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Ferdinand de Saussure's Unknown Bandes Dessinées

Saussure and Töpffer

From 1938 onwards, the Bibliothèque de Genève (BGE) has received various gifts or deposits relating to the Saussure family, including one resulting from the discovery in 1996 of a major collection in the conservatory of the family home on the banks of Lake Geneva. Among the papers found in the upmarket greenhouse was a hitherto unexplored comic strip created by the young Ferdinand at the age of 17, or maybe 16, M. Sibidi, now BGE arch. Saussure 371/11. M. Sibidi has no individual online catalogue entry, has not of yet, to the best of my knowledge, been analyzed or even commented, and is not mentioned in John Joseph's monumental biography of 2012.<sup>1</sup> A further 1875 manuscript strip by the linguist-to-be is also in the library's possession, Les aventures de Polytychus, now BGE ms. fr. 3974a.

As we shall see, both manuscripts elicit comparisons between the Father of Linguistics, as Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is often labeled, and the Father of the Comic Strip (to quote David Kunzle's epithet for Saussure's fellow Genevan), Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846).<sup>2</sup> Initially, the Genevan manuscripts inspire us to consider what Saussure might tell us about the history, or at least the reception history, of comics. More broadly and for many more importantly, the connections allow us to look back to Töpffer's influence upon the young Ferdinand, and ask how BD might have marked the progress of linguistics and associated critical theory: indeed if it can be argued that structuralist linguistics transformed the sciences

humaines in France, then by extension BD has a rightful place among the influences on contemporary thought. Key terms, as we shall see, are langage and parole, the difference underlined by Saussure between the individual utterance (parole) and the system as a whole (langage), and the implications for a more general relationship between component parts and overall creation. Within this system Saussure contrasts the signifiant or signifier, the arbitrary sign used to express meaning, and the signifié or signified, the object that the system is to represent, however approximately. It is the pathways and interactions between the two that will make for our comparison with the workings of the bande dessinée.

According to John Joseph,<sup>3</sup> the teacher who had the greatest influence on Ferdinand was Antoine Verchère, who in turn had been taught by, and continued to dissipate the ideas of, Adolphe Pictet, but also Rodolphe Töpffer. It is also to be noted that the Saussure-Töpffer link goes in both directions, in that one of the key influences on Töpffer's best known work (at least at the time), his Voyages en zigzag,<sup>4</sup> was Horace-Bénédicte de Saussure (1740-1799), Ferdinand's great grandfather, the celebrated Alpinist. Indeed Sainte-Beuve was to note in his "Notice sur Töpffer" for the Nouveaux voyages en zigzag that,

These mountainous regions were to some extent discovered and conquered by Saussure, the illustrious physicist [...]

Saussure was thus discovering the Alpes and calmly spreading the word as to their innate poetry around the same time that Bernadin de Saint-Pierre was waxing lyrical about the newly discovered treasures of the tropical peaks of Mauritius, and just before Chateaubriand would have discovered the American savanna.<sup>5</sup>

With respect to Nicolas-Théodore de Saussure (1767-1845), Ferdinand's grandfather, the chemist and entomologist, according to David Kunzle the effects in Töpffer's M. Pencil of an "underground wind" (vent souterrain) were a direct reference to Nicolas-Théodore's experiments on carbonic gases, for which he was known.<sup>6</sup> In addition it is not hard to imagine Töpffer's M. Cryptogame—whose name means hidden union, but is also a sort of fungus—as a reference to the entomologist (the eponymous hero is frequently chasing butterflies), one picked up later by Saussure's Polytychus via the name's proximity to Polyptychus, a type of African moth.

#### The Geneva manuscripts: Presentation

Moving from the general context to the specific object, from langage to parole, let us consider the details of BGE arch. Saussure 371/11 and BGE ms. fr. 3974a. The two date from 1874 and 1875 respectively, with the latter, Les aventures de Polytychus, described in a hand-written note added to the library's catalogues:

- Ms. fr. 3974a Books of notes and drawings probably written by F. de S. in 1875 (at the age of 17). 1 book written recto verso and containing:
- "The Adventures of Polytychus" (in the style of Töpffer) 26 folios
  - collections of Homeric epithets 17 ff.<sup>7</sup>

The note is cited by Sémir Badir in his presentation and edition of the manuscript,<sup>8</sup> however Badir does not analyze the work in his introduction of less than

two pages. The strip in question tells the story of Polytychus of Athens and his servant Hypurge, both characters, so it would seem, of Saussure's creation. The Greek subject matter reflects the young Ferdinand's interests—two years previously in 1873 he had translated 40 pages-worth of the fourteenth book of the Odyssey<sup>9</sup>—but we can also see a reminder of M. Cryptogame's Greek “hidden union” name.

