

One Soul, From Hell, and Here
The Graphic Novel Page as Time Machine

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Introduction

Scott McCloud noted in his seminal work *Understanding Comics* that in the act of reading sequential art “wherever your eyes are focussed, that’s now. But at the same time your eyes take in the surrounding landscape of past and future” (McCloud 104). As such, every comic book page is a time machine, in a more immediate way than books without pictures, as the faster cognition of the comic book panel means readers can choose to look at the panels in any order they like. This of course is not something one generally does reading a comic, but even while reading the panels in order, as McCloud stated, one is aware of the surrounding images and so have a certain precognition of events to come, particularly if the page is designed in such a way that a certain panel later on is more dramatic, or larger, or bursts its panel borders, and so on.

Neill Cohn and Hannah Campbell note: “The order that we read written language is fairly straightforward However, various manipulations to the arrangement of panels can push readers to navigate panels in alternate routes” (194). Readers generally zig-zag across the page, from top left to bottom right. The authors of certain graphic novels disrupt this by sometimes having the panels tell different narratives, so when the reader still follows the expected path they experience a different kind of story-telling – comics that do not move a few seconds ahead from panel to panel in terms of story time but jump ahead into the far future and then back into the past.

Regardless of the layout, the reader is aware of the totality of the page existing at the same time, before their eye moves to the expected first panel in the top left hand corner. This simultaneity of panels means that sequential images exist not only in order as the eye transitions the page, but also simultaneously, as the reader is also aware of the page as a whole and has the ability to skip ahead or

decode panels in any order. Certain graphic storytellers use this aspect of comics as a narrative device – the simultaneity of panels, and their non-linear potential.

To illustrate how this idea confronts readers with the future, the past, and the present simultaneously, I am going to compare three graphic novels that use non-linear storytelling, and which explicitly or implicitly deal with time travel in their narratives. These are *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, which is a fictionalised, but heavily researched, account of Jack the Ripper; *One Soul* by Ray Fawkes, which tells the life stories of 18 characters at the same moments in each of their lives, scattered throughout history; and *Here* by Richard McGuire, an exploration of one room in a house in different time periods. Each of these books contain stories which use comic book panel simultaneity for different kinds of narrative experiences which allow their characters to interact with ones from other temporal eras. Given that each of these graphic novels allows the reader to travel in time, as they follow the narratives of places and characters, they are reading experiences that encourage comparisons between the depictions of past, present, and future. While *From Hell* does not take readers beyond the twentieth century, a vision of this future (as seen from the nineteenth century) is shown to be unsettling to the protagonist. *One Soul* does not provide a date for the final panel of the book, but again provides juxtapositions between the past and many futures that the characters on each page experience. *Here* does take the reader on a journey to centuries far beyond our own time, but as with the other two books, this is a vision of the future intended as a contrast with the past, and indeed a place from where one might view the past.

Frequent juxtaposition of different time periods might prove challenging to readers. Each of these three books have certain formal structure. *From Hell* and *One Soul* have panel layouts based on a nine panel grid. However, in *From Hell*, the artist occasionally breaks this structure, for example merging the shapes of three adjacent panels. In *One Soul*, the author never breaks the nine panel grid, as an understanding of the narrative is dependent on knowing which character is in which panel at all times. These three books are not

unique in terms of using graphic storytelling as a tool for non-linear narratives and time-travel tales. For example, there are similarities to *Building Stories* (Ware) in the digital version of *Here*, as in both cases the reader can choose the order to read the book in.¹ But in the case of *Building Stories*, an example of people in the future experiencing the events of the book as a virtual reality simulation is only two pages out of the whole length of the graphic novel, while in *Here* – as I will explore below – it is an idea that informs the entire book.

While other graphic novels may use flashbacks and flash-forwards, these three books allow different time periods to interact on the same page, thus making the reader aware that panels set centuries apart co-exist side by side. Also, the narratives in these different time periods interact in a non-linear way. For example, Jack the Ripper is aware of voices from the past and future, while visitors to the house in *Here* react (unconsciously) to dramatic events in the same location, and the 18 characters in *One Soul* are aware that previous incarnations have had similar traumas at the same times in their lives. In this chapter, I will therefore compare the techniques and styles of storytelling in each of these three books to show how graphic novels are an ideal medium for providing depictions of the future that are made startling by juxtaposition with the past, and for drawing comparison between distinct time periods that interact with each other.

