The Comic Book as Literature: 
Contemporary comics and the path to 
recognition for literary awards

by
Shirley Wong

B.A., King’s University College at Western University, 2017

Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the 
Requirements for the degree of 
Master of Publishing

in the 
Publishing Program
Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology

© Shirley Wong 2019 
Simon Fraser University 
Spring 2019

Copyright in this work rests with the author. Please ensure that any reproduction or re-use is done in accordance with the relevant national copyright legislation.
Approval

Name: Shirley Wong  
Degree: Master of Publishing  
Title: The Comic Book as Literature: Contemporary comics and the path to recognition for literary awards

Supervisory Committee:

Mauvé Page  
Senior Supervisor  
Lecturer, Publishing Program  
Simon Fraser University

Leanne Johnson  
Supervisor  
Lecturer, Publishing Program  
Simon Fraser University

Tracy Hurren  
Industry Supervisor  
Senior Editor  
Drawn & Quarterly  
Montréal, Québec

Date Approved: January 29, 2019
Abstract

Comics and graphic novels developed from being regarded merely as children’s entertainment to a more respected status in the past thirty years. This report examines that Drawn and Quarterly’s (D+Q) publication history for Seth’s *Clyde Fans* follows a close path to that historical trajectory. It analyzes how D+Q’s dedication to high production values and lobbying efforts advanced the comic medium’s reputation to become more widely considered for literary awards, such as their most recent achievement with *Sabrina* by Nick Drnaso being longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. *Clyde Fans* is used as a case-study to emphasize that Seth’s artistry and the production attention it received from D+Q makes it an example of a graphic novel that is deserving of recognition outside of comic-specific awards. To conclude, the report emphasizes that lobbying literary awards is an important strategy to further the medium’s reputation for a richer comic book industry in the future.

Keywords: graphic novel, Drawn and Quarterly, Seth, *Clyde Fans*, comics, literature, *Palookaville*
Dedication

To my dearest grandmother.
Acknowledgements

I give my love and thanks to my family for their support and love throughout my degree.

I would like to give my deepest thanks to Mauve and Leanne for your guidance and support as instructors during the first half of the MPub and as my supervisors for this report.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone at Drawn and Quarterly for your patience, guidance and for being so welcoming—Peggy, Tom, Tracy, Julia, Rachel, Rachel, Alison, Chris, Ann, Tomoko and Sruti. Special thanks to Tracy for being my industry supervisor and an amazing mentor.

Thank you to my classmates, my friends, who I met through the MPub in Vancouver. I learned a lot from you all. Your passion and hard work is inspiring. I wish you all happiness and please don’t forget to check-in sometimes.
# Table of Contents

ii  Approval

iii  Abstract

iv  Dedication

v  Acknowledgements

vi  Table of Contents

vii  List of Figures

1  1. Introduction

4  2. A Brief History of Drawn and Quarterly

9  3. The path to recognition for comics’ literary value and cultural legitimation

9  3.1 A brief history of breakthrough comic books and in literary awards in North America

12  3.2 Awards History at Drawn and Quarterly and its impact

15  4. Publishing Seth’s Clyde Fans

15  4.1 Seth and the making of Clyde Fans

20  4.2 Production history for Clyde Fans from 1997-2019

23  4.2.1 Clyde Fans omnibus production work

30  4.2.1.1 Panel Corrections and Front and Back Matter

32  4.2.1.2 File separation

33  4.2.1.3 Relinking and layout

36  4.2.1.4 Proofing

38  4.3 Drawn and Quarterly and Seth

40  5. Conclusion

40  5.1 The Clyde Fans case study: marketing and award submission

40  5.2 The future of publishing omnibus collections at D+Q

41  5.3. The expansion of the comic medium’s cultural status

45  Endnotes

48  Bibliography
List of Figures

21  **Figure 1.** Seth’s artwork sample where he uses the gray and blue tones as shading to create a more three-dimensional looking setting.

24  **Figure 2** (top left), **3** (top right), **4** (bottom). Seth’s original artwork showing the size he works on. Figure 2 shows the line drawing. Figure 3 and 4 show the blue and gray overlay colour drawings. Together they create one page.

26  **Figure 5** (top left), **6** (top right), **7** (bottom). Samples of the line layer (5), and blue/gray (6&7) overlays after being merged from separate files of scans and the Photoshop action) is run.

27  **Figure 8.** Layers panel organization.

28  **Figure 9.** Sample of the merged line-art file with the alignment to the guides.

29  **Figure 10.** Sample of the slivers of white that needed to be filled in with black using the brush tool.

30  **Figure 11.** Sample panels of what the completed panel will appear like once all the files are layered. The blue and gray overlays are set to about 60% or 80% opacity to get a sense of how the shading should appear before the colour for the layer is set in InDesign.

32  **Figure 12.** The finished page for the frontmatter.

35  **Figure 13.** A sample of a final page.

37  **Figure 14.** Turning off the blacks to check for the trap layer underneath.
1. Introduction

Founded in 1989, Drawn and Quarterly (D+Q) is a Canadian publisher based in Montréal that will soon celebrate 30 years of publishing comics and graphic novels by cartoonists from all around the world. At the core of D+Q’s list of luminous cartoonists is Gregory Gallant, known mononymously as Seth, with his landmark work, *Clyde Fans*, a graphic novel that has been published by D+Q since its humble beginnings. This graphic novel that was first serialized in the 1997 issue of *Palookaville* will have the long-awaited definitive omnibus being released in D+Q’s upcoming Spring 2019 list.

Over the past 30 years, comics went from being regarded as low-brow entertainment for children to a more elevated status as an art form and as literature within mainstream culture. The consumption for comics shifted from being ephemeral, because it was initially published as cheaply-made issues, to the longer-lasting book format. Expensive deluxe editions or collector-ready boxsets are increasingly becoming an expected release by publishers with bestselling and or outstanding series. Over the years, several significant events and comic releases have contributed to advancing the medium’s reputation. Now the comic medium has the potential to enjoy larger audiences and a diverse readership. Comic books and graphic novels are now some of the most beautifully crafted books available. D+Q is spearheading the movement towards this becoming the norm and its own publication history follows a close path to the historical trajectory of the evolution of comic book publishing.

This report begins with a brief history of D+Q with a focus on the history of Seth’s *Clyde Fans*. This section includes a historical overview of the trends in the comic book industry, such as breakthrough comic releases and changes in readership, in relation to D+Q. It also introduces
the newly created fellowship program at D+Q and explains how the program assisted with the production process of *Clyde Fans*.

Next, the report outlines the history of graphic novels that were nominated for major awards and ground-breaking releases. This section will briefly draw comparisons with awards recognition from markets outside of North America. This leads into an examination of the case of D+Q’s most recent achievement, *Sabrina* by Nick Drnaso, being longlisted for the prestigious Man Booker Prize. This report discusses how the nomination impacted D+Q’s business and the reputation for graphic novels and what the nomination means for comics in general going forward.

Following that, this report uses *Clyde Fans* as a case-study to analyze its significance as a core series on D+Q’s list and its publication history that has progressed with the evolving mindsets of how comics have been viewed historically in North America. *Clyde Fans* was first published in the pamphlet series *Palookaville*, then as a semi-annual hardcover series, and next as an omnibus edition collecting the full story. The releases of each of these different formats parallels the trajectory of how comic books’ reputation has matured.

