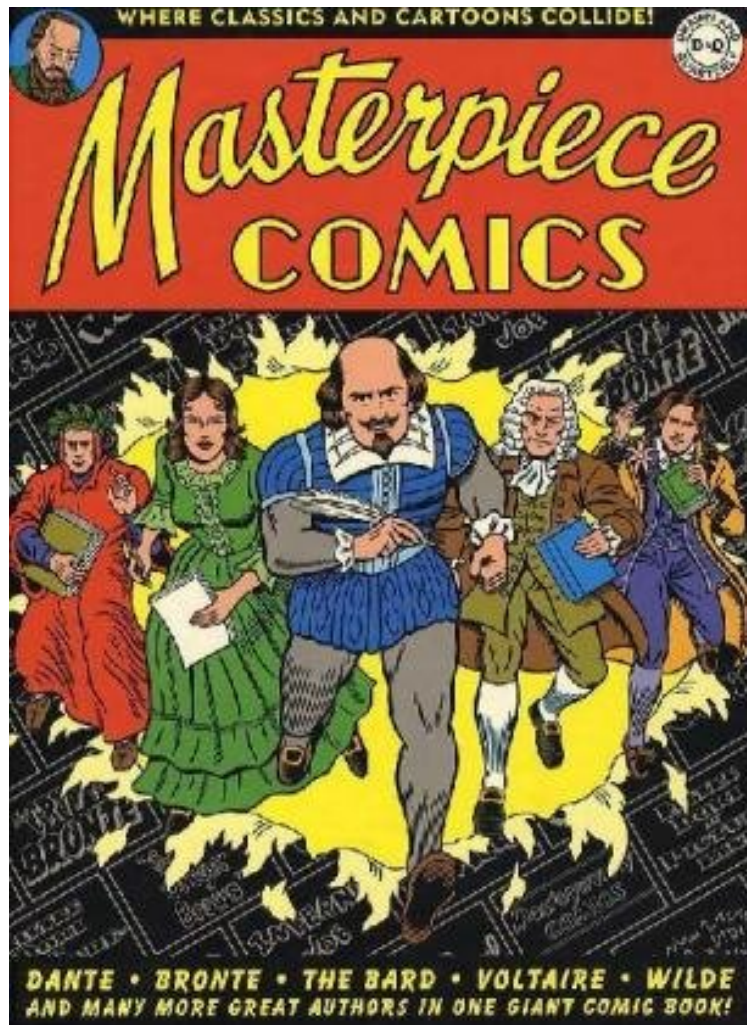


## Masterpiece Comics

R. Sikoryak

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#419541 in Books 2009-09-01 2009-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 12.34 x .56 x 9.271, 1.42 #File Name: 189729984264 pages | File size: 70.Mb

**R. Sikoryak : Masterpiece Comics** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masterpiece Comics:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Redefining the definition of "well-read" By E.J. Jones I never thought I would buy into the idea that comics and classic literature could exist on the same wavelength. For most of my life, I wrote off comics as pandering to the illiterate masses with brightly colored illustrations and a disconcerting lack of periods (that puts the rise of text language into perspective, doesn't it?). In the few years since I've realized I was being an idiot about comics, I've tried to read more of them. That's why I enjoyed Masterpiece Comics so much more now than I would have those few years ago. Or maybe I would have enjoyed it anyway; R. Sikoryak's pun-infested comic celebrates all kinds of literature, with pictures or without. We start off the game with one of the best-known works of literature in American culture: the Genesis creation story. Except here, Blondie and Dagwood are curious Eve and

