Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Expression of Mood and Emotions in Graphic Novels

Case: Blankets and Habibi by Craig Thompson

Julia Riitijoki

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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
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The goal of this study was to find out what the most commonly used methods of emotional expression in graphic novels are and how those principles had been put to use in comic artist Craig Thompson's most famous works Blankets and Habibi. In order to study the principles of emotional and mood-related visual expression, several literary sources were used, some of which focused on comic books, others generally on visual expression.

The focus of the study was on the visual cues such as the use of light and shadow, perspective, lines, comic panel shapes and styles, texture, speech balloons and typography. Plot, characters or dialogue were not relevant to this study because the goal was to focus on visual stimuli only. This study explored individual comic panels only, rather than the entire pages or spreads. In the practical part of the thesis, the goal was to implement a comic that focused primarily on creating the right kind of mood in the panels, utilizing the techniques found in the study.

The conclusion of this study was that there are numerous very effective ways to express mood and emotions in graphic novels. Craig Thompson has utilized these techniques in very versatile ways in his books Blankets and Habibi. However, several panels that were used as samples in this study were not nearly enough to depict the graphic novel's versatility and mastery of emotional expression. The topic could be explored much further, as the expressions of mood and emotions are in the very core of what makes graphic novels a unique storytelling platform.

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Key words: comics, graphic novel, expression, emotions, Craig Thompson

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

A memorable graphic novel, in other words a comic, touches its reader emotionally. Mood and emotions make the graphic novel come truly alive and the theme or message does not matter that much if the emotional experience is lacking. That is why emotional and mood-related visual expression is a particularly interesting topic to study.

There are many kinds of factors that affect mood and emotions in graphic novels. The goal of this study is to find out what the most commonly used methods of emotional expression in graphic novels are and how those principles have been put to use in comic artist Craig Thompson's most famous works Blankets (Thompson 2003) and Habibi (2011). In order to study the principles of emotional and mood-related visual expression, several literary sources were used, some of which focused on comic books, others generally on visual expression.

Craig Thompson is an American multi-award winning graphic novelist whose works have been published in nearly twenty languages (Craig Thompson's website, 2016). Thompson has received four Harvey Awards and three Eisner Awards and his book Blankets has sold about 100,000 copies (Baker, 2011). Thompson's works were chosen for this thesis because of the artist's exceptional ability to portray mood and emotion in his comics. Thompson uses a myriad of different artistic techniques in his panels to convey emotions and feelings.

PICTURE 1. Blankets and Habibi

Both Blankets and Habibi are black and white line art comics. This helps to crop this study to deal only with comics that have been implemented with similar kinds of techniques. Therefore the study does not cover colours, raster or grayscale. Body gestures and facial expressions were also deliberately left out of this study. Instead, the focus is on other visual techniques such as the use of light and shadow, perspective, lines, panel shapes and styles, texture, balloons and typography. Plot and character and dialogue are not relevant to this study because the goal is to focus only on visual stimuli.

This study focuses on exploring individual comic panels only, rather than entire pages or spreads. Each panel is supposed to work individually portraying a different mood. Together panels create a sequential narrative. One might ask why this study does not analyze only individual images but comic panels instead. The answer is simple: There are many elements in a comic panel that are not present in a single image, such as speech bubbles, sound effects and text. The shape and size of the panels are also important in conveying emotion and mood. Therefore, it is justified to study specifically the comic panel, and not just any image.

In the practical part of the thesis, the goal is to implement a comic that focuses primarily on creating the right kind of atmosphere in the panels, utilizing the techniques found in the study. The comic is not intended to be completed during the thesis. The finished output will be 10 pages, but only two of the planned pages will be finished during this thesis. The analysis will focus on the panels picked from the finished pages. The comic is executed in black and white, digitally drawn.

2   GRAPHIC NOVEL VS COMICS

Defining the word comics is actually quite a difficult task. It is important to remember that we're not defining an object like a comic book or a comic strip. Instead we're trying to define a medium called comics. The word "comics" is usually associated with things like childhood, humour and superheroes. Despite the term being derived from the word comical, the medium of comics is not confined to humour. Nor is it restricted to a genre, such as superhero stories. It is a medium open to covering almost every subject using visual and often verbal language. (Gravett 2013, 9).

Based on American cartoonist and comics theorist Scott McCloud, the idea of comics is to place one picture after another to show the passage of time (McCloud 2000, 1). In his book Understanding Comics (1994, 9) McCloud gives an even more specific definition for the term comics: "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and /or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer". (McCloud 1994, 9.)

