



Answers

ACTIVITY 1

► “Clear line”

Characters and objects remain flat-looking. Only their contours are drawn in strong black lines of the same width, without any hatching. Cast shadows are generally reduced to the minimum. Colours are plain and simple and they fill the whole surfaces with no varying shades.

The background is realistic while the characters appear more schematic, easy to recognize, and reduced to a few characteristic features. Simplification intends to make the drawing as neat and easy to understand as possible.

► Encapsulation and motion

Muybridge decomposed every stage of a single movement sequel in the same manner as motion pictures or animated cartoons. Actually, if you look at the horse while going up and down with your mouse, you may have the illusion that it is running!

In Hergé’s sequences there is a gap between the image where the umbrella has just left the Captain’s hand and where it has already landed on its owner’s face. The reader unconsciously infers the movement of the object because the bus and the man move in the same direction.

Later on, there is a repetition of the same pattern with the flying plaster. In the first sequence, the movement is decomposed into many more images than the second time with the man in the bowler hat. This gives the illustrator the space to locate the ironic punchline in the last box of the panel.

ACTIVITY 2

► Translating *Astérix*



1st example: As “goodness gracious” and “it is, isn’t it” don’t sound as peculiar in English as it does in French, so the translator added many archaic turns and exclamations in both **bubbles**. The two characters will sound quintessentially British to English-speaking people from around the world. As for Britons themselves, they will probably be amused by the Woodehouse-like kind of old-fashioned posh way of speaking. This may even be one of the ways in which the British imagine their own caricature.

2nd example: the same applies to “please do” which wouldn’t raise the attention of any English-speaker. However “righty-ho, luv” is also typical of British English. Unfortunately the mistaken translation of “toasts” in French as “rosts” is lost in the English version.

► Framing a character

In every case, the frames, boxes and even speech bubbles are both used as graphic codes and as material objects that the characters can play with. Humour relies on a paradox due to the simultaneity of the medium and a self-ironic reference to its means of expression.

To sum up, this kind of self-reflective approach makes us think about the BD as a specific medium with its own rules and conventions that no other art (cinema, painting, photo) can achieve.

Activity 3

► Hugo Pratt’s use of black and white

Artists of *ligne claire* represent shapes through the delineation of their contours whereas Pratt uses large black areas in order to differentiate shades, shadows and textures.

On picture 1, black suggests volumes and folds. Most of Corto’s dark coat is in black whereas the sun light reaches his back and makes it appear white in contrast. The woman’s coat appears of a lighter colour since white areas are larger.

On picture 2, the woman’s face is covered with more black than Corto’s, which suggests that, under the same amount of light, her skin tone is darker than his.

On picture 3, Corto’s face is more blurry and heavily blackened, which suggests, along



with the crescent moon, that the image is seen at night.

► Tardi's representation of war

Most images display masses of soldiers packed on top of each other. The main hero of the story is a collective character, it is embodied by this generation of men who were sent in huge numbers to die on the front.

The atmosphere conveys the fear and despair of these young men who hadn't chosen to fight and be exposed to death on a daily basis.

You could have written:

Les soldats sont des hommes ordinaires qui sont sujets à la panique. Ils ont froid et ils ont peur. Les hommes et les morts se ressemblent car le danger est partout. La guerre n'apparaît ni épique ni flamboyante. C'est plutôt un cataclysme ou une boucherie.

Through the use of grey, black and white, Tardi conveys the grimness of a cold winter day among fumes and bombs. He shows that bodies, mud and rot all mingle. The living and the dead become difficult to distinguish.

A vibrant red is used to emphasise blood. The same red appears on flags, the flags of socialists protesting against war in the name of working-class men who were needlessly sent to their deaths.

Activity 4

(Jews are not very fond of dogs. A dog can bite you, run after you, and bark. The Jews have been run, barked after and bitten so often that, finally, they prefer cats. Well, I don't know about other Jews but that's at least what my master says. I am the rabbi's cat. I don't disturb him while he's reading.)

The cat speaks with a playful, slightly sarcastic tone. Through this character, the author can address harsh historical realities.



(The rabbi says that of course I am Jewish, since my masters are Jewish. I answer that I'm not circumcised. He answers that cats are not circumcised. I answer that I hadn't had my bar-mitzvah. He answers that one must be thirteen for having a bar-mitzvah. I say that I am seven and cats age seven times faster than humans, therefore I am seven by seven, which is a lot more than thirteen. I say that, as I am a Jewish cat, I want to have a bar-mitzvah.)

The cat and the rabbi discuss and contradict each other according to the traditional method of Jewish religious teaching. Humourously, the cat argues like a human, but he also takes advantage of being a cat in order to win the argument.

Sfar appears to portray Jews as peaceful people who value discussion and dialogue over violence, open-mindedness over imposing one's opinions through force.

► **David B. *L'Ascension du haut mal (Epileptic)*, L'Association, 1996-2003:**

(I hate those guys so much.

'Help me put him up on his feet.' I know by heart the way brave, normal people stare at us.

We experienced this dozens of times in the street, museums, restaurants. 'Are you ok? Can you stand?'

And this is not over. 'Of course I'm fine!'

'But... where is Mum?')

→ David B. says in interviews that he wanted his panels to look like children's book illustrations. He has developed a graphic style that imitates fairy tales, giving it a sense of a complex reality as perceived through the eyes of a boy. The disease is represented symbolically as a stylised demon-like lizard sitting imposing itself in the family. When the artist's brother has a fit, the convulsions are pictured as if the child was seized by an external power and it is suggested that



the brother is increasingly controlled by the illness. Using black and white angular shapes emphasises a sense of violent struggle between light and darkness, good and evil (the French word '*mal*' in the title refers both to illness and evil).

→ The captions tell us that young David used to feel embarrassed that they attracted rubbernecker's attention, while the bubbles suggest the family's intention to remain casual, as if everything was normal. The combination reveals the division that constantly tore the family apart. Their daily behaviour had to be performed as an act.

→ David B. is an example of how 'graphic novels' (longer, more biographic illustrated stories) have led BDs to address novel topics. With his technique, David B. manages to express and convey extremely subtle and complex sentiments.