



Chris Ware's Jimmy Corrigan: Honing the Hybridity of the Graphic Novel

D. J. Dycus

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Without a doubt Chris Ware is one of the preeminent creators of comics today. His is a brilliant figure in a generation of extraordinarily talented people. Granted, there are a lot of innovators in the field right now, but no one else in the last seventy years has explored the capabilities of the genre to the same extent as has Ware. His genius, in part, comes from his interest in and understanding of the past accomplishments of figures such as George Herriman and Winsor McCay. One might even say that much of his work is somewhat archaeological in nature: he is interested in a reclamation of the past. Rather than merely excavating the achievements of past masters for the sake of history, however, Ware is also fortifying, expanding, and enriching comics so that it might flourish in the present. This work begins with a broad examination of the nature of comics. First by briefly discussing the cognitive operations involved in processing this hybrid medium, then by surveying the generic branches of comics, and then by offering an historic examination of its contemporary development, which goes back as far as the sixteenth century. Next is an analysis of comics in relation to literature, film, and the visual arts. Comics utilizes elements from all of these, but it also offers a unique narrative experience. This book primarily focuses upon Ware's magnum opus to date, Jimmy Corrigan. It contextualizes his work within developments in comics over the last fifty years, as well as comparing him to other prominent figures such as Will Eisner, Art Spiegelman, Daniel Clowes, Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Lynda Barry, and Frank Miller.

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