Master comic artist Will Eisner defines comics as a form of sequential art, often in the form of a strip or a book, in which images and text are arranged to tell a story (Eisner 2008, xvii). Yet most people within the influence of western popular culture probably know, at least on some intuitive level, what comics are.

Graphic novel is not an easy term to define either. The term has been distorted as a result of various prejudices and misunderstandings. It has caused confusion in the audience and media and controversy among the graphic novel creators themselves. Graphic novel as a term was originally an effort to overcome the stigmas of humor and childishness of the word "comic" (Gravett 2005, 8).

Graphic novels contain certain special features that seek to distinguish them from comics, but these differences are highly controversial, and not well-defined truths. Since no official definitions exist, it is quite common for terms such as comics and graphic novels to be used in the same context. Graphic novels and comics are basically the same format, so everything that has been said of comics can be

applied also to graphic novels and vice versa. Both terms have also been used in the source material used to conduct this study, therefore it is justified to use both terms in this study as well.

3 EXPRESSION OF MOOD AND EMOTIONS IN COMIC PANELS

Every picture, intentionally or not, communicates a mood element from within its structure. (Hernandez 2013, 152.) In his book Understanding Comics (1993, 118), Scott McCloud raises the question of whether emotions can be made visible. For example, does a sharp serrated line cause a different emotional reaction in the reader than a gentle, circular line?

A visual storyteller can control how the audience feels about what they see. Even if the panel does not cause direct reactions in the reader, he/she still understands what kind of mood and emotional state the panel tries to convey. The ability of an image to evoke an emotional reaction is extremely important for the art of comics. The invisible world of emotions can be embedded either between or within panels. (McCloud 1993, 121.) This study examines the latter.

Compared to for example film and television, comics are a much more challenging medium. Unlike the ones just mentioned, comics are a mono-sensory medium and it relies on only one sense when trying to convey emotions (McCloud 1993, 89). Admittedly, this claim has been challenged by digital comics in the 2000s. Nowadays, sounds and even a movement can be added to the comics. However, this study focuses on the traditional, silent, and motionless comic.

It is important to remember that the emotional impact of a comic is subjective (McCloud 2000, 39). Comprehension of an image is actually a shared experience of the artist and the reader. For the message to get understood correctly, the reader needs to recognize the meaning and emotional impact of the image and it is not always self-evident. (Eisner 2004, 13-14.)

3   TECHNIQUES

How can a single image represent the senses and emotions and how can this idea be applied to comic panels? As mentioned earlier, mood, or the inherent emotion expected from an audience when viewing an image, can be achieved in many ways. The next chapters will study the principles of emotional and mood-related visual expression and how those principles apply to individual comic panels of Craig Thompon's works Blankets and Habibi.

3.1   Lines

Line is the basis of all drawing. It is the first and most versatile visual element in art. (Artyfactory 2021) It is peculiar how only lines on paper can make the reader care and feel things. In his book Understanding Comics (1993, 124), Scott McCloud raises a question that does not actually all lines have some kind of expressive potential? It is a question worth exploring and this chapter covers the findings related to the line and its emotional expression.

A line can be used to tell a wide variety of things in art. It can reflect for example the shape of an object, light, shadow, emotion, or movement. The drawing medium gives the line its own character, depending on whether it is a pencil, charcoal, brush, etc. (Ahjopalo-Nieminen 1999, 25.) For example, a nib pen tends to give dry, edgy and brittle feel to the lines. Brush technique in turn creates the smooth, organic and slick feel to the lines. Thompson uses the brush technique in his works. (McCloud 2006, 194.)

Direction, shape and character of the line determines what kind of mood it expresses. For example, The serrated line can be probing and harsh, while the round shapes convey a warm and tender atmosphere. Straight, clear corners are conservative, while a ragged, flimsy line conveys a weak and unstable mood. (McCloud 1993, 125.)

Direction of the line can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. These three types of line can convey the emotion of any scene that they are in. Vertical lines communicate strength, power or boundaries, whereas horizontal lines give off a sense of peace and stability. Action, instability and/or excitement are implied by the use of diagonal lines. (Arnold & Brendan 2007, 130-133.)

The variation of lines from thick and detailed to thin and blurred creates the right kind of distance and focus to the scene, which helps to create the mood on the image. In the foreground, the line is thicker and more detailed and has more texture than on the background. (Hernandez 2013, 59-60.)

