

“Bound Together”: A Graphic Novel Showcasing Psychological Manipulation within an Interpersonal Relationship

Nicholet Angel L. Melitante

Co-Author

Mr. Jaime Jesus Pacena II

Abstract

Psychological manipulation within any relationship that has a strong bond between two or more people can be quite tricky to spot. It is common to gain trust once a bond is formed between the two parties; however, such a valuable word can offer a sense of security or expose one to potential exploitation. Especially with the difficulty of distinguishing between trustworthy people and untrustworthy ones. In this matter, I aim to spread awareness about the danger of putting excessive blind trust in others by creating a graphic novel as a multimedia output. Drawing inspiration from real-world instances and psychological studies, my graphic novel depicts the subtle yet profound ways manipulation can manifest within relationships. The Psychological Types Theory will enable me to understand different temperaments and personality traits and help me create a story that will revolve around two distinguishably different characters. I will not further explore human personality and psychological manipulation in depth; I will mostly focus on my creative process. This discussion will center on the techniques, color schemes, and storyline choices influenced by mood, intent, and target audience. Additionally, I'll incorporate inspirational artwork to guide the completion of the project.

Keywords: psychological manipulation, digital illustration, graphic novel, psychological types theory, gaslighting, body horror

Introduction

There was a point in high school where I just drifted away from my friends and kept to myself. This was the time when my best friend and I were constantly fighting over small things. Indeed, we were still immature back then, but the on-and-off situation drained me from further socializing. It didn't help that my confidence in social interactions can be lacking as well, resulting in only having a few close acquaintances. Since I have always been the quiet, meek friend who's always hiding in the shadow of her friends, the hesitation to communicate has stuck with me for a long time, eventually hindering my ability to perceive people. Moreover, people often felt too bored to properly interact with me, and at that point, I asked myself if it was because of how different my personality was compared to others. People, and even some old friends, would often take advantage of my humility to achieve their desires. Each time, I would unknowingly comply with their requests without knowing the ulterior motives behind them. Nonetheless, it was simply

because I trusted them way too much and genuinely thought there was a connection between us. It was a low point of my life, as I genuinely believe that I cannot form a relationship with anyone outside my friends, and that alone terrified me for my future.

It was when I moved up to senior high school that I snapped and came to the realization about the serious problem. The environment and the people within were simply toxic and problematic, which, sadly, I was too blind and late to see. There are some cases when people would vent to me back then, and surprisingly, the conversations usually revolve around toxicity and uncertainties between their friends and significant others that I was sure had a strong connection.

Looking back on it, it made me realize an observational conclusion that people back then weren't genuine about knowing each other, myself included, and were just resorting to doing what gave them the most benefit. This realization was what made me develop an interest in observing people. I try to grasp different aspects of their personalities and behavioral tendencies by digesting stories from people and observing how they interact with others. This point in my life has been truly an eye-opener regarding how I perceive humans as human beings. Humans are, no doubt, complex beings.

This experience inspired me to create a graphic novel that delves into the complexities of human personality and behavior while providing caution against putting excessive blind trust in others. The graphic novel will have a genre of psychological horror.

The primary aim of this creative project is to motivate individuals to look deeper into their relationships and exercise good judgment, particularly for those who trust so easily, which often gets them into trouble. Furthermore, this creative project will serve as a powerful medium for a more profound understanding of human complexity and encourage the act of attentiveness.

As I stated before, humans are no doubt complex beings. There is a lot to learn—whether it is on a physical, emotional, cognitive, social, or spiritual aspect. In a world where reviews of existing literature on human personalities continue to evolve, this thesis project aims to emphasize the significance of expanding our understanding of human complexities through contemporary mediums. This medium, in the form of a graphic novel, serves as a means for contributing to this ongoing discussion. This creative project offers a unique and compelling way to explore and convey the multifaceted nature of human existence, reaching a broader audience and encouraging critical thinking on this subject.