Next, the report thoroughly outlines the process behind the production attention that *Clyde Fans* received in preparation for the omnibus’s release. Ultimately, this report argues that the special attention that graphic novels receive during its creative and editorial process makes it deserving of more recognition outside of comic-specific awards. By using *Clyde Fans* as the primary example, this report examines the D+Q’s meticulous production process for the comics’ original artwork to put the book together and how Seth’s mastery of the comic medium created a legendary comic series that is excellent as both a work of art and as literature.
To conclude, this report will discuss *Clyde Fans*’ marketing strategy, the future of publishing omnibus collections at D+Q and the expansion of the comic medium’s cultural status in the future. The further rise of the graphic novel and comics’ literary status is plausible and shows promising signs of inclusion and changing attitudes from readers and awards judges.
2. A Brief History of Drawn and Quarterly

In 1989, Drawn and Quarterly began as a comic magazine anthology created and curated by Chris Oliveros out of his home office in Montréal, Quebec. Oliveros was influenced by Raw magazine, an American comic magazine curated by Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly. Raw is known for being one of the major comic publications during the 1980s rise of the alternative comics scene. Oliveros wanted his magazine to be for a mature, adult readership like Raw's, and not assumed to be intended for the juvenile or children's audience. Oliveros “believed in the potential for intelligent comics of distinguished quality to succeed with a cultured readership.” As a result, Oliveros acquired mainstay cartoonists for D+Q's anthology who laid the groundwork for D+Q's publication canon. These cartoonists include: Seth, Julie Doucet (Dirty Plotte, 1991-1998), Chester Brown (The Playboy, 1992 and Louis Riel, 2003), Joe Matt (Peepshow, 1992-2006), and Adrian Tomine (Optic Nerve, 1998).

Oliveros first met Seth at a convention in Toronto in 1991. Seth was looking for a publisher for Palookaville's first issue and agreed to sign with D+Q because Oliveros was offering more generous royalty terms and artistic freedom with his work than other publishers. Seth became the second author Oliveros signed after Doucet. Oliveros explains, “Seth played a pivotal role in defining the sensibility of D+Q and in its early success as a publisher. Both Doucet and Seth became quickly known for their autobiographical storytelling, and both were huge influences on other cartoonists in the 1990s. Their approach to comics helped define D+Q in its first decade, as at one point in the early years D+Q was publishing autobiographical comics almost exclusively.”

Seth's comic book series Palookaville was first released in 1991. The first issue of Clyde Fans...
began serialization in *Palookaville* in 1997. The story features two brothers, Abe and Simon Matchcard. Abe is an extroverted natural salesman while Simon is an anxious introvert. The story explores the two brothers’ troubled relationship and clashing personalities as they struggle to save their family business of selling oscillating fans in a world switching to air conditioning.

At the time, it was difficult for comics like *Palookaville* to enter chain bookstores or even independent bookstores because of the lack of proper distribution methods and cataloging for comic books. *Palookaville* was targeted towards niche readers of “alternative comics,” that can be defined as comics where the artists could express more artistic freedom and experimentation in their comic works which allowed the medium to explore new ground in both storytelling and art.\(^5\) On the rare occasion that alternative comics did enter traditional bookstores, they were often misplaced in the wrong sections or had nowhere to go. Distribution was difficult because even comic book stores refused to carry “alternative comics” like *Palookaville*, and therefore D+Q’s readership was limited to metropolitan cities with comic book specialty stores such as The Beguiling in Toronto and Quimby’s in Chicago.\(^6\) Oliveros remembers: “The term “graphic novel” was not widely used and the market predominantly focused on comic book pamphlets as a format.”\(^7\)

Early into the 2000s, the public perception of comic books started to change in North America. The change was initiated by successes such as Chris Ware’s *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth* (2000) and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* (*Book One*: 2000, *Book Two*: 2004). Furthermore, Chester Brown’s *Louis Riel* (2003) became a Canadian bestseller in 2003, which influenced bookstores in Canada to create graphic novel sections.\(^8\) During this time, Oliveros realized a need for a publicist at D+Q. Oliveros was acquainted with Peggy
Burns, the publicist at DC comics at that time, and asked if she knew if anyone would be interested in the position. To his surprise, she offered her talents at D+Q starting in September 2003. Burns recognized D+Q’s shortcomings with their distributors at the time and decided to switch to Farrar, Straus and Giroux (FSG). The change to FSG “transformed the profile of the smaller press, giving it a much more secure foothold in American bookstores.”

Tom Delvin from Highwater Books joined D+Q along with Burns. Delvin brought his production design talents and his expertise of comic history and of alternative comics. He officially joined the team in 2004. Burns and Delvin’s talents and expertise of the comic book industry helped to strengthen the publisher’s business.

In 2004, *Clyde Fans: Book One* was released, compiling the first two parts of the story. After 20-years-in-the-making, Seth concluded the story in *Palookaville 23* (July 2017). On May 8, 2018, D+Q announced the long-awaited graphic novel compiling *Clyde Fans*. Now D+Q celebrates over 25-years of publishing contemporary comics, as well as adding legendary cartoonists such as Tove Jansson, Yoshihiro Tatsumi, Guy Delisle, and Shigeru Mizuki to their author list.

Only ten years ago, the market for graphic novels in North America was limited to specialty or comic book stores. In 2003, Oliveros, Burns and Spiegelman successfully lobbied the Book Industry Study Group to recognize “Comics and Graphic Novels” as a category in the American book trade. And as a result, they helped to transform how bookstores retailed comic books and graphic novels. Their efforts resulted in chain-stores such as Indigo Books & Music Inc. in Canada making make dedicated comic book and literary graphic novel sections where D+Q titles are displayed and sold. Furthermore, online sales from Amazon grew from selling a negligible amount of D+Q books to one that is now more widely used to order comics from.
These changes have allowed a larger breadth of comic/graphic novel titles to reach larger audiences and as a result, D+Q’s mid-list sales have increased. In addition to more sales and higher visibility, Burns adds: “I feel the tastes of people reading graphic novels has matured, and they can appreciate the diversity of the medium beyond the season’s big book or the trauma memoir.” Currently, the most consistent, highest-quality graphic novels and comics are recognized as coming from independent comic book publishers such as D+Q or Fantagraphics. As the medium continues to become more widely accepted as popular literature in North America, it may one day see numbers similar to countries with a thriving comic book market such as France where one in five books sold in bookstores is a graphic novel.

In April 2018, D+Q started the five-month fellowship program: one starting in the summer and another in the winter. The primary purpose of the fellowship is to allow firsthand experience on all facets of the book business, including editorial, production, design and marketing to make these skills accessible to a variety of people. The program’s goal is training for entry into the publishing industry, and to create a more vibrant and diverse publishing industry. Tracy Hurren, the Senior Editor at D+Q, explains: “We acknowledge that publishing programs are costly, prohibitively so for many people. University is in general. We want people working in publishing from all different backgrounds, and by having a diversity mandate for the fellowship program, we’re hoping to do a small part in encouraging that. We want more women of colour in the industry. We want more young, eager people to have some barriers eliminated. We want a diverse landscape that represents our readers.”