Here

McGuire's *Here* is a 320-page full-colour graphic novel which depicts moments that take place in the same location across great swathes of history – from 3,000,500,000 BCE to 22,175 CE. The book is a substantial expansion of a short story by the same author, published in the anthology *Raw*, 24 years earlier. Gazing at each double page spread, the reader of the book *Here* is always looking at the same location, the corner of one room in a house in North America (and

¹ A vignette in *Building Stories* also refers to visitors from the future experiencing the narrative through a piece of technology, as a window into the past. The print version of *Here* (instead of the digital) suggests a fairly definitive page order to read the graphic novel in.

also a view of the location before and after the house was built), which is based on a place the author had visited. By providing contrasting panels from different time periods on double page spreads, the author allows the reader to draw their own conclusions regarding whether an event in the past has (or will have) helped shape the present or the future, through different characters experiencing similar events in almost exactly the same place in different time periods. The book also shows visitors in the far future visiting the history of the past through viewing portals and holographic recreation.

This visual contrast of different times – with the reader moving from one century to the next, panel by panel – is easier to create on the comic book page than through paragraphs of text, or even on film; different temporal narratives can exist side by side on the page. In *Here*, McGuire sets out each double page spread of the book in a collage-like fashion, layering panels over each other, which depict different moments in time. *Here* goes as far back as the first skies over a cooling Earth, and as far forward as the 100th century CE. There are many pages and moments in time when the room is yet to be built or has been long destroyed, but the point of view of the reader never changes, so we get to see what preceded the room in the landscape and what comes after it.

Unlike my other two examples, this book has a bare minimum of narrative, with vignettes only unfolding over a handful of pages before they are abandoned. The book's semi-abstract nature means the presentation of historical moments or vignettes have a museum or gallery quality to them, where the semi-educative aspect of the images (based on a certain amount of research by the author), give the reader the experience of walking through a history exhibit in a monument. For example, on pages 45-46 (figure 1), the main image which provides the backdrop to the double-page spread is an illustration of the room as it appeared in 1944, with additional frames that show the segment of the room they overlay in 1933, 1969 and two frames that show 1992. The two frames dated 1992 might not occur simultaneously. McGuire shows numerous frames happening seconds apart, such as a sequence on pages 175-176, where he depicts a girl being terrorized by a bird that has flown in through the window.

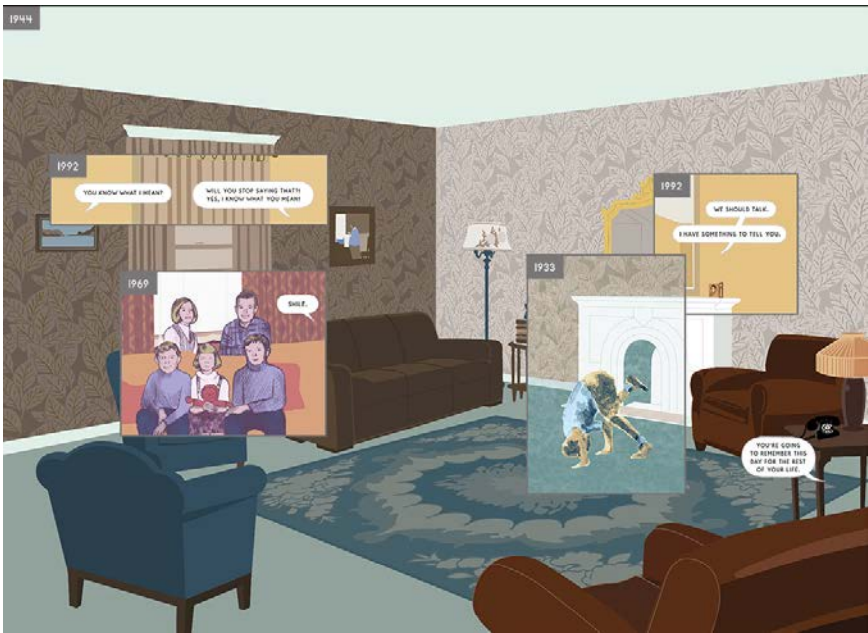


Figure 1: *Here* 45-46.