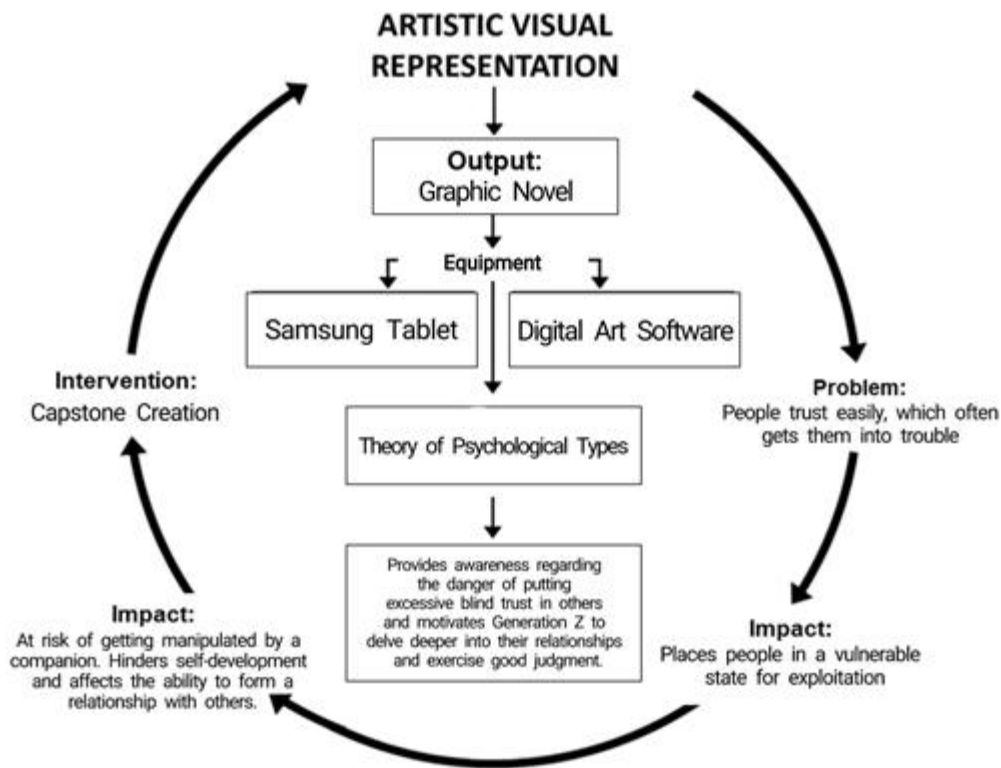


Figure 1 Framework Visual Representation of Overall Concept and Methods of Thesis Project: A Graphic Novel Showcasing Psychological Manipulation within an Interpersonal Relationship

The creative framework that I carefully considered showcases the core components of concepts and methods about the project topic itself. This section will provide a detailed visual summary of my project thesis output, target audience, theory, problem, impacts, purpose, and relevance. The creative framework and the following research that is part of the study are deliberately discussed in the following pages.

I initiated the methodological phase of my study by first evaluating my narrowed-down topic. This focus emerged from reflecting on my experiences in junior high school, which sparked my interest in studying human personalities and exploring the manifestations of psychological manipulation in interpersonal connections. In a way, this topic itself has made a huge impact on my life, as this is the point in my life where I have truly changed into someone who can finally see things as they seem.

After finding the inspiration behind my thesis project, I initiated the development by linking my experiences to the gathered sources regarding the said issue. Given that the issue revolves around individuals tending to trust others they claim to “know” or are even barely acquainted with—without exercising due vigilance and discernment—the casual use of the term 'trust' without a concurrent emphasis on vigilance makes them vulnerable to exploitation, making them an easy target for the manipulators. With that in mind, failing

to address this matter with deliberate consideration will significantly affect an individual's ability to establish relationships with others, thereby hindering their personal growth.

In consideration of these factors, I have developed an intervention in the form of a graphic novel as my multimedia output aimed at acknowledging the issue. The target audience for my thesis output is Generation Z, as this approach seeks to offer young individuals a clearer perspective on the prevalent problem. Especially since, according to Borruso (2022), the indecisiveness of Generation Z and the way they interact with the world differently than every other generation make them vulnerable to easy influence.