In addition, the timing of upcoming big and longer releases, such as Clyde Fans, required more production assistance in-house. The fellowship program’s implementation is then a mutually beneficial arrangement. D+Q needs assistance with tasks such as scanning, and
cleaning artwork that might feel unfulfilling if done long-term. Thus, hiring people for shorter terms and who are fresh to the publishing industry each term means they gain valuable experience since each task is something new to them. The fellowship program helps people develop skills specifically used in comic book publishing that most publishing programs do not focus on because it is a niche area. The program is an opportunity for more people to become competent in the skills necessary to work in comic book publishing. It makes those interested in pursuing a career in the field to become more competent as the comic medium continues to become more prominent and the industry needs people with these highly specific skills. D+Q is dedicated to help train and lower the barriers of entry to the publishing environment with the fellowship program.

Currently, D+Q publishing headquarters is a team of 9 full-time staff and runs two storefronts in Montréal’s artistic Mile-End neighbourhood. In 2008, Librarie D+Q opened its doors, carrying not only D+Q books, but also a specially curated selection of independent prose, comic books, poetry and more. In 2015, Oliveros stepped down as the publisher and the role turned over to Peggy Burns while Tom Devlin became the executive editor. La Petite Librarie D+Q opened in 2017 carrying kids titles and hosts a variety of the literary events. The storefronts demonstrate D+Q’s dedication to providing a space to bring author events to Montréal, promoting comics readership and accessibility with a selection of titles from independent publishers and diverse comic artists. With their consistent release of excellent books, D+Q is now recognized as being an internationally renowned publisher of the world’s best cartoonists and holds a reputation for being a desirable company to work with and be published by.
3. The path to recognition for comics’ literary value and cultural legitimization

3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF BREAKTHROUGH COMIC BOOKS AND IN LITERARY AWARDS IN NORTH AMERICA

This section of the report will discuss the history of literary awards that have recognized comics and major comic works that have positively influenced the public perception of comics’ literary value. Firstly, several milestone comic works brought the medium from the fringes to the mainstream. Secondly, literary awards play a significant role in bringing public recognition and critical acclaim to the authors and their work. Therefore, the breakthrough awards earned by comic creators over the past three decades each mark a moment of inclusion, public recognition, critical acclaim, and recognition of the medium’s literary value. All these factors have impacted the medium’s gradual path towards cultural legitimization.

In 1986, the milestone comic works, *Maus*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Rises*, and *The Watchmen* were published. The stories showed that comics could also grapple with more serious topics. These titles influenced the creation of the term “graphic novel.” All were “novel-length” where the volumes from each issue are compiled into books or an omnibus and sold in the mainstream book market.

In the following decade, the emergence of the term “graphic novel” began to become more widespread and used by both publishers and the book market. Yet, a “graphic novel” encompassed different forms: “Collections of newspaper comic strips (*Peanuts* and *Garfield*); collections of comics that were previously published as comic books (*Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen*, as they are so frequently considered, fit this model perfectly); and books that contained new complete stories from alternative press outlets.” Graphic
novel became a term that was “co-opted by both the book industry and the specialty comic store market to label usually expensive, high-production-value books designed for bookstores instead of newsstands.”

In 1992, there was a watershed moment in comic book history when *Maus* by Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize. It was the first graphic novel to win the prize and it thus received a lot of public attention. This honour allowed more readers who were not familiar with comics to consider the literary nature that the medium holds.

Other notable milestone comic works such as *Jimmy Corrigan* (2000) by Chris Ware, *Persepolis* (*Book One*: 2000, *Book Two*: 2004) by Marjane Satrapi, *Black Hole* (2005) by Charles Burns, *Fun Home* (2006) by Alison Bechdel, also helped to further challenge the negative stigma of comics. Each of these publications became defining moments for the medium’s road to becoming regarded as serious works of literature because more media outlets like newspapers and magazines, and academia started to pay attention to the comic medium’s merit as literature and art. This decade became another turning point for the development of public perception that comics are more than merely entertainment for the juvenile market.

In addition, serialized works from small presses found new life when repackaged as graphic novels, for example Daniel Clowes’s *Ghost World* (1997) that was originally published as a Fantagraphics series titled *Eightball*. Although the prominence of the practice of republishing serialized works breaks down the distinctions between the terms “graphic novel” and “comic”, to this day, the term “graphic novel” is associated with more literary connotations. The promotion of “graphic novel” as both a term and concept led the academic and literary community to become more open to the medium’s literary value.
In the Canadian publishing landscape, the Governor General’s Literary Award (GGBooks) nominated the comic book *Skim* by Mariko (writer) and Jillian Tamaki (artist and D+Q author) in 2008. The GGBooks award recognizes the best in Canadian literature, granting them “valuable recognition from peers and readers across the country.” However, Jillian Tamaki was not credited in the nomination because the award only recognized writers. As a result, D+Q cartoonists Seth, Chester Brown, and several other Canadian cartoonists lobbied the Canadian Council for the Arts to change the award submissions terms where comic books could only be submitted in the children’s art or writing category. Oliveros also endorsed the letter. And now both the artists and writers can be nominated for this major literary award in Canada.

Hurren explains:

> Despite the annual growth of the graphic novel since the early 2000s, there’s still so many readers than don’t view them as equals to prose. Literary Awards, either choose to exclude comics or include them, help to perpetuate or break this misconception. Prizes go a long way in helping comics in libraries and the academic markets, too. Which is a huge portion of our business.

Literary awards play a major role in influencing the public perception of comics. Its influence should not be taken for granted because comics have historically been a marginalized form of art and storytelling. That is why lobbying and advocating for literary awards to change their criteria remains as a hurdle for the medium to overcome.

Overall, comics have gradually advanced from the negative connotation of being for low-brow consumption and critical disrespect to being featured in art galleries, museums, taught in university courses, and entering mainstream bookstores and libraries. The artistic innovations,
diverse and voices and content that come from the talented comic book creators are being more recognized in spaces where their work deserves to be showcased, seen, and sold.

3.2 AWARDS HISTORY AT DRAWN AND QUARTERLY AND ITS IMPACT

D+Q books have a successful record of awards. Their books have won several major North American awards specific to comic books, including the Ignatz Award, Inkpot Awards, Harvey Awards, as well as the Will Eisner Comics Industry Awards, which is considered the industry’s equivalent of the Academy Awards. Some of D+Q’s major wins at the Eisner Awards includes Best Anthology in 2003 for Drawn & Quarterly, vol. 3 and in 2016 for Drawn & Quarterly, Twenty-Five Years of Contemporary, Cartooning, Comics, and Graphic Novels, Best Humour Publication for Step Aside, Pops: A Hark! A Vagrant Collection by Kate Beaton, and four out of nine wins in Best U.S. Edition of International Material – Asia for their manga publications since it was created in 2010. Their impressive record of awards grants them the reputation as “the most elegant comics publisher in North America.”

On July 23, 2018, it was announced that the D+Q book, Sabrina by Nick Drnaso, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, a British literary award, becoming the first graphic novel to be nominated for this prestigious literary award. Drnaso tells an unsettling story about a young woman named Sabrina who suddenly goes missing. The story follows the lives of those associated with Sabrina as the media and conspiracy theories disturb their privacy in the aftermath of her disappearance.