In these pages of *Here*, the repetition of 1998 as the only temporal locator means the reader has to interpret how time might be working in the image. The multiple images of the girl and the bird next to each other provide snapshots of time taken a fraction of a second apart has a cinematic quality, and also the quality of a diagram. We can trace the movement of the bird through the interior space. McGuire's rendering of this scene shows that if one renders brief moments in time next to each other, a reader can see time functioning as a formation of narrative, for example a girl getting increasingly distressed by the activities of a bird. By reading these panels in succession one can see a progression of narrative (however small) from the past into the future, from left to right, but also a longer gap by looking just at the first and last panels which allow for a vision of the future contrasted with the past. This recording of a small section of time, second by second, makes us appreciate the larger jumps in time on other pages, when a moment from one century is frozen next to one from another century. We see how a moment in the past informs the future, on the same page, in the same place.

In my interview with him for the London based radio station Resonance FM², McGuire said that he edited the book in the style of a musician, influenced by jazz rather than a need to tell a straightforward narrative. As such *Here's* portrayal of time is not a journey from a point in the past heading directly towards the future, but rather loops, repetitions of previous events and predictions of the future, similar to the free form construction or improvisation of jazz music where a musical theme will form and then be built on, changed and repeated in a different way.

Regarding the overall plot, beyond vignettes that last 20 pages at most, there is little overall story other than the fragmented history of a location.³ Perhaps this is apt, as if a conventional building was to tell us its story as we walked through it, then each room might provide a jumble of images and sounds taken from different parts of history. However, for a possible overall reading of the text, towards the end of the book, a virtual reality tour guide in the future shows prismatic diagonal slices of *Here's* room in the past as some kind of simulation to a party of visitors standing on a bridge over a swamp in the year 2213 CE (263-264).

Another double page spread in *Here* (111-112) shows an occupant of the house from the date of 2050 CE, pushing his head through some kind of floating window, so perhaps the reader might consider the conceit behind the graphic novel to be a set of windows into the past created at some point in the far future (circa 22,175 CE). The idea of a technological window that one can use to look at history is something that already exists in the form of augmented reality applications for phones and computer tablets, as a way for people to superimpose visions of the past onto present reality. One example of

² Broadcast March 19th, 2015 on Resonance 104.4 FM (London); podcast available via: <https://panelborders.wordpress.com/2015/03/23/panel-borders-richard-mcguire-here>

³ In general, a vignette in the book will last for four to six pages. For example, the longest consecutive sequence is set in 1775 (113- 133) where the owner of an earlier house (or rather, a mansion) built nearby has a conversation with his wife about his worries for an imminent family visit. This is juxtaposed with moments from the past. On 113-115, for example, we also see a sapling sprout in 1564, which will have become a tree by the Eighteenth Century, and we see a man and a woman interlacing their fingers in the 1950s.

augmented reality connecting the past and present of a location is the Street Museum app for iPhone, created by the Museum of London. Visitors to various places in London can use the app to bring up an older photo of that spot, allowing the user to align this image with its surroundings, as the application superimposes the old photo over the live camera view.⁴

McGuire encourages an augmented reality superimposition of one layer of time over another as a reading of *Here*, with the floating frames in the futuristic 2050 scenes mimicking the panel borders of a comic – i.e. the outline of the frame exists within the reality depicted in the graphic novel. In contrast, only a few abstract panel borders appear in *Here* (such as the pages featuring the bird flying into the room), as the use of these help clarify the scenes where subsequent moments happen a split-second apart might overlay in a much later time period. McGuire also depicts a tour guide in the year 2213, presenting the history of the house as a prismatic hologram being projected onto the landscape where it once stood, giving us another clue to who the creator or reader of the book may be, looking at the past from the point of view of a visitor in the future.

