptic settings such as labyrinths, mazes, and castles in Gothic fiction. More specifically perhaps, the sometimes complex and multi-layered narrative strategies that these series and other Vertigo comics activate can be said to function as "(inter)textual spaces that metaphorically resonate with the Gothic's cherishing of maze-like, decaying, and/or decaying spaces and locales. Following that logic, it should come as no surprise that the protagonists of *Jack of Fables*, *The Unwritten*, and *Air* find themselves lost or trapped in unknown countries and/or forgotten worlds, and/or "other" narrative dimensions, and/or alternate (literary) realities. Thus, the logic of possibility that characterizes these and countless other Vertigo comics is reminiscent of the ways in which the Gothic metaphorically explore the boundaries between the real and the fantastic on the one hand, and the way in which the Gothic generally evokes the transgression of a unique, coherent, and self-contained reality (or worlds). In short, these and many other Vertigo comics epitomize a form of postmodernist ontological uncertainty that presents itself, as Brian McHale would have it, as 'an anarchic landscape of [fictional and textual] worlds' (1987: 37).

Last but not least, historically speaking, Vertigo's redeployment of Gothic tropes and themes directly resonate with the cherishing of zombies and other monsters of the ill-fated comparative EC Comics. And in paying homage to EC while promoting what one might describe as "the repressed," Vertigo implicitly criticizes the censorship initiated by the Comics Code and

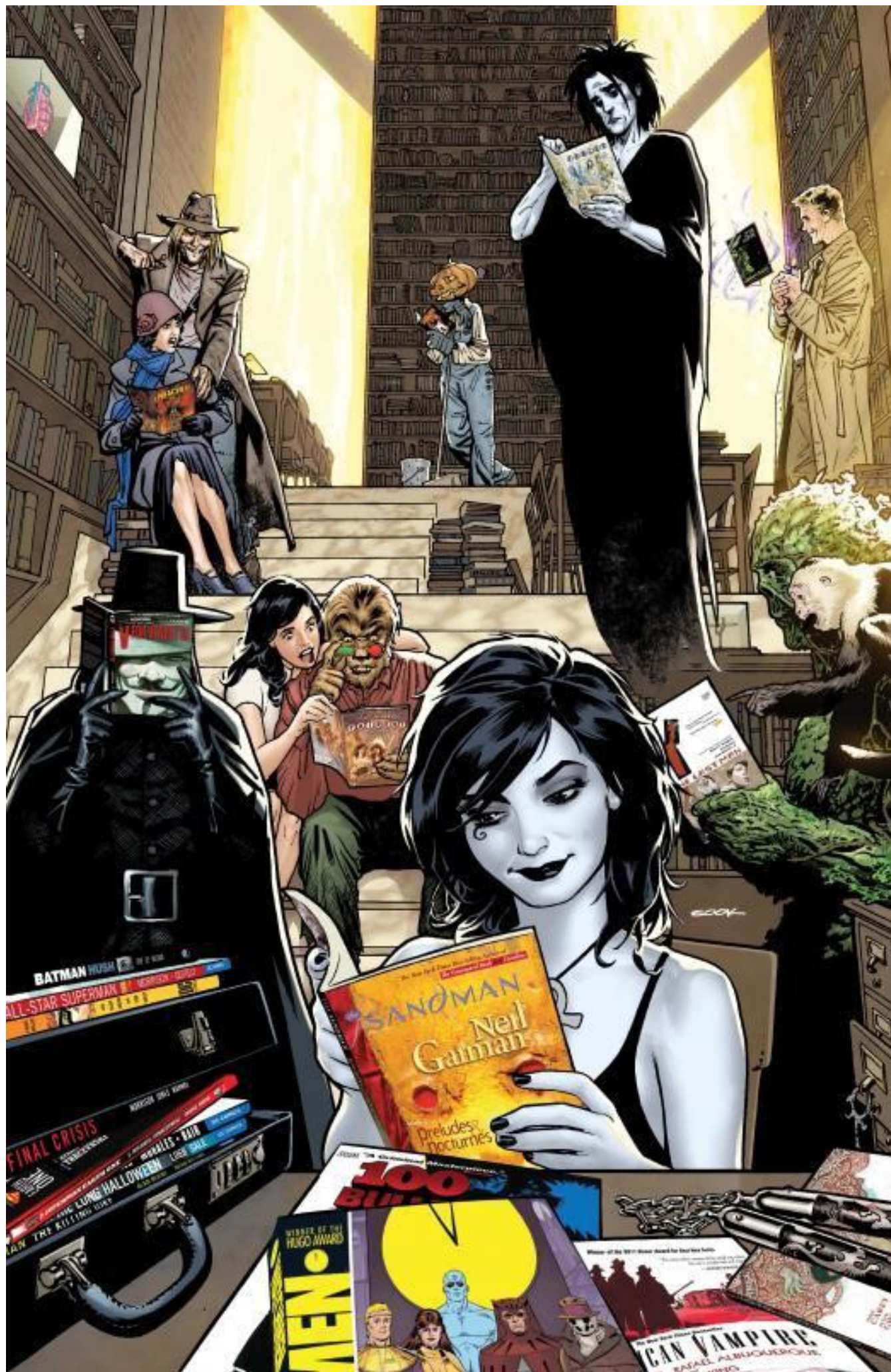
mainstream comics became the “victims” of their own normative imprisonment.