PICTURE 2. (Thompson 2003, 475)

In picture 2 attention is drawn first to the line orientation. The picture is dominated by horizontal lines that communicate calmness and stability. In this picture, Thompson has wanted to express the mood of a boring, long ride home after some very intense and emotional events that happened before it. This picture has a stark contrast to the preceding events in terms of its mood. Horizontal lines have also been defined to express passivity and timelessness (McCloud 1993, 124) which can be felt very strongly from this panel as well. It looks like Thompson deliberately wanted to avoid using vertical lines in this panel to convey the right kind of mood. Scott McCloud states in his book Understanding Comics (1993, 125) that even the blandest expressionless lines can not help but characterize their subject in some way. This panel is a great example of that statement.

3.2 Speech Balloons and Lettering

Speech balloons, also called speech bubbles, are the most widely used synaes-thetic icons of graphic novels (McCloud 1993, 134). They act as an explicit way to reveal things to the reader about the character's inner life (McCloud 2006, 155). There are countless variations in balloon shapes and new are invented all the time (McCloud 1993, 134). By manipulating the shape and form of the panel the artist has the ability to increase or decrease the drama of a moment (Pratt 2009, 110).

Research has shown that people respond differently to different kinds of fonts. One finding was that serif fonts were more likely to make people sad than sans serif fonts. (Bonnici 1999, 52) Another example is that hand lettered font con-veys a very different kind of personality than typeset letters (Eisner 2004, 27.) It can be concluded that relatively tiny variations in letter form can create signifi-cant emotional shifts in the reader.

There are some commonly accepted characteristics in lettering that express the level of the sound and emotion. For example, loudness is indicated by size and boldness, bigger and bolder text reflects greater volume (picture 3). To a certain extent, these characteristics can be quite intuitive. (Eisner 2008, 61.)

PICTURE 3. Bigger text reflects greater volume. (Thompson 2003, 13)
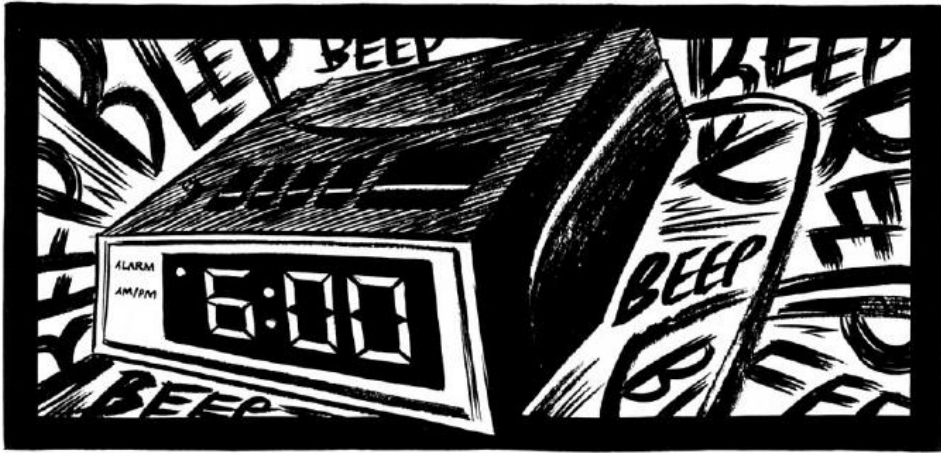
PICTURE 4. Different soundscapes can be created by varying the roughness, tilt, and shape of the text. (Thompson 2003, 307)
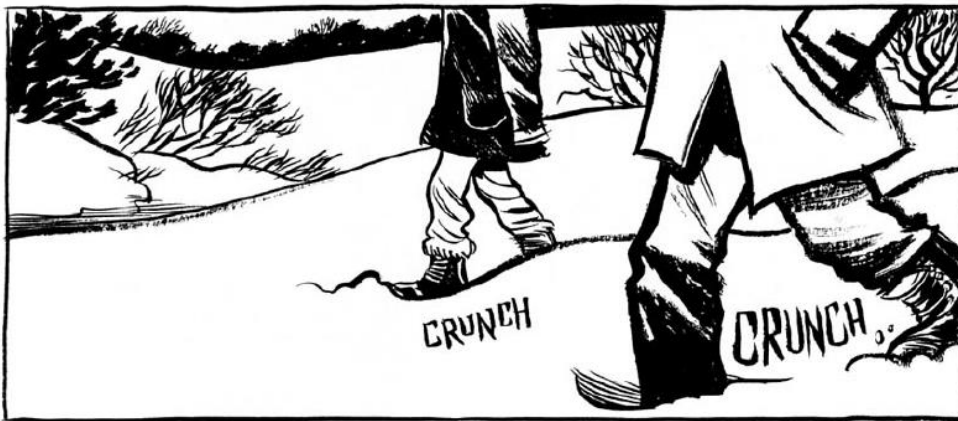
PICTURE 5. Sample of a more restrained soundscape. (Thompson 2003, 459)