Here, is a graphic novel that comments on the experience of how reading comics can take the reader on a tour to different points in history in a more immediate way than other storytelling media. Its panels are windows into the past, which gives readers an opportunity to consider the future as a time period that overlaps the present, mapping time in a similar way to geography on the page – different time periods coexisting like the different traces of history (such as the layers of wallpaper characters are shown alternatively covering and stripping from walls). I will shortly discuss how *From Hell* and *One Soul* make similar comments on the past, present, and future interacting below, but narrative-free *Here* shows that panels from different time periods in juxtaposition create resonances between those time periods and allow the reader to infer connections. These little moments in time such as a bird flying through a window, or someone falling off a ladder, show discrete absurdities in one location

⁴ Representative illustration at: <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/cr-blog/2010/may/streetsmuseum-iphone-app> and the *Museum of London: Street Museum* app itself can be found in the Apple app store via <https://appsto.re/gb/Q9ocw.i>

separated by time, but when placed next to each other, they invite narrative connections, as if a person in one-time period suddenly feels the shock of a sudden event embedded in another. With these immediate connections, McGuire suggests the future is ever present, as a looming presence in any time period. Equally, any moment in the past or present has an instantaneous effect on the future, if different events happen in the same place that have a certain connection through family or similarity. While the futures that McGuire depicts are many centuries away from our own time, in *Here* they are only the turn of a page away.

From Hell

A very different depiction of time travel and location on the comic book page can be found in the pages of *From Hell*, in which Moore tells the story of Jack the Ripper and gives the character both precognition of later events, and then after death the ability to time travel as a disembodied spirit. Both of these attributes inform the narrative throughout. *From Hell* is located mainly in Victorian London, but by giving his protagonist the ability to travel through time, and by structuring the book in a non-linear way, the story emphasises the idea of how events in the past can help shape events in years to come. Most overtly in a section that dramatizes one of the Ripper's most notorious murders, Gull has a vision of the future, and declaims: "Dear God, what is this aether I am come upon?" (Chapter 10, 22), while walking about a neon-lit office, a hundred years into the future.

When we first meet Gull in the graphic novel, at the start of chapter 2, he is moving both in space (being a traveller on a barge) and in time. Not only is he moving forward at the same rate we all travel in time, but also we hear (or rather read) echoes from the future. This predicts the finale of the book, when the Ripper becomes unstuck in the time-stream, moving forwards and backwards through the years. So, within this one page alone we hear snatches of dialogue from, for example, 11 and 31 pages ahead.

Much of *From Hell* is an act of decoding hidden signs and meanings. In Chapter 4, Gull takes his henchman on a tour around

London, making a path between the locations of various historical events that shaped the city, and various architectural achievements, which in their totality mark a pentagram across the Capital. Moore is telling the reader that if that person looks at the elements of a whole in a different order, they might form a pattern to indicate a solution to a problem, or the clue to a grand design. They are symbols laid onto the streets of London by architects in the past that, for him, suggest a design for the future (which he might shape).

Here mapmaking (and annotating) gets absorbed into the language of comics, showing the latter medium has another quality that can help us understand architecture and its place in history. The graphic novel shows that the positions of buildings on a map can be used as a story device, with the characters in the comic placed on the streets to give a sense of location and purpose. They travel into the past – as Gull relates moments from history which inspire him and the symbols he sees on the map – and suggest a route pointing to the future and the task he believes they should undertake.

On page 2 of Chapter 15, a student of Gull's comments on how time is a human delusion and in fact all of time takes place simultaneously. Gull informs him that Hawksmoor followed in the footsteps of Dionysian architects, whose: "monuments supposedly rang with the voices of the ages, echoes of futurity" suggesting buildings can act as a locus for both the present and the past. As if one's appreciation of history and sense of chronological progression is non-linear, as might be the case with a time traveller, then an appreciation of architecture (as rendered as drawings on the page) may suit non-linear depiction as well.