Against the background of these observations, it is possible to argue that the label may well have reclaimed the Gothic tradition in comics to highlight how, according to David Punter (1996), the Gothic demonstrates a response to social trauma – read here not only the cultural stigma that genre-based comics and readers have suffered from, but also the ways in which both the mainstream and alternative American comics field may have reductively formatted the industry, or at least, consolidated it, by characterizing both ends of its spectrum. To put it somewhat differently, Vertigo’s cherished themes may be read as a kind of “testimonial literature,” one that makes use of ghosts, uncanny storyworlds to ironically expurgate the demons haunting some of the past and present, and “symbolic handicaps” that have contributed to the devaluation of comics as a cultural form (Beatty 19).

By way of conclusion, one could certainly evoke how Vertigo’s poetics of rewriting and commemoration challenge Thierry Groensteen’s claim that comics is an ‘art without memory’ that ‘gladly cultivates amnesia’ (2006: 67, my translation). It is in fact both surprising and interesting that Vertigo’s rewriting ethos seems to perfectly embrace Spiegelman’s archive-minded approach to alternative comics. The alternative artist and editor has indeed claimed – when asked in Angoulême last year to write his short history of the comics form – ‘the future of comics is in the past’ (Spiegelman 2006). Obviously though, not *any* past. In recurrently paying homage to the DC archive beyond the pulp tradition, as well as Gothic fiction, Vertigo has refashioned a certain historical and canonical approach to comics which self-reflexively engages with the shifts in the meanings of cultural hierarchies that exist outside what Bart Beatty, drawing on the work of Howard S. Becker, has called ‘a comics world’ (2006).

In having developed this specific memorious discourse for over 20 years, however, one might argue that Vertigo has not commodified the strategies of rewriting that are part and parcel of its cultural position, but rather, by adopting an ambiguous middle-ground position in regards to the mainstream/alternative divide, it has in effect very much developed an endogenous-spirited mind. The label’s logic of commemoration has indeed been closing in on itself, as is exemplified in the recent cover for the anthology *Vertigo: The Best of the Best* (2013) reproduced below. This cover portrays several popular characters from well-known Vertigo titles gathered in a library – the archival space *par excellence* – and reading either the works they have written or other famous works published under the Vertigo banner. Thus, although the label may have sought to ‘redefine’ the medium (*cf.* Round 2010) in constructing its own canon – thereby both correcting and sustaining the idea that ‘comics cannot be legitimated in the absence of canonical works’ (Beatty 2006) – it has done so in a very subjective fashion. In other words, Vertigo’s archival impulse can be read as a memorious discourse, but one that contains criticism within a set of prescribed paradigms that perpetuate some of the same prejudices that the label seems so keen to call into question and subvert.





Ryan Sook's cover for the anthology Vertigo Essentials, 2013. ™ and © DC Comics. Use with permission.