There are also panels that do not have any indication of sound. Silent panel gives the reader time to wander through the picture in peace, because silence has the effect of removing the panel from any particular span of time. (McCloud 2006, 154-165.)
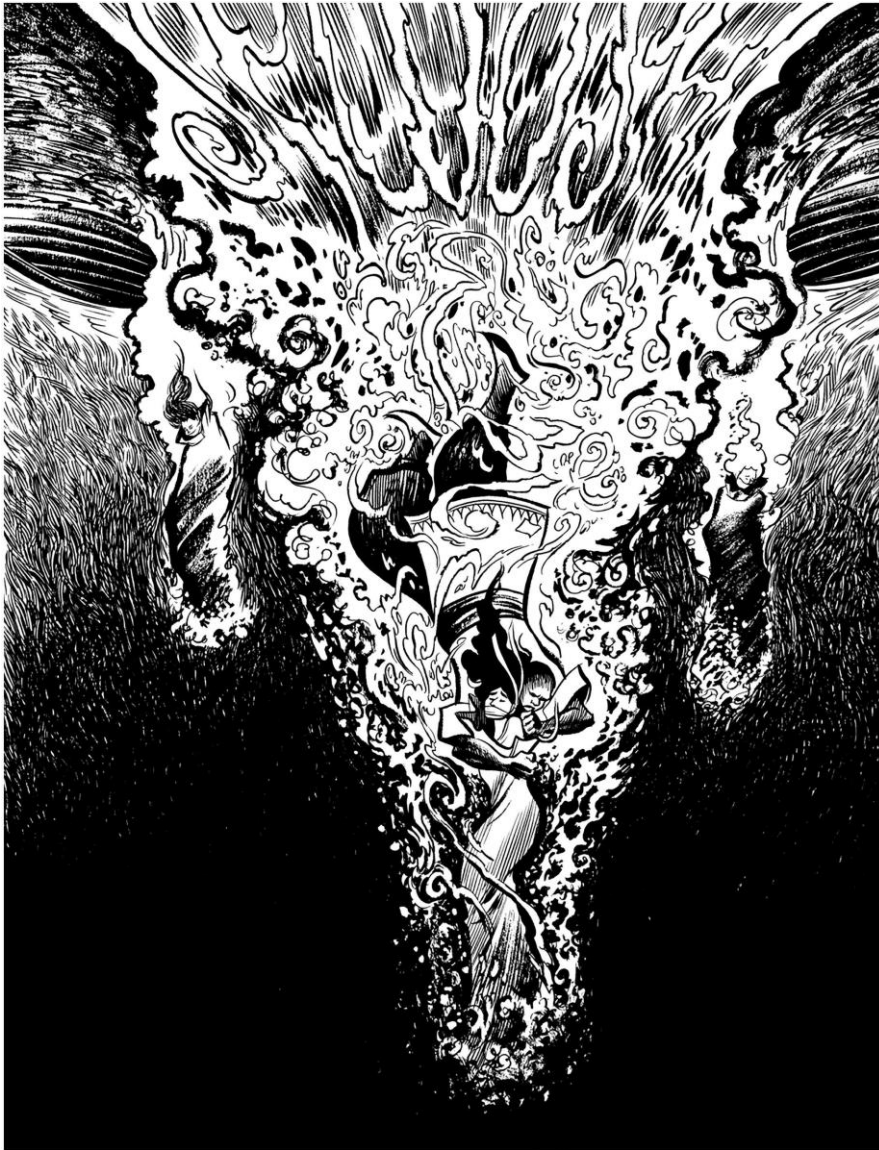
PICTURE 6. (Thompson 2011, 429)

Picture 6 is a full-page panel from Thompson's Habibi. The sound effect is integrated into the motion of submergence which is a great example of how graphically stylized lettering can function as an extension of the imagery. As Will Eisner mentioned in his book Comics and Sequential Art (2004, 10), this kind of technique provides a mood, narrative bridge and the implication of sound. If the artist wants to emphasize a particular emotion on the panel, it is justified to use a different font than in other narration. That is exactly what Thompson is aiming for in this panel. For other narration, Thompson uses his own handwriting. A handwritten font radiates a feeling of relatability and emotional engagement that couldn't be achieved with a typical serif or sans serif fonts generated with computer.

The sound effect's size should also be noticed in this panel. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, larger size implies greater volume. In this panel, the loud sound is emphasized at the top of the panel, but at the bottom there is no longer any sign of sound. It creates a quiet, peaceful mood at the bottom of the panel. In the Western culture, the reader's eye is trained to read a panel from top to bottom and left to right (McCloud 2006, 32).