It is worth noting that in conversation with Hinton, again Gull's speech balloons have no ligatures so the speech becomes loosed from its creator, somehow absorbed into the walls of the cavernous environment, and travelling in time like the dialogue at the start of the chapter. The relationship between the Ripper and his city is not just one of sinister flâneur and environment, but a semi-symbiotic relationship between a monstrous, violent, misogynist city and the trans-temporal manifestation of these attributes in Moore's fictionalised version of the Ripper. He sees a mission etched onto the streets of the city which informs his actions, and in turn his actions

Characters in different time periods in each of the graphic novels I am discussing, act with a seeming awareness of the presence of others (in adjacent panels). The Ripper is aware of people in the future (if not vice versa). In *One Soul*, which I will discuss below, a traumatic event in the past is felt by other characters at a similar time in their lives in their future. The Ripper in *From Hell* imagines an audience for his crimes, and Moore suggests some kind of resonance between events in the same location. Gull sees a vision of the future, as his act of extreme violence creates some kind of portal in time, an inversion of more traditional ghost stories where we might imagine the people of late 20th Century London see the ghost of the Ripper rather than the other way round. However, if we follow Gull's idea that he has helped shape the 20th Century, perhaps his barbaric act narrows down the possible futures to just one, and so he is given this vision as a reward. Moore is following in the footsteps of Science-Fiction writer Ray Bradbury, who wrote about one of the first visitors to Mars in *The Martian Chronicles*, a ghostly Martian from the future, which implies that our arrival on Mars creates the future that the ghost will come to exist in.

In Moore's Whitechapel, the Ripper, either through delusion, mental breakdown, or an act of time travel, becomes unstuck in time, with the sheer brutality of his acts connecting him to Gods from the ancient world and a 20th century formed by acts of carnage. So, in the worst act of murder the Ripper commits, we get an architectural tour of London's East End through the ages. Although the modern office block does not witness Gull's actions, one could argue the recent prosperity of Whitechapel, like much of the fortunes of British Empire, was built on the violence the streets observed over the previous centuries, and certainly this is a theme of Moore's book. As Stone notes: "the narration of a very detailed story of a single incident or personality can make both good reading and good sense... selected for the light they can throw upon certain aspects of a past culture." (Stone 1979, 22). I have also interviewed Moore for Resonance FM, and asked the author whether psychogeography (Iain Sinclair), the idea of drifting around a location and making connections through the juxtaposition of elements of a place, had been an influence on the creation of *From Hell*. He answered

Sinclair's *Lud Heat* completely blew me away. I thought it was probably the most impressive thing that I've read in any number of years ... and I realised that this was a whole new way of looking at the murders, to actually look at the territory in which they occurred and all of the things that related to those streets or those particular buildings I was looking at this and realising that it did provide a means of looking at these events in a different light, because you could look at them in the context of their history and the context of their geographical location.⁵

As well as being fictionalised history, *From Hell* also demonstrates notions of transparency in architecture. "Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations" (Rowe and Slutzky 45). The Ripper does not need to move far in order to see different architectural uses of the same space – Victorian slum and 20th Century office block – through a vision of the future without having to move from the same space. *From Hell* suggests an experience where years between events become completely transparent and a clear vision of a century hence, rather than a microsecond later becomes the potential view. This is a similar experience to readers of *Here*, who can see a building from the 20th Century and also the 19th Century Manor House that preceded it, without having to turn the page, through the artifice of the author's windows in time, overlaid on each other.

Overall, *From Hell* is a graphic novel about this kind of transparency, visions of the future seen through windows (panels), next to visions of the past, that initially show the Ripper experiencing voices from past, present, and future. This eventually results in the character detached from his mortal body and travelling backwards and forwards in time. The Ripper can be seen to step from one time-period

⁵ *Lud Heat* compares the history of six London churches designed by the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor in the late Seventeenth Century and start of the Eighteenth. It tracks phantasmagorical events in and around each location, as if buildings can act as a focus for the past and the future by their very presence. Sinclair also wrote a novel on the Ripper murders – *White Chappell*, *Scarlet Tracings* – and later his character Andrew Norton appeared in Moore's comic *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Century* (Moore and O'Neill), so Moore's interest in the author's work is obvious.

