



Arresting Development: Comics at the Boundaries of Literature (World Comics and Graphic Nonfiction)

Christopher Pizzino

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Mainstream narratives of the graphic novel's development describe the form's "coming of age," its maturation from pulp infancy to literary adulthood. In *Arresting Development*, Christopher Pizzino questions these established narratives, arguing that the medium's history of censorship and marginalization endures in the minds of its present-day readers and, crucially, its authors. Comics and their writers remain burdened by the stigma of literary illegitimacy and the struggles for status that marked their earlier history.

Many graphic novelists are intensely aware of both the medium's troubled past and their own tenuous status in contemporary culture. *Arresting Development* presents case studies of four key works—Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, Charles Burns's *Black Hole*, and Gilbert Hernandez's *Love and Rockets*—exploring how their authors engage the problem of comics' cultural standing. Pizzino illuminates the separation of high and low culture, art and pulp, and sophisticated appreciation and vulgar consumption as continual influences that determine the limits of literature, the status of readers, and the value of the very act of reading.

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