D+Q had sold United Kingdom rights to the publisher Granta over two other publishers, Faber & Faber and the Random House imprint, Johnathan Cape, who had a history working with D+Q. Despite that, Granta submitted a strong pitch to D+Q and won the rights. Granta’s
support and enthusiasm for *Sabrina* played a major role in getting the Man Booker nomination for the title.\textsuperscript{35} As a result, the nomination became D+Q’s first major award recognition outside of comic book specific awards. Not only was it a cause for celebration for D+Q, but the nomination also represents a breakthrough for the comic medium.\textsuperscript{36} Following the announcement, Val McDermid, a judge for the Man Booker, described that he was “blown away by it” and that “[t]he graphic novel has increasingly become front in centre in terms of storytelling [and] we felt [*Sabrina*] does just what good fiction should do.”\textsuperscript{37}

The Man Booker nomination came unexpectedly for D+Q. The impact from the nomination became a new situation to navigate for D+Q. Immediately after the nomination, *Sabrina* sold 1500 copies on Amazon US and took the top position on the Bookscan US hardcover graphic novel list. D+Q quickly had to consider reprints in light of the nomination. FSG, D+Q’s distributor, reported that it is typically rare to see a sales bump from being longlisted.\textsuperscript{38} Hurren explains that this nomination “broke the mold for what a publisher should expect with a Booker nomination, in terms of sales.”\textsuperscript{39} *Sabrina* became a special case as the first graphic novel ever to be considered.

Before the nomination a reprint of 10 000 copies from China had been ordered. After the nomination another 20 000 copies was ordered from the same printer. However, these copies would not arrive in time to meet the demand. Considering this, D+Q decided to print in North America for a faster turnaround, ordering another 14 000 copies split between two printers to minimize printing risks since D+Q had never worked with either of them before. Hurren shares,

In the end, it’s looking like our numbers were pretty on target, and we should have stock to carry us into the new year. It was an extra tricky decision because not only did we need to consider the nomination sales spike, but also,
we’re likely to see the book appear on many best-of-the-year/Christmas shopping lists. So, we also needed to consider the increased holiday sale. Then in addition to that, the book may see increased course adoptions in January. So again, we needed to factor that in. It’s really a guessing game, but also we have 30 years worth of sales data to reference. So, we’re not flying completely blind. And we’re monitoring our stock very closely to make sure we’re staying on track and don’t need to send it back again for a 5th printing. 

After the announcement, D+Q sold foreign rights for 

‘Sabrina’ to 11 additional territories: China, Spain, Poland, Korea, Germany, Japan, Croatia, France, Italy, Denmark and Taiwan. The weeks following the announcement also saw interview and review copy requests from local TV, radio, and significant press that included features in: the New York Times, New Yorker, NPR, Ice News Tonight, O Magazine, Wall Street Journal, Entertainment Weekly, Vulture, CBC As It Happens, CBC Day 6, CBC Radio Q, The New Republic, The National, BBC Scotland, Longreads, and more. All the media coverage “Sabrina” received played a positive impact for D+Q’s business and profile from the increased book sales and media coverage.

The literary community was supportive of “Sabrina” being longlisted. Julia Pohl-Miranda, the Marketing Director at D+Q, comments: “Most reviews that followed the nomination, like Jo Livingstone’s in The New Republic, were very positive about the book, and whatever negative feedback there was came from folks who simply didn’t enjoy the subject matter or premise or illustration style of the book.” She continues, “No book is going to appeal to everyone, but there really weren’t people who felt that a graphic novel shouldn’t have been longlisted, so that says a lot about where the medium has gotten to.”

With “Sabrina’s” nomination, D+Q and comic enthusiasts hope this will influence other literary awards in North America to start viewing graphic novels as vital forms of literature and allowing the format to be eligible in its awards categories.
4. Publishing Seth’s Clyde Fans

The publication history of Seth’s Clyde Fans provides insight into how the comic medium’s reputation has matured. This section includes an overview of the step-by-step production process of Clyde Fans, demonstrating D+Q’s meticulous production process that went into creating the book. Additionally, an interview with Seth provides insight into his artistic process when creating Clyde Fans.

4.1 SETH AND THE MAKING OF CLYDE FANS

Seth (Gregory Gallant) is one of the foremost cartoonists in Canada. As detailed in section two, he has been published by D+Q since its inception, making him one of the core authors. His accomplished career includes having his works appear in the New York Times Magazine, Best American Comics, and McSweeney’s Quarterly. His illustrations have also graced the covers of the New Yorker, the Walrus, and Canadian Notes & Queries. Seth is also the first cartoonist to have a solo-show at the Art Gallery of Ontario (2005) for his model buildings of his fictional city, Dominion.

Seth first was inspired to start cartooning by the legendary work of Charles Schulz’s Peanuts, and later Marvel Comics. During his teenage years, he began to imitate the Marvel style in his drawings. Already having ambitions of becoming a cartoonist, the turning point came when Seth attended Toronto’s Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD, now the Ontario College of Art and Design University).

My horizons expanded—I found other work to be inspired by. The bigger
world of art and literature and culture. Plus, right around that time (early 1980’s) comic books began to branch out into more ambitious works. The work of the Hernandez brothers and Lynda Barry and Chester Brown and Art Spiegelman really inspired me to try my own hand. My discovery of Robert Crumb around this time was very important as well for setting me on the path I eventually followed.45

Before the term graphic novel was as widely used as it is today, Seth coined another term: picture-novella. He labelled his first graphic novel, It’s a Good Life, If You Don’t Weaken as such when released in 1996. However, he used the term ironically to criticize the inaccuracies that comes with the term “graphic novel.” He comments that “A picture-novella is just a graphic novel. I started using the term as a joke because I hated the term graphic novel (I still do). I thought picture-novella sounded prissy and pretentious and was a good little dig at the equally pretentious term graphic novel.”46 For Clyde Fans, the cover simply reads “A Picture Novel by Seth,” showing D+Q and Seth’s continued dedication increasing the market share for the comic medium, where any reader can pick up Clyde Fans and enjoy it just as much as they would a novel categorized in the fiction section at a chain-bookstore.

Not only does Seth take special care to thinking about the book as an object, the design aesthetic is interlaced with the story to create a strong sense of place. Seth describes his intentions behind the design of Clyde Fans:

The most important elements in the design of the Clyde Fans collection are as follows. First, intimacy. I wanted the book to be a tight little world. The size of the book (a small brick) and the fact that the front and back covers create the illusion of the Clyde Fans storefront itself is very important. You enter into the building when you open the cover. That building is the thematic centre of the story. The shape and heft of the little book itself is intimate—quite different from a big book like George Sprott (Seth, 2009).

Second, cohesiveness. All the elements of the design are meant to create a “texture landscape” to set up a “feel” for the story itself. There is a long design sequence at the beginning of the book (40 pages!) between the half title page and the first page of the book. This visual poem is composed of business de-
sign, interior room scenes, and objects that relate to the story itself. I’m trying to thematically/emotionally set the stage even before the reader reads a single work.