to another, from one panel to another, making the same leaps that the reader does when casting their eye across the page, allowing him to travel temporarily as well as geographically. The juxtaposition of panels set in the 19th century and the 20th allow the reader to make comparisons between the two and how an image of the past may have led to the future. In turn, the Ripper can travel back and forth between these times, so that when the panels are laid out in a non-linear fashion regarding their time period, he can move across the page the same way as the reader's eye do. As the narrative of the book is about a killer in the past influencing the future, Moore uses the language of comics to let his protagonist cross that temporal divide to make the time periods even more directly connected. In this way he drives home the point that events taking place in the past can have an effect that is ever present in the future, especially if the people of that time are unaware of this happening.

One Soul

Like *From Hell*, *One Soul* has a similar, but more formalised, approach to a story structured through depictions of moments in time, as it shows the lives of various characters from early civilisation (undated) to the present day. These characters are portrayed on the page simultaneously as they move through time, through snapshots of each of their lives at certain ages, with each character's unfolding story occupying the same panel on each subsequent double page spread. Again this juxtaposition not only invites comparisons through the placing of adjacent panels on the page, but Fawkes actively encourages this reading by having similar moments take place across each set of 18 panels as the moments occur to each character in each of the different time periods.

One Soul is therefore a graphic novel that is also all about windows in time. As mentioned before, it uses the same nine-panel grid per page utilised (though occasionally broken) by Campbell in *From Hell*, but the framing of each character in each panel slightly distances the reader, as if one is always looking through a window to a scene beyond. Each adjacent window showing a similar view, as if one was

looking through all the windows of an apartment block, voyeuristically observing the lives of the people inside. As the order of the panels never changes, i.e. character one is always in panel one, character two is always in panel two, and so on. If one were to read just the top left hand panel of each double page, the reader would follow just one narrative, and it would still make sense. If one reads the text in each panel side by side, across each double page spread traditionally, i.e., from left to right, top to bottom, in Cohn's Z-path transition, it does not exactly make sense, but the reader becomes aware of each spread depicting a similar moment in each character's life, separated by numerous decades, from medieval times in the top left, to the early 21st century in the bottom right. Some double page spreads, if read in this traditional way, read like poetry, with the experience – such as being a new born – almost the same for each character. As it is stretching disbelief that the text is reproducing the articulate thoughts of a new born, then this encourages a reading that the narration is by someone remembering or re-experiencing these multiple (re)births from some point in the future.

Even when read like this, it allows the reader to make comparisons between lives lived in different centuries, in the past and in the future, in different geographical locations, of different genders, and different sexualities. This method allows 18 different narratives to unfold simultaneously across the double page spread, and the reader skips centuries from panel to panel, but conversely only skips moments from page to page as each narrative unfolds at the same pace.

Having each of the stories unfold at the same pace allows the author to create ripples in time, so that there are pages where each character experiences an incident of violence simultaneously in each of their separate geographical and temporal locations at the same point in their lives, with an event in the past predicting an event in the future, with all their lives following a similar pattern. This is as different an experience as one character being hit by lightning, another being beheaded, and another vomiting over a balcony and nearly passing out (figure 3). Then the next spread depicts the same close-up look of shock on each face - with the exception being the death that one character experiences. Then, the next spread allows them an

have accustomed us to reading the many-windowed visual screen” (Bizzocchi).

Perhaps *One Soul* might have been incomprehensible to readers before the 1990s, when the use of multiple frames and scrolling text became common on certain TV news stations. This simultaneity and multiplicity of information being provided to the viewer is something that takes a while to process and understand, but starts to become second nature when viewed enough times. In a comic this is a technique – the presentation of multiple time streams – that works even better than on screen, as the info on a TV news channel, or multiple frames on a computer screen can create too much noise, so that the viewer is constantly distracted, not knowing where to focus their attention as the future is always arriving. In a comic, this simultaneity is paused, so we can take our time to process the multiple streams of information, or rather stories, and allow the juxtaposition to unfold at the rate we feel comfortable reading it.