I opted for a graphic novel as my intervention because stories have the potential to become timeless masterpieces, offering individuals the opportunity to revisit them repeatedly while still deriving insightful experiences. The thesis output will consist of 5 chapters of narrative illustrations primarily rendered in black-and-white with a few selected red-colored elements. By utilizing textures, colors, and ink strokes to evoke mood and movement and effectively convey intentions, emotions, and feelings, I can employ the Theory of Psychological Types to craft distinct personalities and behaviors for the characters.

Since I would like to create a story where understanding different personalities and their accompanying behavioral tendencies becomes fundamental, I will utilize the Theory of Psychological Types as the foundation, as it categorizes individuals into different personality types based on their preferences in how they perceive the world and make decisions. In addition, the exploration of human personalities would help individuals improve their awareness and refine their discernment.

According to Makhaev et al. (2022), the psychological types theory is one of Carl Jung's most practical and, quite frankly, one that has been quite influential. When we observe people in our daily lives, one of the initial and striking impressions is the apparent dissimilarity between them. People exhibit a spectrum of behaviors, ranging from high sociability to reserved introversion. This observable variance prompts us to employ descriptors such as "talkative" and "quiet" when characterizing those around us, reflecting our intuitive attempts to categorize and make sense of their personalities.

In the context of psychological manipulation within an interpersonal relationship, the recognition of distinct personality types becomes not only relevant but essential. Moreover, this theory allows for exploring characters, unraveling the diverse ways they navigate manipulation. It will help me create a story that will revolve around two distinguishably different characters. This approach also sheds light on the dynamics at play in any relationship, offering readers a mirror to reflect upon their interactions and the world around them. In essence, my thesis output becomes a factor in assessing human connection, revealing the vulnerabilities and strengths of different personality types.

Additionally, the personality typological concept was further expounded by American researchers Katharine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers in 1923, when the two came to the observational conclusion that the type system has one more pair of factors that is based on a person's preference for either a more structured lifestyle, called 'judging', or a more flexible or adaptable lifestyle, called 'perceiving'. Thus, Jung's

personality typology evolved under Briggs' version, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

Furthermore, Jung's theories initially had more influence on art, literature, and anthropology than on psychiatry and psychology. With this in mind, I aspire to integrate both art and psychology by adapting Jung's ideology and writing a graphic novel about relevant issues that focuses on the study of human complexity.

Data Gathering Method

In this research, the desk research method will be used as the data gathering method to further understand the concept and topic of my thesis. Desk research methodology involves collecting and analyzing information from various secondary sources, including existing studies, documents, journals, academic publications, and online or library resources. Surveys or interviews will not be conducted, as the project's development is qualitative in nature and does not hinge on specific findings and analyses.

Research materials, including studies and documents exploring Carl Jung's Theory of Psychological Types, will provide a foundational understanding for elaborating upon the concept and topic of my thesis project. Additionally, I gathered online articles and discussions, providing further insight into the development. Furthermore, I collected related works to inform the project's medium, visual elements, message, symbolism, and narrative progression.

Design Process Creative Framework

The research design of my output will be a semi-realistic style with different ink strokes, textures, and off-putting expressions to create a sense of unease. The use of different ink strokes and textures in my artwork will create a sense of depth, add interest, and evoke certain emotions. Moreover, these techniques will create a foreground, middle ground, and background, thus giving it a sense of realness. As for the color scheme approach, I will apply a black-and-white format with red accents to some selected objects and scenes. I did black-and-white toning by using a gradient map since it adds mood, atmosphere, and depth. The color red is essential to my output as it draws attention like no other color and radiates powerful energy, which I will be utilizing in my story as hints and warnings. Additionally, I will also go full-on grotesque when illustrating some particular scenes or create tension by leaving my character shadowed in intimidating places to emphasize the eeriness and bizarreness of the story. Regarding the character design of the two main characters, I specifically made their characters look and radiate the opposite energy to highlight the differences in their personalities.

The target audience of my output will be Generation Z, with an age range of 13 and above—which is suitable for men, women, and nonbinary people—as it is stated under the diagram section that the issue applies more to the younger generation.