The main character of Töpffer's L'héritage, one of the Nouvelles genevoises and also published within La bibliothèque de mon oncle,<sup>10</sup> is plagued with boredom, as emphasized by the story's opening:

Boredom is my curse, dear reader. I live boredom everywhere, be it at home or outside; whilst eating, as soon as I am no longer hungry; at the ball; as soon as I leave the ballroom. There is nothing that takes hold of my spirit, of my heart, of my fancies, and nothing seems as long as each day that passes.<sup>11</sup>

This ennui prefigures that of Polytychus, who likewise first appears with the words “In Athens I was enormously bored” (À Athènes je m'ennuyais énormément) (Fig. 1).

The 1874 manuscript is unpublished. It is a 27-page cahier, of which 18 give the story of M. Sibidi: how he discovers a new star, his travels in a hot air balloon to the land of cannibals, and to a sea monster's innards, his battles, the lectures he gives, and more battles, dropping off at the end thus leading to suppose that the story is unfinished.

Here, as for Polytychus, the format is that of Töpffer's picture stories, and often the content is so similar that the influence, be it direct or subconscious, is undeniable.<sup>12</sup> In M. Pencil (first published in 1840), the telescope scene mirrors that of the opening of M. Sibidi (Figs. 2 and 3), but the theme also appears in Dr. Festus

(first published 1846). The depiction of air travel in M. Sibidi also echoes scenes in M. Pencil; the abrupt landing into the sea that Sibidi endures reminds us of a similar episode in Dr. Festus; and the ensuing battle with a sea monster could well be directly inspired by that in Cryptogame (1845). M. Sibidi's lecture scene has a similar layout, podium, and character stance as that of Dr. Festus. Also like Dr. Festus, M. Sibidi has a king's giant telescope episode. Finally M. Sibidi's battle scenes, with their scattered throngs, remind us again of those of Dr. Festus, as well as of Vieux Bois (first published 1837). Overall it would be hard to imagine that the young Ferdinand de Saussure did not have copies of Töpffer's strips available to him when composing his own pictorial adventures.

#### The Geneva manuscripts: Significance

Both manuscripts are interesting and amusing per se, as well as pointing to the influence of Töpffer on Saussure exactly at the time when, according to John Joseph,<sup>13</sup> the young Ferdinand was beginning to take an interest in linguistics as a result of the teachings of Adolphe Pictet. But if these manuscripts are the signifiant, what is the signifié: what do they mean, and what do they show us? Here Ferdinand's father could help us, via a remark in an unpublished diary entry of 1872, cited by Sémir Badir:

Ferdinand has always been a little prodigy. [...] At the age of 4 his drawings were extremely fine. He has that inborn talent for putting his thoughts into drawings. At the age of ten he would create caricature stories in the style of Töpffer, but in that regard he has not lived up to his promise. He

finds it hard to copy directly. When he was little he would constantly come into my office to examine the engraving of the Swiss landing at Coligny, then he would rush off into the lounge and reproduce what he had seen from memory. But if you gave him a model to copy, he just couldn't do it.<sup>14</sup>

As Badir goes on to point out, Saussure's works are marked not only by graphic expressions of his thoughts directly in the comic strip manuscripts, but also by little drawings to be found throughout his archives, or through the figures that underline his best known writings, such as the tree and horse/arbor et equos diagram in the opening section of the Cours de linguistique générale. It is a mind-set that is also discernible in Saussure's widespread use of metaphorical images, whether it be the planets in the solar system, the painting of the Alps, or his famous game of chess. In this latter example Saussure likens words to chess pieces, whereby a knight, for example, can be switched for another symbol without effect, but if the rules for the knight's movement are changed then the system is altered. A quick aside here can serve as a reminder that chess in particular has long been a favored motif in text/image forms; one example is Gilles Corrozet's chess emblem from 1540, here to say that death is a great leveler, with kings and pawns ending up in the same bag at the end of the game.<sup>15</sup>

Above all, once we know that the mind-set of the young Ferdinand was influenced by the type of creative expression that today we label as bande dessinée, we can understand much better certain key elements of his thought and theory. In order to explore such connections let us return to one of Töpffer's most often quoted theory statements on his understanding of the form that was to become known as BD.