In an interview with the Comic Book Resources website, Fawkes said about *One Soul*: “I really wanted to explore the dimensionality of comics — both in ‘time,’ i.e., position on the individual page, and in ‘time,’ i.e., position in the series of pages” (Dueben). If every panel is the same size and shape, the reader might spend the same amount of time reading each, and so the period of reading time between each page can be the same, even though the content of the panels is set decades apart. The moment of shared experience, and the characters in *One Soul*’s similar reaction of “what was that?” after a traumatic event, partially explains and justifies the title of the book, suggesting each character is a reincarnation of the same soul, and when, through the machinations of fate they all have a similar experience at the same age, there is a shared moment when some kind of recognition is registered as a ripple through time. Each character has a different life expectancy in each time period, so inevitably some stories end sooner than others. Some of these black panels later contain a disembodied voice, perhaps that of the titular soul waiting to be reincarnated in the next life.

Overall, *One Soul* uses techniques that mirror modern information presentation on TV, tablets, and computer screens, which allows information from the present, the past and the steadily arriving

future to be simultaneously available. If characters are aware of their neighbours in adjacent panels and time streams, then that means they are also processing information from the future. If the shared “One Soul” begins to remember that similar events have happened at similar ages, then they may start to expect the same again will happen in the future. This, then is a book all about simultaneity, about how one processes the information about events happening now while considering similar events in the past. Compared to constantly split-screen tablets and computer monitors, one’s ability to process information on the comic book page is at the pace one chooses, so *One Soul* shows that a graphic narrative is an ideal medium to contrast the past, present, and potential future on the same page.

Conclusions

Each of the three books use techniques that have similarities in presenting a juxtaposition between the past, present and future. This is done through the presentation of events from different time periods on the same page while suggesting connections between them. In *From Hell*, the Ripper can float forwards and backwards in time from panel to panel on the same page, or even within the same panel be simultaneously in his present and a century later. It is time travel as a way of encountering a location’s history and its possible future.

One Soul takes Moore’s comic book simultaneity to its logical extreme, every page is an act of time travel, where the act of reading shuttles the reader up and down the centuries, and like the time travelling killer of *From Hell* who can take in different time periods while in the same murder room, the reader of *One Soul* can observe 18 different times without leaving their seat. *One Soul* also treats simultaneity as a given in a world where we are used to such content delivery, and so asks us to consider this conceit as a story-telling device. *Here* is a book with little narrative but though its non-linear construction reflects the way one can encounter ghosts of the past within a dwelling and consider how the same place might look in the future, or be looked at by people in the future.

To help deliver these parallel narratives from past, present, and future, each of these three books use formalist structures to help us

understand how these juxtapositions might work. These comics offer a language which can help readers imagine the history of locations as moments that happen simultaneously in a person's awareness, where events and memories from the past, present and future can interact with each other. *Here* also shows how our interactions with a space can leave memories that might be displayed through artifice or virtual reality, the display of which is similar to our experience of reading these books, the panels on the page acting as similar viewing windows for the reader. In turn, Jack the Ripper acts as an avatar of the reader, being able to travel between these different time periods on the same page.

On the page past, present, and future can occur simultaneously, allowing for locational contrast. As such, all three books allow the reader to travel in time and in space, from panel to panel, from page to page and back again. Through their pictorial juxtapositions of past, present and future they allow readers to make quick comparisons between these time periods, allowing for elements of the past to be shown as influences on the future and visitors from the future to be seen observing the past. While all comics allow for a reader to apprehend the whole page simultaneously and then move their eye from panel to panel, these three examples show how placing elements from the past, present and future on the same page can take the reader on effortless travel between these periods. By using time travel narratives, these three books therefore take advantage of the comic reader's ability as a time traveller (being able to read backwards and forwards on the page), by presenting stories that are non-linear to varying degrees and allow moments set in the past and future to interact with each other in terms of narrative. One's ability to read comics more quickly than plain text, or to experience comics non-linearly rather than at 24 frames per second, allow for time travel narratives to be well suited to graphic novels such as *From Hell*, *Here*, and *One Soul*. In these books, the future is not just the ultimate destination, but merely one stop on a path that goes forwards and backwards, a journey that is frozen in time but ours to navigate as we choose.

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