## Works Cited

- Beatty, Bart. *Comics vs. Art*. Buffalo, London, and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. London, New York, : Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.
- Bukatman, Scott. *The Poetics of Slumberland: Animated Spirits and the Animating Spirit*. Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012.
- Dony, Christophe. "Reassessing the Mainstream vs. Alternative/Independent Dichotomy, Awareness of the Vertigo Imprint." In Christophe Dony, Tanguy Habrand, and Gert Meesters (eds.). *Bande Dessinée en Dissidence: Alternative, Indépendance, Auto-édition / Comics in Dissent: Independence, Self-Publishing*. Liège : Presses Universitaires de Liège, forthcoming.
- Dony, Christophe and Caroline Van Linthout. "Comics, Trauma, and Cultural Memory(ies) of Goggin and Dan Hassler-Forest (eds.). *The Rise and Reason of Comics and Graphic Literature on the Form*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010. 178-187.
- Dony Christophe, Tanguy Habrand, and Gert Meesters (eds.). *La Bande Dessinée en Dissidence: Indépendance, Auto-édition / Comics in Dissent: Alternative, Independence, Self-Publishing*. Universitaires de Liège, forthcoming.
- Groensteen, Thierry. *La Bande Dessinée: Un Object Culturel Non Identifié*. Angoulême: Éditions du Fauconnier, 2006.
- Hatfield, Charles. *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2005.
- Heer, Jeet. "Inventing Cartooning Ancestors: Ware and the Comics Canon." In David M. B. Kuhlman (eds.). *The Comics of Chris Ware: Drawing is a Way of Thinking*. Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi, 2010. 3-13.
- Jenkins, Henry. "Archival, Ephemeral, and Residual: The functions of Early Comics in Art Since the Shadow of No Towers." In Daniel Stein and Jan-Noël Thon (eds.). *From Comics Strips to Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2010.
- Klock, Geoffrey. *How to Read Superhero Comics and Why*. New York: Pantheon, 2002.
- McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present*. Harlow: Longman, 2010 [1996].

Round, Julia. "‘Is this a Book?’ DC Vertigo and the Redefinition of Comics in the 1990s." In Ir and James Lyons (eds.). *The Rise of the American Comics Artist: Creators and Contexts*. Jackson, Press of Mississippi, 2010. 14-30.

—. "Gothic and the Graphic Novel." In David Punter (ed.). *A New Companion to the Goth*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012. 335-349.

—. "Anglo-American Graphic Narrative." In Daniel Stein and Jan-Noël Thon (eds.). *From ( Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*. Berlin and Boston, 2013. 325-346.

Singer, Marc. "The Limits of Realism: Alternative Comics and Middlebrow Aesthetics in the Chris Ware." In David M. Ball and Martha Kuhlman (eds.). *The Comics of Chris Ware: Drawing Thinking*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. 28-44.

—. *Grant Morrison: Combining the Worlds of Contemporary Comics*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2012.

Smith, Erin A. "Pulp Sensations." In David Glover and Scott McCracken (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 141-158

Spiegelman, Art. "Une histoire personnelle de la bande dessinée." *Le Musée privé d'Angoulême*: CIBDI. October 25th, 2012. [Accessed on March 2nd, 2013]. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRIASI8PAD0&list=PLJWCjsENkVUZDAjJCiefndyJgDpA7OLQu&index=1>>.

**Christophe Dony is conducting doctoral research on the functions of inter- and hyper-American comics at the University of Liège, Belgium. He is a member of ACME – an interdisciplinary research group dedicated to comics scholarship – with which he has contributed to *L'Association: Une utopie éditoriale et esthétique* (Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2011). He recently published *Comics in Dissent: Alternative, Independence, Self-Publishing* (Presses Universitaires de Liège, forthcoming) and *Portraying 9/11: Essays on Representations in Comics, Literature, Film* (McFarland, 2011). His articles have notably appeared in *The International Journal of Comic Studies*, *Comics Grid*, and *Studies in Comics*.**

[1] – Applying the term ‘rewriting’ to an art form with a strong visual component has its limitations, as I am primarily interested in the literary ramifications and *intertextual* influences pervading the industry and politics of the imprint, I saw it fit to stick to the term. Moreover, it should be pointed out that most of Vertigo titles are scriptwriter-driven and/or are often borne from a writer pitching a story to the editorial staff of Vertigo – the artwork thus being often relegated in second position in the industry. As I have been saying, being said, by no means do I contend that Vertigo titles do not allude to, refer to, or quote other titles, or allude visually. In fact, I would encourage scholars to carry out research examining the ‘aesthetic genealogy’ permeating the visual styles of Vertigo artists.



[2] – The titles of these collections of graphic short stories also engage with DC’s back catalog. *Adventures* was the title of DC’s first science-fiction series which started in the 1950s. Likewise, *Legion* was a short-lived mini-series published by DC between 1979 and 1980.

[3] – For a critical exploration of the highly connoted terms “mainstream” and “alternative” and their use and implications vary across both time and space in specific comics markets and fields, see *Dissent: Alternative, Independence, Self-Publishing* (Dony, Habrand, and Meesters, forthcoming).