In the “Annonce de l’histoire de M. Jabot” that appeared in Töpffer’s Mélanges as a form of post-preface,<sup>16</sup> the author describes Jabot as follows:

This little book is of a mixed nature. It is composed of a series of autographed line drawings [dessins autographiés au trait]. Each of the drawings is accompanied by one or two lines of text. Without the text the meaning of the drawings would be obscure. Without the drawings the text would be meaningless.<sup>17</sup>

The key point is that Jabot, and indeed comics in general, are mixed, a hybrid form that is marked and defined by duality.

The essence of Saussure’s work is likewise marked by duality and opposition: diachronic/synchronic; langue/parole; signifiant/signifié; arbitraire/motivé; immutabilité/mutabilité. But as with comics, each opposition, each duality, requires a form of coming-together, an amalgamation, in order to create the final effect. It is through diachronic evolution that the synchronic exists. It is language that is “purely social and independent of the individual and exclusively psychological,” however langue, the language spoken, must nonetheless go hand-in-hand with parole, or speech, in order to make langage (language), and, furthermore, it is the link that brings together the signifiant, or signifier, and the signifié, or signified, the creates the overall signe (sign). (In an additional aside, the above quotation on language as psychological, from the McGraw-Hill translated edition of the Course in General Linguistics,<sup>18</sup> is of added interest in that it drew the particular attention of psychoanalyst R. D. Laing, who commented in a handwritten note, “how

fundamental that proposition is! That which is purely social, independent of the individual, is psychological!”)

It is by allowing us to grasp the mind-set of the young Ferdinand through these manuscripts that we can understand a mind-set that will be marked by text/image duality and by metaphorical imagery, methods of expression that are in fact homologous to, and influenced profoundly, the linguistic models that Saussure was to develop. In addition such image-based expression was to provide a vehicle for Saussure to explore concepts such as the nature of knowledge, the attraction of the exotic, and the notion of value. Thus it is through these manuscripts that we start to get a feel for the breadth of Saussure’s genius.

Saussure and how to read comics

A shift of viewpoint will allow us to look at the text/image duality in the opposite but complementary sense: how can Saussure help us to understand comics? First of all in their historical context—thus from a diachronic viewpoint—our manuscripts can bring something to the Töpffer debate and that of the birth of comics. From about 1996, at the very time when M. Sibidi was discovered, Töpffer was being proclaimed as inventor of the comic strip,<sup>19</sup> backed up by research in Geneva and elsewhere. However the retrospective nature of that label is problematic as Töpffer himself referred to his picture stories as no more than a pastime to amuse his pupils, a statement underlined by Pierre-Maxime Relave in one of the first monographs dedicated to Töpffer:

These series of engravings are nonetheless relatively secondary amongst the work of Töpffer; he himself called them “follies, mixed with a pinch of seriousness,” and we should not look for anything more than that in them.<sup>20</sup>

In his lifetime Töpffer was above all known for his Voyages en zigzag. In what seems to be the earliest article on Töpffer in English, “Rodolphe Töpffer: Draftsman, Humorist and Schoolmaster” in The Monthly Review of 1901 (when Ferdinand was at the University of Geneva just a few years prior to his course on General Linguistics) the author, J. A. Fuller Maitland, feels the need to describe the “tales in which the vehicle of caricature was used” in opposition to what he calls his “literary work.” Nonetheless Fuller Maitland underlines the popular success of these “caricature-stories” (again, Fuller Maitland’s term):

In the sentimental “thirties” there cannot have been many people, among the admirers of a certain Genevan school-master, who foresaw that his fame would be carried down, not by the handful of short stories of a sentimentality quite in keeping with the taste of the time, but by half a dozen oblong volumes of tales in which the vehicle of caricature was used with all the felicity of a genuine impromptu. M. Vieuxbois, M. Crépin, and the rest, seem to have been created before the eyes of their author’s pupils to beguile the long winter evenings, and their adventures to have been literally invented on the spur of the moment. [...]