Having them as the target audience will help the generation understand the importance of exercising good judgment, particularly for those who trust so easily, and form a new perspective about human beings themselves.

Regarding the design process, I plan on creating my artwork using my art style, which I've carefully practiced long ago. With the art style set aside, all I have to improve are the color schemes, compositions, and approaches by watching and researching art studies from other artists.

My thesis project is titled "Bound Together," which holds a dual significance, encompassing both figurative and literal interpretations. The choice of this title is rooted in my desire to leave readers with a thought-provoking experience after delving into the graphic novel. "Bound Together" serves as a subtle hint that may initially be overlooked but carries significant implications. Hints play a significant role in my graphic novel, heightening engagement and providing readers with an intriguing experience. The primary goal is to write a narrative that challenges readers to decipher subtle hints, providing a sense of complexity and depth within the graphic novel.

The graphic novel will consist of five chapters. Furthermore, I intend to make it available in physical format since according to Baron (2023), Gen Z readers vastly prefer physical print novels over online formats. The use of print versions highlights my intention to bring attention to the fact that there is a growing population of Gen Z readers that emphasizes the relief of digital eye strain through the consumption of print novels. Moreover, the tangible nature of print materials provides a break from the discomfort associated with prolonged screen time. Print novels, in contrast to the potential distractions inherent in digital devices such as phones or browsers, offer a beneficial environment for undistracted narrative immersion. In addition, an increasing number of young adults aged 16–24 are actively engaging in digital detoxes, consciously reducing their exposure to social media (Baron, 2023).

The output of my thesis project will have a black-and-white format with selected red-colored elements and scenes. The choice of color is decided based on the mood and intent of the story. The symbiotic relationship between black and white is not only a stylistic decision but a thematic one as well. In this context, black and white serve as symbolic representations of opposites, with white embodying pure light and black representing profound darkness. This format aligns essentially with the narrative, particularly in portraying the stark differences between my two main characters.

Ink strokes and Textures



Figure 2 *Various Ink Strokes*



Figure 3 *Various Textures*

As seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3, I will utilize a variety of ink strokes and a texture pack from Krita software to improve the complexity and realness of my artwork. Moreover,

the selected ink strokes not only contribute to the complexity but also provide added texture to the overall aesthetic, influencing the mood of the artwork. Furthermore, I will also incorporate a noise effect as an additional layer to the overall illustration to further enrich the texture.