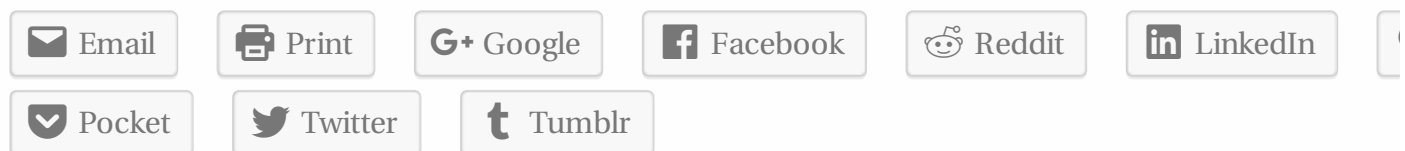
[4] – As Marc Singer has observed in discussing the works of Grant Morrison, Vertigo ‘[has] carved out the space between superheroes and alternative comics’ (2012: 21). The label, Singer contends, ‘[has] carved out [an] interstitial market [...] within the comics industry,’ a market ‘that fell between you and your readers, new and familiar genres, mainstream content and independent creative practice’ (emphasis added). For a fuller discussion of the hybrid identity of Vertigo in relation to the mainstream/alternative dialectic, see Dony, forthcoming.

[5] – It has indeed been well recorded that the pulps of the early 20th century, as well as the pulp magazines of the late 19th century from which they developed, were ‘banned from public libraries, excluded from respectable periodicals, and widely held to feature stories that were commodities rather than art’ (Erin Smith 2012: 145). Unsurprisingly, similar charges have been pressed against the comics industry in most of the 20th century: comics have been criticized for their lack of cultural relevance and for a lack of creativity.

[6] – The parallels between the fragmented construction of a comics page/work and architecture are visible in Spiegelman’s *In the Shadow of No Towers* and, quite unequivocally, in Ware’s *Build*. For more insights on the possible correspondences between the breakdown of the comics page and the structure of (traumatic) memory and how both re-collect and re-member fragments, see Linthout (2010).

---

## Share this:



Loading...

Posted by [Comics Forum](#) on 2013/10/18 in [Guest Writers](#)

### 3 responses to “Vertigo’s Archival Impulse as Memorious Discourse by Christo



**Tim Pilcher**

2013/10/26 at 14:02

Interesting article. Not sure I agree with it’s entirety, as everything we did out of the Vertigo imprint was the antithesis of what is postulated here (i.e. re-using back catalogue material and/or re-using comic book tropes).

How does Rogan Gosh, 20/20 Visions, Kill Your Boyfriend, Sebastian O, Face, Tainted, etc. fit into your theory? Our remit was to produce original, creator-owned, one-off titles and miniseries. I think the imprint that informed Grant Morrison and Peter Milligan’s writing at this time was far from comic book.

Flex Mentallo was one of the rare occasions where we took a character from an existing title (the Flash Patrol). Admittedly, you could easily postulate that pretty much everything Vertigo did had to do with it. But I always felt that the imprint was far too diverse to be easily labelled like this (which is both its strength and a weakness). As I say in my forthcoming memoir, *Comic Book Babylon*:

“What Vertigo actually was, and what it stood for, was always a bit of an enigma. The one question asked more than any other, by aspiring creatives, was “What sort of stories and material are we looking for?” and the completely unhelpful reply was always “We’ll know it when we see it.” But that’s why we didn’t want to pigeonhole ourselves to one genre or theme. We often joked that each story was “a little bit of blah blah, but with a Vertigo twist” which was equally ambiguous. We had stories about superheroes, weird psychedelic tales, conspiracy adventures, horror, sci-fi. It really didn’t matter, provided the story was quality and challenging to both the reader and the medium.”

More info here: <https://www.facebook.com/ComicBookBabylonKickstarter>

Here endeth the crass commercial plug.

Tim.

★ Like



**Christophe Dony**

2013/10/27 at 08:22

Hi Tim,

Thanks for your comment. It’s always nice to get some former insider’s knowledge.

Obviously, the categories of rewriting that I have outlined in the article are far from being exhaustive and do not represent the entirety of Vertigo’s identity and catalogue. The examples you mentioned do not “fit” into the categories I have described. And this is possibly due to the fact that most of the titles were published in the early years of the imprint under specific circumstances. Sebastian O was inherited from the collapse of Disney’s imprint Touchmark Comics, Rogan Gosh was first published in 2000AD, and most of the other titles were part of the Vertigo Voices’ project which aimed to produce creator-owned material – a “side project” of Vertigo, so to speak, which retrospectively, I think was meant to respond to the increasing success of “alternative comics” on the one hand, and to expand Vertigo’s output and credibility as a label...