Third, luxury. I want the book to be beautiful. A beautiful object treats its subject matter with dignity. Hopefully it encourages the reader to do the same.47

Seth’s designs work to embody the book’s atmosphere and themes. Delvin says, “For all its specificity in time and place, Clyde Fans reveals universal anxieties - What do our successes and failures mean or matter in the long run? How do we get out of our own heads? How do we find happiness? Through the story of two brothers, Seth masterfully probes how our environment shapes who we are and what we allow ourselves to strive for.”48 The design and writing of Clyde Fans work together to articulate the story’s theme, making it a combination of being both a literary and artistic work. The art style of Clyde Fans accompanies the written narrative and strengthens the reading experience because it contributes to the mood and experience of the work. The pacing, paneling and style work together to create a greater emotional impact than what the written word can express alone. This balance of words and art creates an immersive experience of the story that is unique for comic books. The combination of the two demonstrates how comics can be suitable for a mature, adult audience who are looking for a read that calls for many different interpretations and analysis. Seth’s work invites readers, book reviewers, awards panelists, etc. to view comics as an important form of literature and understand the depth of sophistication that the medium can hold.

Seth speaks on how the comics medium has evolved since publishing the first issue:

Simply put, comics went from being a child’s medium to a fan-based genre medium to finally arrive at a literary/art medium. The change that has most effected how I tell stories is the change in the formats of comics. When I started out you told a story in a 24-page comic book. My first story was 24 pages long. My next story had two chapters—each 24 pages long. After that I did a story with 6 chapters—each chapter the length of a comic book.
The length of the comic book determined how you told the story. For *Clyde Fans*, I decided that each chapter would be made up of three comics. That meant you had to divide the chapter so that it read well in three sections. Later, when *Palookaville* changed to a hardcover it took me a couple of issues to realize I didn’t have to tell the story that way any longer. In *Palookaville* 23 I published the entire end chapter which was 65 pages in length. The old days that would have been three issues and would have read slightly differently. I’m still discovering how the book format will affect how I pace and tell future stories.49

As a 20-years-in-the-making comic, the publication format for *Clyde Fans* seemed to change with each new release. However, Seth remarkably had the story of *Clyde Fans* thought out from the beginning. Seth shares how he sustained his creative process over the years:

I made decisions in the beginning that I followed all the way to the conclusion of the book. A book like *Clyde Fans* was deliberately crafted to be fragmented and non-linear. So, the chapters do not follow a simple timeline and each one is told slightly differently. For example, chapter one is entirely a monologue whereas chapter two is told in a “naturalistic” manner (meaning you follow the main character around and watch and interpret what he does without being told what to make of it). The following chapters are told with different narrative devices as well.

I made these plans right in the beginning and wrote extensive notes to myself about how the story would be told, what elements I wished to write about (time, memory, mystic experience) and then, over a very long time, slowly drew it out page by page.50

Seth shares that much of the writing for *Clyde Fans* was done page-by-page, such as for the dialogue. This process allowed him to stay interested in the story, and for it to come to life as he drew all the scenes out. He says, “[t]his is the best way (in my opinion) to create comics because when you are drawing out the comics connects from that you could not have anticipated by writing out a script. There is something magic in the process itself.”51 And since the book took 20 years to finish, it is natural that his drawing style evolved. Seth’s artistic process demonstrates that his unique method for creating comics was an advantage because it is part
of what allowed him to be flexible with the changing trends in the comic industry since it was more important how the story naturally unfolded than continuing with the original format as a pamphlet.

One sequence that Seth discloses is the biggest change to Clyde Fans are his corrections to Part 3 to a scene where Simon speaks to his figures. He reworked these pages to leave out the dialogue from the inanimate toys. Seth left it up to the reader to imagine what Simon was hearing. This correction exemplifies how Seth brings literary sensibilities to his comics. He reworks the scene to deliberately change the readers’ experience of the work in a way that uniquely shows how comics use the “show, don’t tell” technique just like a work of literature.

Along with his career as a cartoonist, Seth is behind many beautiful book designs. He pays respects to his early inspiration, Charles Schulz, by being the book designer for The Complete Peanuts that was published from 2004-2016 by Fantagraphics. The series went on to win Best Publication Design at the Eisner Awards in 2005. As described by the Canadian Encyclopedia, Seth’s designs raise the original work through his ability “to wholly inhabit another artist’s world, providing new visual interpretations of this work for contemporary audiences.”

Oliveros praises Seth in an interview with Quill & Quire in late 2013 saying that he makes a book completely his own “with hand-drawn typography, no computer fonts are ever used, just like in 1945, and his iconic imagery, Seth makes each project a distinct work of art.”

Clyde Fans is Seth’s life’s work and after 20 years the omnibus edition marks the first time it is collected. This edition presents Seth’s legendary cartooning at its best, in combination with his award-winning book design aesthetics to create a book that is a beautiful object in every element, from the cover, front matter, endpapers and its format. Seth completes Clyde Fans
with a repackage that is nothing less than the artistic intent behind works of great literature.

4.2 PRODUCTION HISTORY FOR CLYDE FANS FROM 1997-2019

As a standalone work, Clyde Fans is one of the major graphic novel achievements in the past couple decades. Such long projects are rare and no longer as feasible for cartoonists to begin anymore. Therefore, Clyde Fans marks an end of an era of long-serialized comics at D+Q. But over the decade that Clyde Fans was published, its publication history also parallels the gradual change in views over graphic novels as literature.

Seth’s unique artistic process for creating Clyde Fans also makes it an equally unique production job that is not as widely used in comic production work any longer. Few cartoonists use such a laborious method as Seth. Seth creates comics using the traditional illustration method using only using ink on paper. For Seth’s comics, he creates the line-art drawing and the overlay colours each on separate sheets of paper. Seth chooses a light blue and gray tone for his overlays to create a nostalgic mood reminiscent of the mid-twentieth century.

The overlay colours are essentially the shadows to make the artwork appear more three-dimensional (Fig. 1). Original drawings like Seth’s do not make it through the D+Q office as often anymore because of the convenience of sending files electronically. The result of his artistic process is a carefully crafted work-of-art that is unique to the artistic method of cartoonists.
First serialized as a pamphlet series in 1997, *Palookaville’s* production process was done the old-fashioned way. The comic book pages were sent to a printer and photographed with a mid-century camera that filled half a room. The drawings and overlays photos would be colour separated, then assembled onto the page to create the copies. Oliveros explains the disadvantages of this process:

The downside is that the old system never had the degree of precision that computers have, so with each issue of *Palookaville* we received proofs and on
about half the pages. Seth’s overlays were noticeably misaligned. From these proofs I would make a list of pages to “shift” and send it to the printer, and then we would get a 2nd set of proofs to verify that everything was fixed. At some point in the early 2000s everything changed, nobody was using films and negatives anymore, and production on Seth’s books was being done digitally, as is the case now.54

Seth admits that he was resistant at first to his work being assembled digitally but now enjoys the opportunities of working with digital colour. The switch to the digital production process where the artwork is scanned and edited on a computer using software like Adobe Photoshop now allows for a higher degree of print quality-control at D+Q.

