Propaganda was rampant in British popular culture. Jessica Meyer points out that the now-forgotten stories of leadership and sacrifice by "Sapper" (Herman Cyril McNeile, the author of the Bulldog Drummond thrillers) present an "alternative narrative to that of disillusionment and passivity discussed by Bergonzi, Fussell, and Hynes" (125), who have deeply influenced our perceptions about those times. Nicholas Hiley explains how the ironic and detached cartoons of the German enemy in 1914–15 gave way to darker, more emotionally involved cartoons in the last two years of the War. Less popular, and often violently attacked, was anti-propaganda (*vide* the reputations of pacifists like Bertrand Russell and Bernard Shaw), which itself could be a moderating force, as Grace Brockington asserts about C. K. Ogden in *The Cambridge Magazine* and Roger Fry's Omega Workshops.

Hammond and Towheed's highly readable book contains useful endnotes and a full bibliography. The index occasionally omits a useful entry such as the War Propaganda Bureau or J. W. Fortescue. Most of the illustrations are the cartoons in Hiley's paper. Admitting they could not cover all topics related to the War and print culture, the editors suggest possibilities for Canadian scholars: "Did Canadian soldiers reading on the Western Front experience the same awakening of national (literary) consciousness seen by their ANZAC comrades? ... And how did the British and Germans in their colonies 'read' the experience of war in the trenches?" (7). The fact that such questions are raised by British editors indicates that Canadian experiences do not resonate like those of India or Australia in the world beyond our borders. Even though the First World War has received its due by our historians and merits a chapter by Jeff Keshen in volume 2 of the *History of the Book in Canada*, it remains uncharted territory by our print-culture historians.

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George A. Walker, ed. *Graphic Witness: Four Wordless Graphic Novels by Frans Masereel, Lynd Ward, Giacomo Patri and Laurence Hyde*. Richmond Hill, ON: Firefly Books, 2007. 424 pp.; \$29.95 ISBN 1554072700

There is no doubt that critical and public attention to graphic novels (as they have come to be called) has increased in the last ten years. As

newspaper articles never tire of reminding us, comics aren't just for kids anymore – they've grown up to become today's graphic novel. Such articles are not only reductive of the medium today, but of its history, part of which has now been beautifully reprinted in *Graphic Witness: Four Wordless Graphic Novels*. These four texts represent some of the most important wordless novels of the first half of the twentieth century and their reprinting makes them readily available for the first time in an affordable edition. Those interested in sequential art, print-making, book art, and the convergence of these forms with social-justice issues should take note of this collection.

The four wordless novels in question – Frans Masereel's *The Passion of a Man*, Lynd Ward's *Wild Pilgrimage*, Giacomo Patri's *White Collar*, and Laurence Hyde's *Southern Cross* – were all published between 1919 and 1951 and are presented in chronological order. As George A. Walker points out in the preface, these wordless novels were chosen for their social-justice character and their continuing relevance today. As Walker sees it, "Wordless novels have often treated controversial themes and been associated with protest movements" (10). In the introduction, he goes on to write, "After they were published, wordless books moved quietly through their readers' hands, bearing silent witness to the times in which they were written. Each one of the four wordless novels in this volume looks at the underlying and timeless themes of human dignity and social justice" (17, 19). By using techniques of relief-printing, each of these artists has created a book of prints that form a narrative sequence. As Seth points out in his afterword, however, there is actually little in common between these works and today's graphic novels except that "they share the same goal of producing a serious sequential novel for an adult audience" (415). In fact, many of the markers of the medium of comics are missing from these wordless novels, such as word balloons and pages with multiple panels; he writes, "I suspect that these woodcut novels are more tied to the silent film than they are to the comic strip" (416). Moreover, the painstaking techniques of relief-printing (usefully explained in Walker's introduction) are far more labour-intensive than those of today's graphic novels. To call these texts graphic novels is not accurate in the sense of drawing a direct line from the wordless novels of Masereel, Ward, Patri, and Hyde to the current work of people like Art Spiegelman, Alison Bechdel, Joe Sacco, Chris Ware, or Marjane Satrapi. In other words, any historical connection is, at best, indirect. Despite this caveat, the shared goal of producing "a serious sequential novel for an adult audience" remains important

and makes this collection indispensable for anyone engaged in the study of comics and graphic novels.

The collection begins with Frans Masereel's *The Passion of a Man* (1919), a powerful narrative composed of just twenty-five woodcuts that tells the story of one man's alienation from the capitalist society in which he lives. Lynd Ward's *Wild Pilgrimage* (1932) deftly explores issues of race and class through the innovative juxtaposition of wood engravings printed in black and white to signify the main narrative with wood engravings in brown and white to signify the dream narrative. The book ends with the only text produced after the Second World War: Laurence Hyde's *Southern Cross* (1951), a scathing critique of the U.S. government for its testing of hydrogen bombs on Bikini Atoll. Each of these texts is an excellent example of the wordless novel and its potential to provoke critical thought in its audiences.

Among these important texts, the standout is Giacomo Patri's *White Collar* (1938), a narrative told in one hundred and twenty linocuts documenting the 1929 stock market crash and subsequent events. As Walker notes, *White Collar* "was first used as a promotional piece by the labor movement to show how white-collar workers were as much in danger of unfair labor practices as the so-called blue-collar workers" (27). *White Collar* took Patri three years to produce and was the only sequential narrative of his career. It is a stunning piece of work and one of the finest examples of what sequential art is capable of conveying. This text, along with the others in this volume, deserves wider recognition and further study.

In bringing these texts together in a beautifully presented and affordable volume, *Graphic Witness* has not only done a great service to anyone interested in sequential art, print-making, and book art, but to anyone interested in ways to approach social-justice issues and cultural critique.

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Kevin Johnson. *The Dark Page: Books that Inspired American Film Noir, 1940-1949*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2007. 384 pp. US \$95.00 ISBN 9781584562177

When this volume arrived in my mailbox, my immediate reaction was: wow! A giant coffee-table book on a topic that desperately needs