

between melted and molten: both mean rendered from a solid to a liquid state by heat, but the first is used of substances which melt at comparatively low temperatures (melted snow, ice, fat, butter, wax, plastic), the second of those usually thought of as hard and solid and which melt only at very high temperatures (molten metal, rock, glass). Then there is *nervy*, which has different, and indeed almost opposite, meanings in Britain (*nervous*, *jumpy*) and America (*bold*, *brash*, *having lots of nerve*) and *nipple*, which has only an anatomical meaning in Britain, but in America means what in Britain is called a *teat*. A final example of the difference between American and British usage not addressed is the American use of *snicker*, which in British English would be *snigger* (even the American spellchecker on this computer objects to that word!), perhaps because of similar racial sensitivities to those associated with *niggardly*.

Despite my strictures, most of this book is useful and, like Hamilton says of the full version, of general interest and even enjoyable. But Butterfield is far too reticent about condemning usages which are simply wrong, and also I fear that, like most such works, it will be least used by those who need it most.

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Wonderfully Wordless: The 500 Most Recommended Graphic Novels and Picture Books

William Patrick Martin

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This book starts with the claim in the introduction that this is “the only comprehensive guide to illustration-only books on the contemporary scene”. The problem for me as a reader is that although there are definitely areas of connection between the two forms of book

stated in the subtitle, I am considerably more interested in comics and graphic novels than picture books. And although there are comics for children and adults, it is much rarer to find a picture book for adults. So this volume presents an uneasy mix of graphic novels aimed at different readerships – and children’s story books. It is also true to say that the vast majority of the titles considered are of the picture book variety, with some comics included. It would appear that having “graphic novels” as first in the title was a ploy to interest readers interested in that field. It leads one to speculate that the author possibly had little interest in comics as a subject in itself.

Another difficulty which comes with the mixing of the forms is that there is an all age category in comics that does not equate with other books – which are more rigidly split into junior, teen or adult books. So, various all ages comics are strictly labelled along with the picture books, such as *Mister I* from Lewis Trondheim being for three to seven year olds. The book, however, is an interesting exercise in silent graphic storytelling, an aspect which may interest adults.

The book does get more interesting in chapter 30, called *Graphic Novels for Teens*. In this section, we have multiple works by Jim Woodring, Peter KuPer, Thomas Ott and others. Here, they are all given a 12+ rating. This is problematic when applied to Thomas Ott, some of whose work is terrifying. The chapter also has comics such as Masashi Tanaka’s *Gon*, a manga adventure starring a tiny dinosaur. Anyone following this volume’s advice would not give that to a reader under 12, which would deprive them of a very enjoyable story for children.

There is a tradition of this kind of categorisation in libraries, where teen is often the default section that most graphic novels are placed into in their systems. Child and mature readers’ graphic novels left to be ignored next to other teenage fiction and non-fiction. So, teen is often “where graphic novels go to die”.

So for a reader primarily interested in graphic novels, the book has a few areas of interest. For someone needing to research children’s picture books, it is probably much more suited and relevant to what they would find useful. An additional nit-pick is the omission of an alphabetised index of book titles.

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