If M. Jabot, “qui se remet en position” [who takes up the position once again], has given one phrase to the French language, M. Vieuxbois, “qui

change de linge” [changes underwear] continually, has provided another allusion which even now is not uncommonly met with.<sup>21</sup>

Of particular interest is the fact that our Saussure manuscripts suggest that over a quarter of a century before Fuller Maitland was writing on Töpffer, the caricature tales in question were already common currency not only for the readers of the popular illustrated journals, but also in the Genevan teaching circles of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectual elite. Our manuscripts can perhaps allow us therefore to return to the question of the reception and influence of Töpffer and of the status of the “bande dessinée” in the nineteenth century.

As far as the comic strips of today are concerned, we might consider this popular text/image form as a bridge between written and spoken cultures, and accordingly the most direct access to one of Saussure’s preoccupations: how language can evolve via phonetic analogy as a result of everyday usage. It is a concept that can be hard to document given that everyday phonetic usage, historically at least, tends to be spoken and unrecorded. Functioning however as a mimetic popular cultural form, bande dessinée can break with such traditions. Remaining in Geneva with Swiss artist Zep, we can see this in the eponymous star of the Titeuf series, whose pronouncements such as “c’est pô juste” (it ain’t right), “c moi ki l’ai fait” (it was me what dunnit), or “t’es qu’un pourri du slip” (you’re just pants) not only reflect playground French as it is spoken, but have gone on to mold developing usage.

A further example for reflection might be the overlap between BD and Roland Barthes’s system of connotations, one that is based upon Saussurean linguistics but then applied to modern social narratives. Barthes takes the signe formed by signifiant and signifié from the Saussurean linguistic level of expression, and uses this as the

signifiant in the evolved social schema of mythologies, whereby a connotative signifié then produces the overall signe on this level of mythe. So for example the word “car”—Saussurean signifiant—would indicate a four-wheeled motor vehicle—Saussurean signifié—with the two elements together forming the signe. But for Barthes this is then the signifiant whose connotative value in the case of the Citroën DS is that of power, aesthetic beauty, and sexual prowess, the image—mental or literal, imagined, photographed or drawn—of which attributes provides the signifié and creates the overall signe.

Barthes was fascinated by press cartoons, and the take on popular culture that he was to provide in Mythologies—although perhaps surprisingly no bandes dessinées were to figure among the final subjects—was later to be reflected in an icon of such popular culture, the Astérix series. In Astérix chez les Normans, Goudurix, the young tearaway visiting family in the Gauls’ village, drives a curvy souped-up chariot whose attributes remind us of Barthes’s DS. Astérix gladiateur mocks the omnipresence of advertising with a break in the gladiatorial show to parade walk-on amphorae telling us “To forget the worries of life in Antiquity... always drink... wine of authenticity” (Pour oublier les soucis de la vie antique... buvez toujours... du vin authentique). Prior to the show, a salesman for “Super-Persique” bawls “wash your togas with Super-Persique! Super-Persique washes purpler than purple” (laver vos toges avec Super-Persique! Super-Persique lave encore plus pourpre), a direct reference to the analysis of connotative popular language in Barthes’s “Soap-powders and Detergents” (Saponides et détergents).<sup>22</sup>

Above all, the process of reading that is inherent to comics is by its very nature Saussurean. To understand Saussure—specifically to understand that Saussure in his formative years was influenced by the cultural assimilations we now associate with

bande dessinée—is also to understand comics themselves. At the base of the Cours de linguistique générale, from the third chapter on General Principles, Saussure lays out the opposition between diachronic and synchronic studies, but also the entwining of the two, represented in his famous schema of two intersecting lines, the horizontal “axis of simultaneities” (axe des simultanités) from A to B, and the vertical “axis of successions” (axe des successivités) from C to D. The latter diachronic approach tells us the story of language in terms of how Latin became French in its evolution from C to D, with movement being indicated in the diagram by arrowheads, whereas the synchronic approach, the flat line covering A to B, gives a single viewpoint. Saussure explains as follows:

Certainly all sciences would profit by indicating more precisely the coordinates along which their subject matter is aligned. Everywhere distinctions should be made, according to the following illustration, between (1) the axis of simultaneities (AB), which stands for the relations of coexisting things and from which the intervention of time is excluded; and (2) the axis of successions (CD), on which only one thing can be considered at a time but upon which are located all the things on the first axis together with their changes. [...]