In 2004, Clyde Fans: Book One was released as the first hardcover book publishing the first two parts. Starting in 2010, Palookaville began as a series of semi-annual hardcover volumes that Clyde Fans was published in. However, during the early 2000s, pamphlet sales began decreasing because of the rise of graphic novels. The concept of graphic novels was beginning to gain more recognition. Therefore, reformatting Palookaville into a hardcover format was a timely release. The hardcover volumes included a digest of the Palookaville issues along with Seth’s other artistic Endeavours in autobiographical comics, photo essays, sketchbook drawings, and gallery exhibitions. These books were all packaged into a beautifully designed hardcover series that was a callback to classic 1940s textual book design.55 The design allowed for a whole new experience for readers to enjoy Clyde Fans and showcases Seth’s varied creative passions. The repackaging of Clyde Fans into the omnibus version marks how far comics and graphic novels have come in being accepted not only as a work of esteemed literature, but also as a beautifully designed book.

And finally, the definitive Clyde Fans will be released in Spring 2019 that collects the story as a deluxe edition with a slip case, over 400 pages and priced at $64.95 CAD/$54.95 USD56 with
an initial print run of 10,000. The release of this edition allowed Seth to revisit the comic’s artwork and story, and to create new material, meaning that the production for the book essentially started anew. The production work involved everything from scanning, assembly, touch-ups, layout, and editing. Seth sent to the D+Q office hundreds of pages of corrections to the original artwork, new comic pages, and new material for the front and back ends for the book. Thus, it was a project that kept the D+Q production team busy for the total duration of the summer fellowship program.

4.2.1. CLYDE FANS OMNIBUS PRODUCTION WORK

The first step of the production process was to scan all the corrected and new pages that Seth mailed in. The original artwork was drawn in black and white, on large sheets of watercolour paper at about 20 x 33 inches in size. The size made it too large for the scan bed of the scanner. This meant that each original needed to be scanned 2-4 times depending on the layout of the comic panels and details of the artwork to get the artwork fully scanned. With over three hundred pages of corrections sent in, it was a time consuming (the work spread over about three months) but important process. The originals were scanned as files set as grayscale image, as a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), at 600 dots per inch (dpi) for a high quality and crisp scan of the artwork.
Figure 2 (top left), 3 (top right), 4 (bottom). Seth’s original artwork showing the size he works on. Figure 2 shows the line drawing. Figure 3 and 4 show the blue and gray overlay colour drawings. Together they create one page.

From the very start, it is best practice to create a consistent file naming system to keep the files organized. That way, any possible mistakes or missing pages can be easily tracked down. The files were named using the page number, whether it is a blue (b) or gray (a) overlay or line (l) file and the part or issue number at the end (fig. 2, 3, and 4). For example, the file “99a_CLYDE_16,” meant page number, gray overlay, Clyde Fans, and issue 16. All the files
are organized into the *Clyde Fans* production work folder, and inside were folders for each part of the story.

After the scanning was finished, the next step was to merge the scans together using Adobe Photoshop to complete the artwork into one file. The artwork for the same page is separated to layers in the same file. The top layer from the scanned line, grey or blue artwork pages was set to multiply with a lower opacity (about 60%) and was moved and rotated until the line-art and overlay colours are aligned perfectly. This process is repeated for every page except for artwork when it was possible to be scanned all at once.

Once all the scanned files are merged, a Photoshop action was created to make each file uniform at 1200 dpi, threshold for rich and crisp lines, 16 x 22 inches for the canvas size, and guides are created at the top right-hand corner of the canvas to straighten the alignment of the artwork. The action is used to batch automate those steps for each newly created merged file. It is best practice to create actions any time a task requires repeated steps for multiple files because it is a time-saving tool.

After the automate process was finished, the next step is to open the line, gray, and blue files into one file into separate layers. Firstly, the layers are named according to whether it is a or grey overlay (A), blue (B), or line-art (Lines) layer (fig. 8).
Figure 5 (top left), 6 (top right), 7 (bottom). Samples of the line layer (5), and blue/gray (6&7) overlays after being merged from separate files of scans and the Photoshop action) is run.
The best practice in this step is to keep the layer order consistent with all the files when considering creating an action in the future.

Next is to manually align the line layer to the guides created from the action. Then, the overlay layers set to multiply at a lower opacity (~50-60%) to be able to see the line-art displayed clearly underneath.
The next step was to move and rotate the overlay layers to lined up with the line-art drawings as closely as possible. However, the overlays were not always perfectly aligned, which was the same problem that presented itself when comics production was done with a camera. Next, the brush tool was used to draw in the missing areas in the overlays layers with black. By doing this, slivers of missing colour will be filled (fig. 10). All of this was done with a pen tablet for drawing accuracy and pen pressure.
This step is the longest part of the production process because it must be hand-drawn and using an action was not possible. This particular part of the production process demonstrates D+Q’s care for high-quality production and great attention to detail. Additionally, part of the skills that comes from experience of doing production work is to be able to emulate the cartoonist’s style when making corrections to the artwork. This skill is something that comes with practice and from developing a close relationship to the cartoonists such as the one D+Q has with Seth.
When all the overlays have been corrected, the files were all renamed automatically and consistently to xx_CLYDE_layered (xx represented the page number). These “layered” files were now the working version to return to if further corrections or editing was needed. These working layers were all saved as TIFF files and organized with a new folder for the layered files according to the part in the book the page belongs to.

Figure 11. Sample panels of what the completed panel will appear like once all the files are layered. The blue and gray overlays are set to about 60% or 80% opacity to get a sense of how the shading should appear before the colour for the layer is set in InDesign.

4.2.1.1 PANEL CORRECTIONS AND FRONT AND BACK MATTER

Seth also mailed in corrections for specific panels when the full-page did not need to be corrected and new material for the front and back matter of the omnibus. Panel corrections and the new front and back matter pages would follow the same steps as described above up. The panel corrections are added to the previously existing working files from the *Palookaville* hardcovers and *Clyde Fans: Book One*. 
The process for panel corrections was to drag over the layers from the new panel to the existing file. The image was converted back to grayscale from threshold. It was easiest to first line up the line-art layers and do the overlays after because the shadows can be fit into place by using the line-art as the reference. Guides can be used to scale the new panels perfectly into place. Next was to fill in the old drawings with white to essentially erase the old artwork and then merge down the new layers to the previous gray, blue and line layers. Once these corrections were all completed, then the file is saved over and placed into the correct folder.

One page of the front matter required D+Q’s assistance recreating the design of a page from an older issue of *Palookaville* using InDesign. The page was to be designed similarly to a newspaper ad that did not use hand-lettering that most of Seth’s artwork uses. For this page, the production team choose suitable fonts and typeset the page to create the frontmatter page for Seth.
Before the book layout begins, each layer (the line, blue, gray layers) from the layered file needed to be separated and organized into its own folder. Splitting up the layers is necessary because *Clyde Fans* is printed using the offset printing technique. For offset printing, each printing plates holds a different colour, so the files also need to be setup in such a way.

A new action is created to separate the layers. The steps are as follows: first the “Lines” layer is selected while holding the command key (control on Windows) while clicking the eye icon to make it the only layer visible, converted to bitmap mode, then it is saved into separated folders. One folder for the line, blue, and gray layers. Bitmaps create a hard-edge for the line.
art and removes anti-aliasing from the artwork, creating crisp and high-quality lines. The action is applied to all the layered files for each part and saved into the corresponding folders. Once again, the batch automate tool saves a lot of time instead of having to manually save each later into separate folders.