3.3 Texture

Texture refers to the illusion of a tactile experience created with the use of lines and shading (Hernandez 2013, 79). Therefore the texture is largely connected to the line we discussed in Chapter 4.1 and the lighting that will be covered in Chapter 4.5. But since it cannot be directly linked to either of these, it is treated as an independent entity in this study.

Texture in art has its own role in expressing emotions. By adding realistic details and textures, artists can help trigger memories in the reader. In addition to the visual sense, other senses, such as the sense of smell and hearing, can be evoked with the texture. (McCloud 2006, 164.) What is seen can be associated with how it feels and usage of texture has a significant role in this process (Hernandez 2013 79).

Again, there are techniques that intuitively evoke certain feelings in the reader. For example, dashed lines and half-drawn edges make objects look older. Effective way to convey a spooky mood in a scene is to use heavy texture lines to give a gritty feel. (Hernandez 2013, 146, 151.)

PICTURE 7. (Thompson 2003, 310)

Picture 7 is a panel from the comic Blankets. Texture and details of the fabric help to convey the right kind of mood and emotion in the panel. Thompson wants to enhance the sensory experience by making surfaces as vibrant as possible by adding a realistic texture to them. This panel exudes comfort and relaxation. Thompson has deliberately drawn the patterned blanket shown in the panel in great detail, as that quilt involves a lot of emotional charge in the comic.
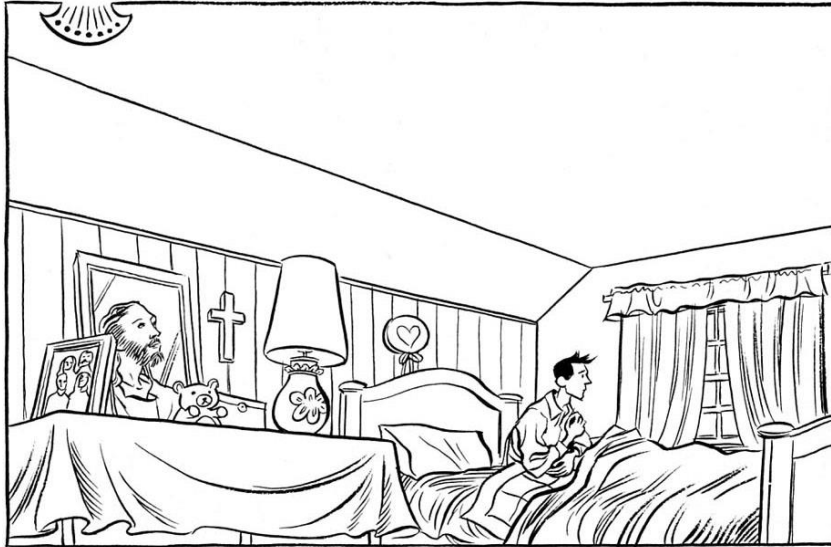
PICTURE 8. (Thompson 2003, 572)

Picture 8 shows the impact of not having a texture in the panel at all. Thompson has wanted to convey an empty, cold, and distant mood and has therefore omitted texture and too much shading.

3.4 Panels

The comic page consists of panels. The reader's viewpoint is controlled and restricted by the outlines of the panel. The panel is a lense of sorts through which the reader experiences the comic book's world. This restriction is a great power with great responsibility, and emotions can be stimulated by panel manipulation. (Eisner 2004, 88.)

Panel shapes and styles have the power to position the reader emotionally and indicate how long an action takes (Eisner 2004, 28, 59). Even the act of not using a frame at all can affect the reader's emotional response by making the action pop out from the framed ones and convey a sense of limitless, serene space. The frame's shape or absence of one can have its own important meaning in the story. Frame's style choices also matter. Wavy panels have a different impact on the reader than jagged outline and so on (Eisner 2004, 46-47).

An effective way to convey the illusion of power and threat is to break the edges of the panel by letting for example the character or any object burst out of the panel. It creates a feeling of unleashed action. (Eisner 2008, 46.) The shape of the panels can vary a lot. In addition to a typical rectangular panel, there can be for example circular, star-shaped or wavy panels. All of these convey a different kind of feeling and information to the reader. (Berntsson 2015.)

Also, the panel size matters because we're dealing with the medium where time equals space. A general thought is that the smaller the panel the shorter the smaller the time it expresses. For example a long horizontal panel often expresses a scene where a long event takes place. (Eisner 2004, 56.) As Will Eisner mentions in his book Comics and Sequential Art (2004, 89), these principles are deep-rooted primitive feelings and only work when used properly.