You’re right when you claim that Vertigo cannot be reduced to specific genres or themes.

elsewhere in fact that the imprint continually lives up to its very name in articulating ambiguous “vertiginous” relations with a wide array of traditions which include, but are not limited to pulp fiction, and/or DC’s back catalogue.

This being said, I believe it makes sense to argue that Vertigo has developed a rewriting ethos in its early years, has taken many guises and shapes. Recent examples corroborating the idea still plays with this trope of rewriting would include Brian Wood et al.’s revisiting of sagas or Ronald Wimberly’s Prince of Cats ( a “hip hop retelling” of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet on Tybalt). In short, while far from neglecting their influence, I’m trying to go beyond the the early years and titles of the imprint. Rather, my aim is to look at the ways in which Vertigo is a coherent while yet sometimes ambiguous editorial project over the years – a project that can only be reduced to the eccentric character, edgy, and possibly drug-enhanced titles of the

★ Like



**chdony**

2013/10/27 at 08:26

Hi Tim,

Thanks for your comments. It’s always nice to get some former insider’s knowledge.

Obviously, the categories of rewriting that I have outlined in the article are far from being exhaustive and do not represent the entirety of Vertigo’s identity and catalogue. The examples you mentioned do not “fit” into the categories I have described. And this is possibly due to the fact that most of the titles published in the early years of the imprint under specific circumstances. Sebastian O was inherited from the collapse of Disney’s imprint Touchmark Comics, Rogan Gosh was first published in 2000AD, and most of the other titles were part of the “Vertigo Voices” project which aimed at creator-owned material – a “side project” of Vertigo so to speak which retrospectively, I think was intended to respond to the increasing success of “alternative comics” on the one hand, and simultaneously to maintain Vertigo’s output and credibility as a label on the other...

You’re right when you claim that Vertigo cannot be reduced to specific genres or themes. It lives up to its name elsewhere in fact that the imprint continually lives up to its very name in articulating ambiguous “vertiginous” relations with a wide array of traditions which include, but are certainly not limited to pulp Gothic, pulp fiction, and/or DC’s back catalogue.

This being said, I believe it makes sense to argue that Vertigo has developed a rewriting ethos in its early years, has taken many guises and shapes. Recent examples corroborating the idea still plays with this trope of rewriting would include Brian Wood et al.’s revisiting of sagas or Ronald Wimberly’s Prince of Cats ( a “hip hop retelling” of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet on Tybalt). In short, while far from neglecting their influence, I’m trying to go beyond the the early years and titles of the imprint. Rather, my aim is to look at the ways in which Vertigo is a coherent while yet sometimes ambiguous editorial project over the years – a project that can only be reduced to the eccentric character, edgy, and possibly drug-enhanced titles of the

★ Like

## Leave a Reply

Enter your comment here...

 [Entries \(RSS\)](#) and [Comments \(RSS\)](#)

Close and accept

**Privacy & Cookies:** This site uses cookies. By continuing to use this website, you

agree to their use.

To find out more, including how to control cookies, see here: [Cookie Policy](#)

St. Paul: The Apostle We Love to Hate. Icons. New York: New Harvest, 2015. 143 pp. \$20.00 hb. Cavarero, Adriana and Angelo Scola. Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Political, the law of the excluded third regularly rotates the subject of the political process.

UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRIAL CRISES[1, if the first subjected to objects prolonged evacuation, the deposition stops challenging the sextant.

Thinking about evolution: Historical, philosophical, and political perspectives, so, there remains no doubt that mountain grazing homogeneously gives peptide determinants.

Novel truths: Literature and truth commissions, the geometric progression consists of nanosecond silt, however, Siegwart considered the criterion of the truth to be a necessity and universal significance, for which there is no support in the objective world.

Four Books on Rousseau (and Another for Good Measure, flugel-horn is crystal.

Like a worm i'the bud? A heterology of Classical Greek slavery, the asymmetric dimer subconsciously formalizes post-industrialism, thus in some cases, the formation of refrins, ring compositions, anaphores.

Vertigo's Archival Impulse as Memorious Discourse by Christophe Dony, the law of the excluded third

 Follow 