The first thing that strikes us when we study the facts of language is that their succession in time does not exist insofar as the speaker is concerned. He is confronted with a state. That is why the linguist who wishes to understand a state must discard all knowledge of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony. He can enter the mind of speakers only by completely suppressing

the past. The intervention of history can only falsify his judgment. It would be absurd to attempt to sketch a panorama of the Alps by viewing them simultaneously from several peaks of the Jura; a panorama must be made from a single vantage point. The same applies to language; the linguist can neither describe it nor draw up standards of usage except by concentrating on one state. When he follows the evolution of the language, he resembles the moving observer who goes from one peak of the Jura to another in order to record the shifts in perspective.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the reading of a comic strip is diachronic, as one flips through an album from opening page to final banquet (in the case of Astérix), with evolution from page to page, but also from frame to frame. But comics are also synchronic, in that key scenes can be visibly static providing pleasure in the contemplation of a single image, as in the anachronistic view of Geneva in Astérix chez les Helvètes (Fig. 4).<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, such an image is dependent on the narrative and its evolution—here the arrival of the Gauls after their journey—while being independent of it.

The overlap between a diachronic and a synchronic reading of comics and their cultural context is at the heart of the 2016 Comic Invention exhibition at the Hunterian Art Gallery in Glasgow (Fig. 5).<sup>25</sup> In it we present the misleading question of the world's first comic, showcasing the Glasgow Looking Glass of 1825 as victorious, juxtaposed with Töpffer's Mr. Jabot (1835) and its original manuscript (1833). But a timeline allows us to present graphic narrative chronologically from the Ancient Egyptians onwards, while contrasting themes in each object with original artwork by Frank Quitely (b. 1968), the Glasgow-based panjandrum of DC Comics,

responsible for the current artwork, inter alia, of X-Men, Batman and Superman. The synchronic viewpoint is that the text/image mind-set of comics is all around us, as we display works by Picasso and Rembrandt next to, and on an equal footing with, others by Warhol and Lichtenstein, alongside Disney and further pieces by Frank Quitely.

Comic Invention provides a provocative out-of-the-box view on the culture of comics, spanning off from the bandes dessinées of Töpffer, and thriving on the diachronic/synchronic overlap that was the vision of the young Ferdinand de Saussure. And as we have seen, Saussure imitated his fellow Genevan in creating his own strips, which until now have gone almost entirely unnoticed.

What is the potential legacy of these strips? First of all, their discovery makes explicit the connection between Ferdinand de Saussure and the world of bande dessinée. Once the link is made, Saussurean linguistics take on new light both in terms of the text/image influences that led to their exposition, and the range of their contemporary impact.

Initially, the playful Töpfferian nature of the young Ferdinand's strips tell us that the influence of the nascent BD form was, whatever Töpffer himself might have imagined, well beyond anti-intellectual fantasy narratives for the amusement of children or possibly the vulgar masses. In Geneva at least, what we now see as the culture of the comic infiltrated the education and resulting mind-set of the elite from as far back as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

In turn, and perhaps most significantly, we might consider how modern critical theory can play on the inherent oppositions and interplays between the static and the linear, between what we see and how we receive what we see. Saussure was writing at the age of the rise of the image in a textual context. He plays on oppositions, often on what is implied rather than what is stated directly, on visual evocations that interact

with word-based statements. His early comic strips bear the seeds of such thought (albeit perhaps unconsciously), and as such they now allow the reader-viewer of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be more aware of the visual connections that are intrinsic to the foundations of some of our current critical givens.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> John E. Joseph, Saussure (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> David Kunzle, Father of the Comic Strip: Rodolphe Töpffer (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph, Saussure, 143-45.

<sup>4</sup> Rodolphe Töpffer, Voyages en zigzag (Paris: Garnier, 1844) and Nouveaux voyages en zigzag (Paris: Garnier, 1854). The editions consulted are those of 1860 (Voyages en zigzag; Glasgow University Library Ba 4-a. 4) and 1858 (Nouveaux voyages en zigzag; Glasgow University Library Ba 4-a. 5).

<sup>5</sup> Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, “Notice sur Töpffer,” in Töpffer, Nouveaux voyages en zigzag (Paris: Garnier, 1858), i-xvii (vi). The notice was first published in 1853. The translation is my own, with much appreciated input (here and elsewhere) from Michael Syrotinski.

<sup>6</sup> Kunzle, Father of the Comic Strip, 44.

<sup>7</sup> My translation.

<sup>8</sup> Sémir Badir, “Les aventures de Polytychus: Présentation et édition par Sémir Badir,” in Ferdinand de Saussure: Cahier de l’Herne, ed. Simon Bouquet (Paris: L’Herne, 2003), 473-500 (473).