PICTURE 9. (Thompson 2003, 341)

Picture 9 is actually a nested panel which includes four different panels. Focus is on the black background panel, which is the most dominating of these four pan-

els. A frameless panel reaches out to unlimited space and an unseen background. (Eisner 2004, 45.) Thompson has used this technique in picture 9, in which the panel does not have the traditional frames drawn with outline. The shape breaks down into brush strokes, leaving the upper area of the panel empty and creating a sense of incompletion into the moment portrayed in the picture. This panel is quite large in size, meaning Thompson has wanted the gaze to wander in it longer than usual. This panel is a great example of how stylistic choices of the frame can become a part of the story.

3.5   Lighting

The lighting in the panel is a very large entity, which could be studied very extensively on its own. However, the lighting is such an essential part of creating emotions and mood in a panel that it would seem wrong to leave it completely unaddressed in this study.

Through lighting, the creator of the graphic novel can affect the emotional quality of the image inside the panel (Eisner 2004, 15). Heavy use of black in the right places connects the reader to emotions and subjects such as death, emptiness and sadness (Hernandez 2013, 141, 146). Darkness makes us uneasy and people are generally scared of dark so it is understandable that it evokes fear in the viewer (Djudjic 2017). White, on the other hand, conveys a feeling of purity, lightness and serenity, but can also be used to express emptiness or coldness (Hernandez 2013, 142).

The amount of contrast and direction of the light are important factors of conveying emotions. It is notable whether the light comes from below or above, for example. When the light source is down, the subject looks cruel and threatening, while the light coming from above is natural and balanced and therefore makes the reader feel comfortable. (Djudjic 2017.)

PICTURE 10. (Thompson 2011, 78)

Picture 10 is a panel taken from Habibi. As mentioned, strong use of black affects the mood of the scene. Black is usually connected to some darker emotional context, and in this panel, it communicates the sense of fear and threat that the main characters are experiencing. There is also a strong contrast between light and shadow on the panel. From the top of the panel, light floods into the scene and it creates the impression of hope and relief.

PICTURE 11. (Thompson 2003, 475)

The dominance of white in picture 11 gives off a message of boredom and a certain kind of emptiness, something that is a crucial emotion to convey at this point in the story. As mentioned in this chapter earlier, white also reflects cold-ness, an emotion present in this panel both physically and mentally.

3.6 Camera Angle and Perspective

Perspective in layout design creates the illusion of dimension and distance within a two-dimensional medium (Hernandez 2013, 7). The distance between the "camera" and the portrayed character or an object determines the audience's emotional response to what is shown. With the use of viewpoint positioning, var-ious feelings ranging from relaxed to tense, humorous to tragic, uncomfortable to familiar and so forth can be evoked, because humans respond to the environment they are put into. Perspective combined with the shape of the panel promotes different kinds of reactions. (Arnold & Brendan 2007, 141, 142; Eisner 2004, 89.)

With the choice of shot angle it is possible to tell a wide variety of things about the character's state of mind and situation (Hernandez 2013, 29). For example, looking at the scene from above it, removes the reader from intimate involvement, making him/her more like an observer rather than participant. Instead, low cam-era angle can convey an image of a threatening situation. (Eisner 2004, 89.)
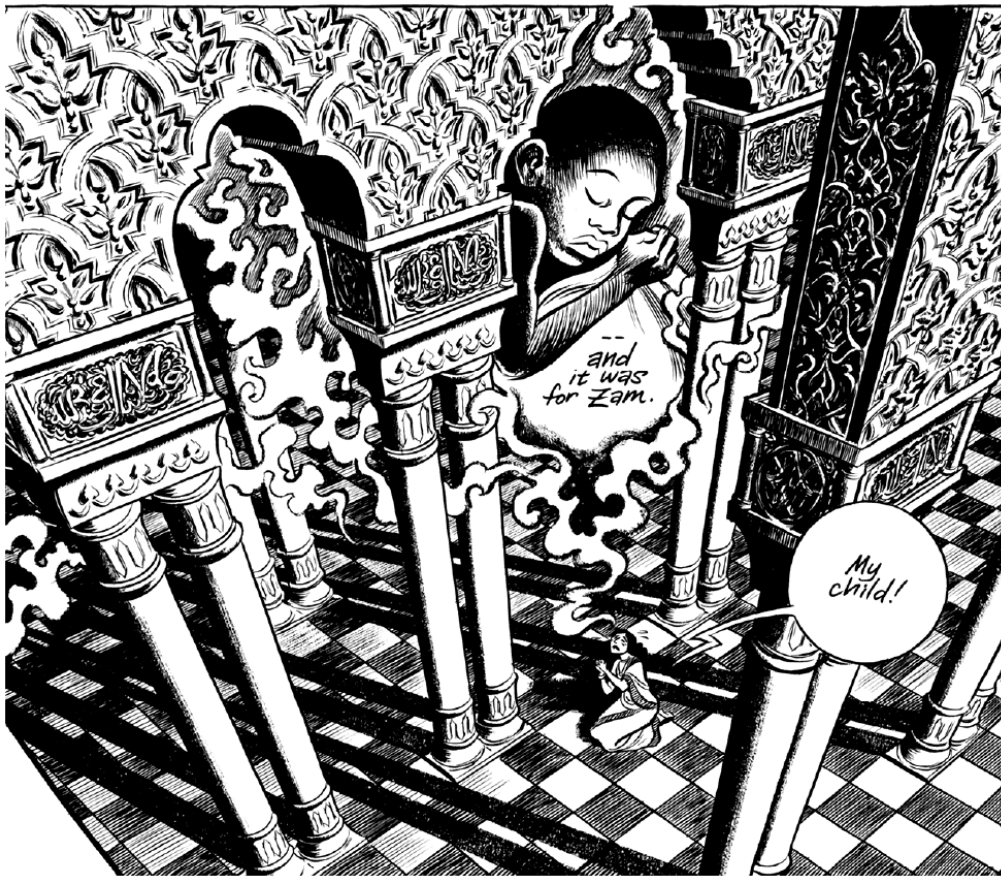
PICTURE 12. (Thompson 2011, 279)