During the layer separation process, a trap layer is created. Trap layers are necessary to ensure high print quality because the line-art of Clyde Fans is going to be printed as rich blacks. Trap layers help to minimize the risk of colours bleeding out on the edges and causing white to appear underneath in the case of the printing plates are not lined up perfectly.

A new action is made to create the trap layers. The first step is to convert the layered file back to grayscale mode. Secondly, the lines layer is selected so it is the only visible layer. Third, the line-art is selected using Select>Colour Range> and using the eyedropper tool to select the white space for an accurate selection of the black lines only. Next, selection is expanded by 12 pixels and inversed, creating a spread for the trap. Lastly, the image is converted back to a bitmap. This action is run for all line files and saved into a newly created folder to hold the trap files.

4.2.1.3 RELINKING AND LAYOUT

Once the layers are properly separated and organized into the right folder, the next step is to relink all the corrected pages to the new InDesign file for Clyde Fans. The InDesign file includes every part of Clyde Fans compiled with the files from the published books in the series (for example, from Palookaville 20 – 23), new corrected pages, the new material for the front and back matter of the book. Altogether, it is a graphic novel that is well over 400+ pages. The files from the previous books or issues are helpful visual guides for the pagination of the book.
Next begins the progress of relinking. Each page needs to be relinked because the files have new names and folder locations. Seth also provided pagination notes for the whole book that were very helpful during the layout process.

The process for relinking first requires creating a new master page in InDesign with new margins to increase readability so the artwork is not placed too close to the spine of the book when printed. Next the files from the previous books are deleted with the direct select tool. The frame is then selected with the selection tool and relinked with the hotkey command + d (control + d for Windows). This process ensures files are placed at the same scale percentages to fit within the margins. Clyde Fans is being printed at a final size of 6.3 x 8.5 inches, but the canvas sizes for the original artwork is much larger. The images had to be scaled down to about 40% of its original size.

Since there are four different layers (line, two overlays, trap), one page is required to be relinked four times. After the relinking, the layer order must be blue at the top and followed by the line layer, gray and trap. The blue overlay and line layer are then set to multiply. The multiply blend mode works by multiplying the base colour by the blend colour, resulting in a darker image. The overlay colours are then set, finally allowing a look to how the artwork is intended to look digitally. The blue layer is set to multiply so that it overlaps with the gray underneath, creating a third shade of dark blue. This technique is an iconic aesthetic of Seth’s, where he skillfully overlays sections of the colours to give the artwork more dimension without needing another overlay colour. All these layers must be set in this layer order so that it is printed accurately.
Figure 13. A sample of a final page.
4.2.1.4 PROOFING

After the relinking is completed, the layout for the book is essentially finished. The file can be exported to a portable document format (PDF) file for proofreading and doing a page-by-page to check for any possible pagination or artwork mistakes while referencing Seth’s pagination notes and the Palookaville books.

The colours also need to be checked. Using Adobe Acrobat Pro DC to open the PDF file, under the Print Production Tool > Output Preview, the colour separations can be turned off to ensure that everything is properly linked and in the correct order. For Clyde Fans, process black is turned off to doublecheck that the trap layer underneath is properly linked and the colour is set.
The blue and gray colours are also checked for the overlapped colour to know that the layer order in the InDesign files is correct. *Clyde Fans: Book One* and *Palookaville* are used as a reference to double check that the colours are correct. The alignment of the artwork is also checked to ensure that the panels are straight and within the margins.

The working PDF is sent to Seth for him to check for any more necessary corrections. For example, Seth would notice mistakes like if the overlay colours need to be swapped, or if any panel corrections were missed. A colour swap correction could be done as a quick fix in InDesign. Whereas, if the edit were for a panel correction then the layered file would need to be reopened and all the steps from panel corrections to relinking would need to be repeated to update that page. Lastly, the book is thoroughly copyedited and proofread.
4.3 DRAWN AND QUARTERLY AND SETH

D+Q’s production team and fellowship program completed a full production process for *Clyde Fans*. With over three hundred revised, redrawn and new pages added to this edition, it was as if it were a brand-new book release. The production work was a team effort to ensure that the project was completed well in-time for its scheduled release in Spring 2019. This publication of *Clyde Fans* is certainly D+Q and Seth’s most ambitious edition yet.

Throughout the production work for *Clyde Fans*, it is apparent that D+Q allows their cartoonists a high degree of artistic control. As one of the major recent comic works, it is imperative that *Clyde Fans* receive a lot of attention in its production efforts to reflect Seth’s status and artistic vision. Seth shares how D+Q’s support of their artists has impacted his relationship with the publisher:

D&Q is like home to me. They are the only comics publisher I have ever worked with. Chris Oliveros published my very first comic book and over the years the freedom and dignity D&Q has granted my work has forged a bond of loyalty in me that it would take much to weaken.

I seriously doubt that the artistic freedom I require could have been found at any other publisher. D&Q was unique in that Oliveros picked artists he wished to prosper and then gave them the freedom to do so. Let me tell you—that is a rare thing. I hope to always publish with D&Q. That is a unique thing too. Most writers work with a real variety of publishers. I’ve been lucky. ⁶⁰

Seth’s full artistic intentions with the *Clyde Fans* may not have been realized at any other publisher than D+Q. This is one of the strengths of D+Q as a publisher where they have such a loyal relationship from their cartoonists. Their dedication to supporting their cartoonists’ work during the production process elevates the comic by ensuring that the artwork is always published at its definitive and best version, just as *Clyde Fans* will be. The commitment to
artistic integrity remains as a part of the reason for D+Q’s desirability as a publisher. However, D+Q’s dedication to high production standards goes largely unrecognized by literary awards’ jury or organizers who do not consider comics or graphic novels. But, the D+Q’s consistency for publishing excellent comic books that read just like works of great literature that are beautifully designed and produced is a way to overcome the misconception that comics do not hold literary connotations. Additionally, their effort to publish collected versions makes the book more welcoming to new readers because it tells the complete story in one edition, which fits what readers expect when similarly picking up a regular novel. D+Q’s impact on the construction of the category of “graphic novel” is both a marketing strategy by the publisher to create retail space, but also rebrands the comic book into the realm of being literary. D+Q is recognized as a publisher where everything they publish can be considered a “graphic novel,” no matter how incongruous that might seem under investigation.” The books that D+Q publishes could just as easily be placed in the same bookshelves as fiction and other novels at bookstores.
5. Conclusion

5.1 THE CLYDE FANS CASE STUDY: MARKETING AND AWARD SUBMISSION

Upon release the of *Clyde Fans*, the book will have a full-scale marketing campaign as supported by D+Q. The campaign will include full book tour with Seth’s appearances at literary festivals and independent bookstores. Seth will be touring in Canada and the USA, as well as the UK. At these events, Seth will be put in conversation with literary luminaries working within and outside of comics.62

The differences between how *Clyde Fans* will be marketed this time from its past releases as a pamphlet series or the hardcovers is that there will be more extensive press and academic outreach. Pohl-Miranda says that D+Q will conduct extensive outreach for *Clyde Fans* beyond their usual contacts.63 As a project Seth has been working on for decades, D+Q will focus on garnering press attention for this release because interviews and reviews are more likely to incentivize book sales. And as standalone graphic novel, *Clyde Fans* is more suitable for course adoption in universities. *Clyde Fans* will be submitted to all comics industry awards such as the Eisners, Doug Wright, Harvey, and the full gamut of literary awards including the Governor-General, Writers Trust, Trillium, and many more, plus select library lists. All major Canadian news outlets will be pitched for profiles and interviews such as the *Globe & Mail*, *Maclearen’s* and CBC. Promotions will be more focused on Canadian press and mailings. Alison Naturale, the production manager at D+Q, shares that for new titles Canadian sales are usually about a fifth of the US sales.64 *Clyde Fans* is expected to sell better in the US than in Canada but better in Canada in comparison to D+Q’s other books.