clueless Adam (the guy gets a rib sawn out of him and doesn't think to file a complaint? Why should we expect less from the creator of the Dagwood Sandwich?), and their post-Eden abode is not the desert of Canaan, but suburbia. More mash-ups ensue: Garfield as a feline Mephistopheles, Charlie Brown waking up one morning as a bug, Dantes Inferno showing up on the insides of gum wrappers. Some issues are longer than others; The Crypt of Bronte covers over half of Wuthering Heights, and Hesters Little Pearl zips through all of The Scarlet Letter, albeit with 95% fewer synonyms for the color red. All the comics and their literary counterparts are identified and summed up by the author in a wry letters-to-the-editor-type section. This is where some of the wittiest writing pops up, like this bit on the durability of chewing gum: In this writer's experience, novelty bubblegum has seemed impervious to age, foul weather conditions, and occasionally, human mastication. This is more of a me problem than a problem with the book itself, but I'm still not enough of a comics fan to be familiar with every comic featured here. (The letters section does help out with this, dropping some not-so-subtle hints about which works match up with which.) Also, in the longer issues, I wished the comics would poke a little more fun at their literary subjects instead of just telling the stories with pictures. (Again, this complaint might be a byproduct of my ignorance about anything to do with comics; a true comics fan might understand more comic references and find more to laugh at.) But any comic that uses the word mastication is a comic worth reading. Lots of fun for the truly well-read of literature both with and without brightly colored illustrations.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Sincerest Form of Flattery By David Swan My first experience with R. Sikoryak was in a graphic fiction anthology from 2008. I'm embarrassed to say that the point of his entry sailed right over my head. In a review of the book I wrote, "The artist that most caught my eye this time was R. Sikoryak who did some brilliant parodies of 1950's Action Comic covers with an unpleasant character named 'The Stranger' in place of Superman." I completely missed the fact that the comic was a brief synopsis of 'The Stranger' by French existentialist Albert Camus. Another story I read prior to picking up this book was 'Crime and Punishment' featuring Gil Kane's Batman as Raskol. When I originally read the story I couldn't help but see it as some kind of alternate reality Batman or perhaps a merging of characters but it isn't. It really is simply Dostoyevsky's main character drawn as Batman. What the reader is presented with is a compilation of classic stories using the drawing styles of modern comic artists. The book opens with Genesis featuring Dagwood and Blondie as Adam and Eve and Mr. Dithers playing the part of God. I'm sure that most people's first reaction is that this is being created for a humorous effect after all in 'The Tragic History of Doctor Faustus' the part of Mephistopheles is played by Garfield the Cat. However, Sikoryak plays it completely straight. Yes, it's funny seeing Bazooka Joe in Hell but believe it or not I'm not sure this is being played for laughs despite all the reviews that praise its hilarity. To me it feels like a straight homage to classic literature and comics. Mad magazine was notorious for taking popular comic characters and putting them in odd situations but it was all done for laughs. When the characters from Little Lulu act out the Scarlet Letter it stays completely true to the story with nary a joke to be had. R. Sikoryak's hook is his eerily accurate ability to duplicate other artist's styles. From Dick Browne to Charles Schultz to Joe Shuster, it's spooky. Even Bevis and Butthead are rendered in precise detail. Sikoryak also does a great job of compressing stories down. I read a synopsis of Camus's 'The Strange' and he pretty much captures all the major plot points in eight comic covers. This book actually would serve as a pretty good introduction to the Classics. 'Wuthering Heights' features no famous characters since it was done in the style of 'Tales from the Crypt'. Besides the choice of art style it is pretty much just a straight illustrated version of 'Wuthering Heights' (although the author does emphasize certain parts of the story to more resemble an EC Comics horror story). This one was tough for me to rate because Sikoryak does a magnificent job of accomplishing what he set out to do. I just don't think that for me it rose to the level of five stars. The fusion of various artists is amazing but the writing and art are still just emulations even if they are stunningly well done. If you can get past some full frontal nudity of Dagwood and Blondie this is actually a book that could be a good buy for children. After reading Sikoryak's version of 'The Stranger' I felt compelled to do a bit of research on Albert Camus and learned a bit about the famous writer. It might be a pretty good way to get children interested in classic literature.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Combines the best of comics with the best of literature By deadpoetnsp Combines the best of comics with the best of literature. If you like comics or "litreacha" (or indeed, think comics is the only worth literature), you will enjoy the references to masters from both fields.

**HILARIOUS PARODIES OF CLASSIC LITERATURE REIMAGINED WITH CLASSIC COMICS** Masterpiece Comics adapts a variety of classic literary works with the most iconic visual idioms of twentieth-century comics. Dense with exclamation marks and lurid colors, R. Sikoryak's parodies remind us of the sensational excesses of the canon, or, if you prefer, of the economical expressiveness of classic comics from Batman to Garfield. In "Blond Eve," Dagwood and Blondie are ejected from the Garden of Eden into their archetypal suburban home; Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray is reimagined as a foppish Little Nemo; and Camus's Stranger becomes a brooding, chain-smoking Golden Age Superman. Other source material includes Dante, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, bubblegum wrappers, superhero comics, kid cartoons, and more. Sikoryak's classics have appeared in landmark anthologies such as RAW and Drawn Quarterly, all of which are collected in Masterpiece Comics, along with brilliant new graphic literary satires. His drawings have appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, as well as in The New Yorker, The Onion, Mad, and

Nickelodeon Magazine.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . This slim but densely sly volume collects, at long last, 20 years of Sikoryak's classic lit/classic comics mashups. Blondie and Dagwood act out Genesis in Blonde Eve; Garfield tempts Jon into a deal with the devil in Mephistofield; and Batman turns into Raskol for a reworking of Crime and Punishment. What could be simple parody in other hands is elevated to multileveled artistry by Sikoryak's uncanny ability to mimic the line of artists from Winsor McCay through Jack Davis to Charles Schulz. He goes far beyond mere imitation to eerily inhabit the artistic sensibilities of a dozen cartoonists; the result is as funny as it is impressive. These retellings linger on the philosophical underpinnings of such tales; coupled with the allusions and baggage of these familiar cartoon characters, the crossovers take on a life of their own to become legitimate adaptations. For instance, Little Pearl in Red Letter Day features Marjorie Henderson Buell/John Stanley's Little Lulu characters in a note for note retelling of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, contrasting the grim Puritan narrative with the animated expressions of the Bueel/Stanley originals to cast the sin-obsessed settlers into even sharper relief. Readers who pick this up for the well-deserved laughter will get a bonus with the thoughtful metaphors. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From School Library Journal Grade 11 Up The practice of retelling classic literature in comic-book form gets turned on its head in this entertaining mash-up. With a varied compilation featuring Blondie and Dagwood newly created and naked in the Garden of Eden, or a typically wry Garfield in the role of Mephistopheles, Sikoryak successfully merges the main themes and plot points with the artistic components unique to the individual comics. For instance, old school Superman's square jaw perfectly conveys *The Stranger's* nihilistic detachment, presented by the covers of *Action Camus* instead of *Action Comics*. Though each story's impact depends on readers' frame of reference with the material (teens might readily recognize the Macbeth plot but not the Mary Worth comic strip), the book provides a good entry point for discussing satire. Added details like Letters to the Editor, a drawing contest, and advertisements for a toy model of the Pequod complete the package, ensuring more than a few chuckles. Joanna K. Fabicon, Los Angeles Public Library Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

A provocative collision. Entertainment Weekly A brilliant parable about literature, history and what telling stories tells us about ourselves. Toronto Star Disconcerting and fascinating . . . A canny fusion of overlapping fictional legacies. The Globe and Mail (Toronto)