From picture 12 one can sense hopelessness, grief and longing. As was mentioned earlier, the camera placement plays an essential role in mood creation and especially in this panel it has a significant role. The reader has been removed from the direct intimate involvement by placing the camera above the character. That makes a character appear smaller and more vulnerable which is exactly what Thompson is aiming for in this panel. Camera is also placed very far from the character, which provides a clear view of the subject and the environment.

3.7   Other Emotional Cues

This chapter contains all the findings that did not fit under the previous headings. These are techniques that Craig Thompson uses a lot and effectively in his comics and are therefore essential to this study.

Artistic style has an important role conveying emotion in a comic. Comics are a graphic medium and the reader absorbs the mood through the artwork. (Eisner 2008. 94.) A carefully considered stylistic choice can affect the mood of the whole story. A good example of such a style is Frank Miller's Sin City comics, where a certain kind of mood is maintained throughout the comic. (McCloud 2006, 29.) Also in both of Thompson's works covered in this study, the style supports the mood throughout the comics.

Using the symbolism on the panel is an effective way to increase the reader's emotional response (Eisner 2008, 16). Especially abstract, expressionist or symbolic images reinforce intensely felt emotion (McCloud 2006, 29). Scott McCloud states in his book Understanding Comics (McCloud 1993, 132) that certain patterns can cause almost physiological effect in the viewer.

PICTURE 13. (Thompson 2003, 59)

Picture 13 is a panel from the Blankets and it is a great example of how expressionist and abstract imagery reinforce the emotive meaning of the panel. In this panel distortion of the character helps the reader to understand the character's inner states. That is extremely important when conveying the emotions of the panel.

In Habibi, Thompson uses somewhat different techniques than in Blankets. Habibi is set in a fictional Islamic state so naturally it conveys a very different kind of mood than Blankets which is set in snowy Wisconsin. In order to maintain the unique, mystic mood in Habibi, Thompson combines organic lines with geometric patterns and shapes as in the picture 14 below. Employing Arabic calligraphy detailed explorations of Islamic art are a key part of what makes the unique mood in this panel. Utilizing symbolism also plays a big part in conveying the right kind of mood.

PICTURE 14. (Thompson 2011, 111)

4 IMPLEMENTATION

In the practical part of the thesis, the goal was to implement a comic that focuses primarily on creating the right kind of atmosphere in the panels, utilizing the techniques found in the study. The final output will be 10 pages and two of the planned pages were finished during this thesis. The analysis focuses on three different panels picked from the finished pages. The finished comic pages, from which the panels below (Picture 15, picture 16, picture 17) have been removed, can be found in the appendices. The comic is executed in black and white, digitally drawn.

The comic is meant to reflect the connection between human and nature and in particular the character's feelings and experiences of the forest. The soundscape of the comic is very subdued and the only sounds that appear in it are nature's own sounds. That is why the comic has given special consideration to all the other techniques of conveying mood and emotion. The forest is large, majestic, familiar, but at the same time unknown and exciting. It is also diverse, vibrant and organic, maybe even a little threatening. Because the story is set in the forest, the tools and style have been chosen to serve this idea. The comic is made digitally, but mimicking the imprint of ink to maintain a certain roughness and not being too clean.