5.2 THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING OMNIBUS COLLECTIONS AT D+Q
D+Q will continue to publish timely releases of omnibus collections of major works by all their cartoonists. Although most long-term projects have been wrapped up, more retrospectives of cartoonists’ work, including their art practices, are likely to be published next by D+Q. Since the success of D+Q’s first attempt at publishing larger and more expensive books such as Drawn & Quarterly: Twenty-Five Years of Contemporary Cartooning, Comics, and Graphic Novels and the Moomin deluxe editions, it became less daunting to continue with projects of this scale. On whether an author should have their works collected and how price points are determined for these types of books, Hurren comments:

If we see an audience for the work, and it is work we believe in and think should be available/in print, in one collected edition, then we’ll move forward with the project. We used to price books at what we thought people would pay, but lately we’ve seen that customers are willing to pay more than they used to be, so we’re more able to price books at the price point they are worth, which is good for the overall publishing industry, to not undervalue our products.65

If a book is expected to do better in Canada, D+Q considers pricing the book more carefully to ensure that it is not priced too high and sales are lost or priced too low and sales are not benefitted from as much. For most other books, D+Q purposefully keeps Canadian prices down rather than doing a direct conversion.66 But overall, D+Q recognizes that the success of omnibus collections depends on the work and not dependent on the pricing strategy. Readers recognize the value in what it takes to create and design a comic book or graphic novel. It is most important that a publisher believes in the strength and quality of the content that they publish.

5.3. THE EXPANSION OF THE COMIC MEDIUM’S CULTURAL STATUS

D+Q actively works to spread the perception that comics should be taken seriously as a work of literature. They do so not only by publishing beautiful and good books that they believe in, but also by taking the extra step to advocate for their books to be considered for awards
outside of the comic industry, adopted into academic curriculums, reviewed in major press outlets, and available in bookstores and libraries.

*Sabrina* being longlisted for the Man Booker Prize is a telling example of how immediately influential a literary prize nomination can be to push the comic medium to be taken seriously as a work of literature. If other comic book publishers were to work together to advocate just like D+Q does, then the medium could see even more progression in the coming years, allowing the medium and the publishers to finally get the recognition they deserve.

For the future of award submissions at D+Q, Pohl-Miranda says:

D+Q will continue to advocate for our books to be considered more widely for prestigious awards including lobbying for their consideration in awards that haven’t got graphic novel categories or where graphic novels are explicitly excluded. Winning or even being nominated for these awards can make an important difference to the sales life of a book and the ability of our authors to build a lasting career and reputation.67

D+Q does not stop there when an award does not consider comics, but instead will make the effort to lobby the awards organizations to update their prize process and criteria. In 2018, D+Q lobbied the PEN American Literary Awards, the Pulitzers, and the National Book Awards.68 The former has not traditionally considered graphic novels, whereas the latter do not consider American authors published by Canadian-based editorial teams unless the publisher holds offices in the United States. This inherently places independent publishers at a disadvantage because corporate publishers with offices around the world have more opportunities to be considered for awards. Pohl-Miranda argues, “Our authors are some of the most acclaimed folks working in the comics medium and we want those award committees to recognize the disservice they’re doing to smaller publishers with these restrictive measures: why should an author stay with us if we can’t ensure them an equal shot at the prestige they might
be able to get through a larger corporate publisher just because of where their offices are?”

Furthermore, D+Q lobbying efforts involves researching each book for specific awards whereas in the past they had to do blanket submissions. When publishing in new genres or regions it creates more opportunities for literary awards considerations. Burns shares a case where she lobbied the Canada Council for the Arts to include graphic novels in the adult category. Before 2018, graphic novels could only be submitted in the children’s category. D+Q will continue to craft specific marketing plans suitable for the individual books on their list and devise strategies for award lobbying for specific books going forward.

For multi-national companies, publishing comics and graphic novels remains a new or untouched venture because it requires a niche set of skills in its production and editing process that would be difficult to mimic without the specialized team that is needed. But becoming more aware of comic books’ growing readership and successes, Penguin Random House announced they are launching Random House Graphic, a dedicated graphic novel imprint that is set to launch in Fall 2019. The imprint will focus on titles for the children and juvenile market. Multinational publishing companies now realize the opportunities of expanding their readership with a dedicated comics imprint but will need to catch up to publishers such as D+Q’s expertise and experience with the medium. D+Q’s fellowship program, is one way the publisher is adding value to the publishing industry by providing valuable training for the highly specific skills needed for comic book production. The program is a timely opportunity now that multi-national companies are starting to recognize the growth of the medium’s prominence amongst readers. It will be interesting to track the development of the comic industry’s growth in the overall publishing environment in the coming years.
Graphic novels and comics are designed and crafted in many ways that the written prose alone does not necessitate. Seth masterfully crafts Clyde Fans in a way that exemplifies what one of the best in the industry is capable of. To end, Seth shares what he would like readers to get out of reading his work:

What matters to me most when I read a book is the moment I finish it. Did it effect you? When a book has been meaningful to me as a reader I always feel as if it has somehow been added to my own life—as if reading it was an experience in itself. One to be remembered. With a graphic work you also hope that some images you’ve created will remain in the reader’s minds-eye.72

Comic books will gradually establish its status as a reputable form of literature as publishers like D+Q continue to lobby literature awards and enrich readers to expand their horizons. Through examining the artistic process, intents, and the meticulous production process behind Clyde Fans at D+Q, this report aims to shed light on the complexity of how comics are made and reconsider what it means to be literary.
Endnotes

3. Ibid, 22-23.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
18. Tracy Hurren, personal communication, October 2, 2018.
20. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
25. Ibid.


30 “About the Governor General’s Literary Awards,” ggbooks, accessed October 20, 2018, https://ggbooks.ca/about

31 Peggy Burns, personal communication, October 10, 2018.

32 Tracy Hurren, personal communication, October 2, 2018.


35 Peggy Burns, personal communication, October 10, 2018.


39 Tracy Hurren, personal communication, October 2, 2018.

40 Ibid.


42 Ibid.

43 Seth, personal communication, October 31, 2018.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.


49 Seth, personal communication, October 31, 2018.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.


54 Chris Oliveros, personal communication, October 5, 2018.


56 Tracy Hurren, personal communication, January 21, 2019.

57 Alison Naturale, personal communication, November 13, 2018.


60 Seth, personal communication, October 31, 2018.
63 Ibid.
64 Alison Naturale, personal communication, November 12, 2018.
65 Tracy Hurren, personal communication, October 2, 2018.
66 Alison Naturale, personal communication, November 12, 2018.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Peggy Burns, personal communication, October 10, 2018.
72 Seth, personal communication, October 31, 2018.
Bibliography