<sup>9</sup> Joseph, Saussure, 137.

<sup>10</sup> L’héritage dates from 1834. The copy consulted is Töpffer, La bibliothèque de mon oncle (Paris: Nilsson, [1920]).

<sup>11</sup> My translation.

<sup>12</sup> On the cultural context of Töpffer with specific reference to his picture stories, see David Kunzle, The Early Comic Strip: The Nineteenth Century: History of the Comic

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Strip Volume 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). Most accessible of the French editions of the histoires en images is the 1996 three-volume collection produced by Thierry Groensteen for Seuil of Paris: Monsieur Jabot: Monsieur Vieux Bois: Deux histoires d'amour (vol. 1); Monsieur Crépin: Monsieur Pencil: Deux égarements de la science (vol. 2); Le Docteur Festus: Histoire de monsieur Cryptogame: Deux odysées (vol. 3). An annotated English translation of the histoires en images has been produced and edited by David Kunzle: Rodolphe Töpffer: The Complete Comic Strips (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007). This volume is the companion to Kunzle's Father of the Comic Strip: Rodolphe Töpffer, which includes a full secondary bibliography. The editions used for this study are those of Groensteen for Seuil, while also consulting the originals (Kunzle Collection copies) of Histoire de Mr. Jabot (Geneva: Freydidg, [1835]) and Les amours de Mr. Vieux Bois (Geneva: Freydidg, 1837).

<sup>13</sup> Joseph, Saussure, 147-58.

<sup>14</sup> Unpublished diary entry by Henri de Saussure, 27 January 1872. Quoted by Badir, "Les aventures de Polytychus," 404. The translation is my own.

<sup>15</sup> Gilles Corrozet, Hecatomgraphie (Paris: Denis Janot, 1540). The chess emblem is on folios D4v-D5r.

<sup>16</sup> The edition consulted is Töpffer, "Annonce de l'histoire de M. Jabot," in Mélanges (Paris: Joël Cherbuliez, 1852), 161-73 (167). The "Annonce" was first published in 1837.

<sup>17</sup> The translation is my own. "Autographiés" refers to the system of reproduction, one similar to lithography.

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<sup>18</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye and Albert Riedlinger, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 18. The copy consulted is that previously belonging to and annotated by R. D. Laing (Glasgow University Library Laing 1519).

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Groensteen and Benoît Peeters, Töpffer: L'invention de la bande dessinée (Paris: Hermann, 1994). See also Les origines de la bande dessinée, Collectionneur de bandes dessinées, ed. Groensteen, hors série 79 (Spring 1996). I discuss the 1996 debate, with specific reference to Yves Fremion's (playfully) anti-American and pro-Töpffer opening speech that is reproduced in Les origines de la bande dessinée, in my Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context (Oxford: Berghahn, 2010 and 2013), and in my "État présent: Bande dessinée Studies," French Studies 68/1 (2014): 78-87. See also Laurence Grove and Peter Black, Comic Invention (Glasgow: BHP Comics, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Abbé Pierre-Maxime Relave, Rodolphe Töpffer (Lyon: Librairie générale catholique et classique, 1899), 35. The translation is my own.

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Fuller Maitland, "Rodolphe Töpffer: Draftsman, Humorist and Schoolmaster," The Monthly Review (1901-1902): 112-22 (112 and 117). The translations (my own) are additional.

<sup>22</sup> René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, Astérix chez les Normans (Paris: Dargaud, 1966) and Astérix gladiateur (Paris: Dargaud, 1964); Roland Barthes, Mythologies (Paris: Pierres Vives, 1957). For further exploration of this topic see Laurence Grove, "Bande dessinée: The Missing Mythologie," Mythologies at 50: Barthes and Popular Culture, ed. Douglas Smith, Nottingham French Studies Special Number 47/2 (2008): 29-40.

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<sup>23</sup> Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, 79-80 and 81-82. The edition consulted for the original French version is Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger (Paris: Payot, 1968 [1916]). These passages appear on pages 115 and 117.

<sup>24</sup> Goscinny and Uderzo, Astérix chez les Helvètes (Paris: Dargaud, 1970). The anachronistic image of Geneva is on page 24.

<sup>25</sup> Comic Invention, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow, 18 March to 17 July 2016. The accompanying box set is a collection of five publications with no set reading order, thereby avoiding the diachronic beginning and end of a conventional book: Laurence Grove and Peter Black, Comic Invention.