PICTURE 15. The first panel of the comic.

Picture 15 is dominated by diagonal but also partially vertical lines formed by the trees. This expresses the excitement and power of the forest. Horizontal lines have been deliberately avoided to convey exactly the right kind of mood in the

panel. There are no straight lines in nature and therefore all lines in the panel are drawn without a ruler. The lines tend to be organic and lively. The thickness of the line varies a lot, creating its own vibrant nuance in the panel.

Although horizontal lines are otherwise avoided in the panel, the panel itself is horizontal. This is because we are dealing with an establishing shot of the comic and it is essential to show both the character and the environment in which the action takes place (Comics in education, 2020). The size and shape of the panel can also be justified with fact that it is not necessary for the reader to rush out of the panel, but the eye is allowed to wander and explore it in complete peace.

The abundant use of black conveys the feeling of a slightly threatening forest. Strong contrast between black and white creates the sense of mystery which is often somehow present in the case of a large and unknown forest. To convey the feeling of the wild and boundless forest is achieved by breaking the edges of the panel and letting some of the vegetation burst out of the panel. The panel is not very large in size because the reader is not meant to spend too long on looking at it.

The camera has been placed rather far away from the subject and we are a bit above eye level compared to the subject. This makes the reader more like a spectator in the scene. Therefore there is no emotional connection to the character in the scene.

Details of the forest, texture of the trees and vegetation have been drawn in great detail to make nature as vivid as possible. Texture is one of the most important mood creators in this panel. Picture 15 does not have words or sound effects, as the picture alone is supposed to be a sufficient communicator of everything that needs to be understood.

PICTURE 16. Panel 2

As mentioned in chapter 4.4, a frameless panel reaches out to unlimited space and an unseen background. This technique has been used in picture 16, in which the panel does not have clear outlines. The purpose of this panel is to convey a sense of a grand and powerful forest, and the choice of perspective plays a significant role in this.

The usage of light and shadows has been thought out carefully in picture 16. Upper area of the panel is empty and bright and it creates a sense of freedom and limitless possibilities of the moment. White also conveys a feeling of purity and serenity, which is the feeling being in nature evokes in some people. Looking at the scene from below evokes a sense of smallness of the character and strength of the forest which are exactly the feelings wanted to convey with this panel.

Sound effects are one part of creating the right kind of mood in this panel. The goal is for readers to combine sound effects in their head with sounds already familiar to themselves and an experience that they may have gone through. The text is small because the birds flying high are far away and therefore the sound is supposed to be heard quietly. The forest has its own kind of soundscape, often with birds singing and screeching.

The same principles related to line, tools, and texture mentioned below picture 15 also apply in this panel. Although, texture is not as significant of a mood creator in picture 16 as it was in picture 15.

PICTURE 17. Panel 3

In picture 17 the viewpoint is placed very close to the hands. As was mentioned in chapter 4.6, the camera placement plays an essential role in mood creation. The extreme close-up, as in picture 17, is used to force the reader into an intimate contact with the object. Panel does this intimacy with all the details and texture of the vegetation and hands. Looking at the scene at eye level and from the character's point of view, as in this panel, means the viewer is at the same level as the action. That is why the viewer feels connected to the action not just as a spectator as in picture 15, but also as part of the experience.

The panel is wide and flat, which creates quite a cramped feeling in it. This, combined with extreme close up, puts the reader even more into the role of a participant. The character in the panel does not see what is ahead, nor does the reader. Strong contrast and heavy usage of black creates the sense of mystery and a slight feeling of discomfort or fear when you cannot see what is ahead.

5 CONCLUSION

This thesis studied the expression of mood and emotions in the graphic novels and how those principles have been put to use in Craig Thompson's works Blankets and Habibi. In order to study the principles of emotional and mood-related visual expression, several literary and web sources were used, some of which focused on comic books, others generally on visual expression.

The conclusion of this study was that there are a lot of very effective ways to express mood and emotions in graphic novels. The mood on the panel is the sum of its parts. It consists of many different factors, but it is not always necessary to have more than one effective technique to create emotional impact in the panel. It was interesting to notice that many things that exist in the reader's head only as practical intuition, were fully justified by a number of different sources and theories.

Blankets and Habibi contain an impressive variety of techniques used to express mood and emotions. However, several panels that were used as samples in this study are not nearly enough to depict the graphic novel's versatility and mastery of emotional expression. The topic could be explored much further, as the expressions of mood and emotions are in the very core of what makes graphic novels a unique storytelling platform.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Finished pages of the comic

MINUN METSÄNI