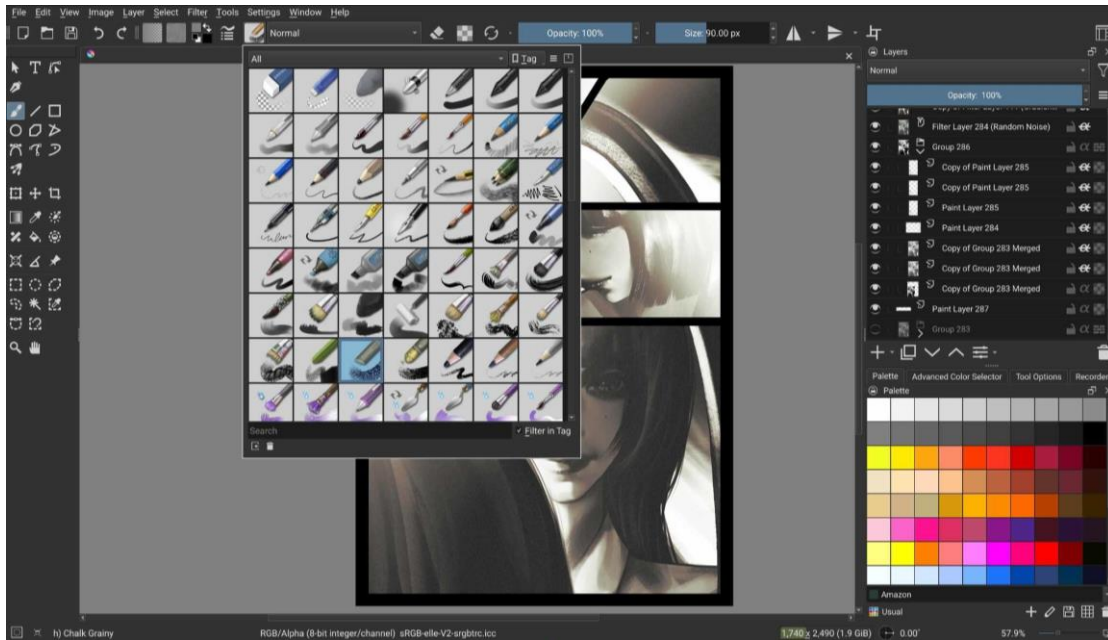


Figure 4 *Work Document from Krita*

Color Direction and Technique

The story will revolve around the friendship between two main characters. The first main character, Aisha, will be the student who befriends the new student. Her character design will have prominent light features to highlight her liveliness and friendliness, while the other character, Alice, will possess darker features to highlight the polar oppositeness of Aisha.



Figure 5 *Color Theme*

In regard to the color direction, the chosen color theme will be a red monochromatic color scheme, as shown in Figure 4. The use of red accents in selected elements and scenes in this graphic novel serves a dual purpose. Firstly, the selected red hues are chosen with a keen awareness of their emotive qualities, aligning with the mood and atmosphere of specific scenes. This use of color contributes to the overall emotional impact of the narrative. Secondly, these red elements function more than for mere aesthetic purposes. They are deliberate and calculated choices intended to serve as subtle hints and warnings, drawing the reader's attention to crucial moments or elements

within the story. Moreover, the coloring technique is mostly inspired by a short film titled *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* by Yea An (2023).



Figure 6 *Coloring Techniques Used in Other Mediums Note. Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (2023) by Yea An*

Logline

A graphic novel depicts the haunting and unfortunate fate of a student after forming a friendship with a new student, as things are not always as they seem.

Synopsis

The project will be mainly illustrated in black-and-white, with red accents added to specific scenes and parts. There will be five chapters in the graphic novel. The story *Bound Together* will unfold when a senior high school student named Aisha Magdrigal decides to become friends with an enigmatic new student named Alice Evangelista. The graphic novel will emphasize the importance of getting to know your companion thoroughly before putting yourself in a vulnerable state.

In the story, Alice moves to a new school, where she meets and befriends Aisha. The two are like the opposite points of a spectrum: Alice, who is frequently seen keeping to herself, and Aisha, who is the perfect representation of a social butterfly. Nevertheless, the two got along pretty well, fitting each other like a puzzle. However, things will take a disturbing turn when something strange happens to Alice's behavior, and the following events will soon lead to Aisha's demise.



Figure 7 *Alice Evangelista and Aisha Magdrigal Note. Bound Together*

Pre-production Stage

The pre-production stage of the project will be solely focused on building up the storyline, character studies, environment studies, scene studies, mood boards, references, and storyboard. These requirements will be discussed with my thesis adviser for revisions. Moreover, a full overview of the timelines and the budget breakdown will help oversee and better understand whether the resources are enough to complete the said output based on estimated costs and the budget provided. And since the project output provides a printed format of the graphic novel, the search for printing and bookbinding shops was also included to gather as many options as possible to secure the publication of the graphic novel.

Assets

The planning phase in the development of a graphic novel is a crucial and foundational stage that holds importance in the overall creative process. This initial step is essential, as it sets the trajectory for the entire project, shapes the narrative, and provides a thorough guide for the creators.

As the first step, the primary objective of the planning stage is to draft the storyline that will unfold within the graphic novel. This process involves careful consideration of plot elements, character development, thematic elements, and the overall arc of the narrative.

Storyline for Bound Together

Looking out her window, Alice Evangelista notices posters that are haphazardly taped to the wall across her dorm while she is adjusting her school uniform in front of a mirror. There have been posters appearing all over the city about a missing female SHS student. "Girls my age should be careful next time," Alice murmurs.

Three months later, Alice is introducing herself to a class at her new school. Her classmate, Aisha Magdrigal, observes her with her eyes wide open and her head cocked. Though she couldn't identify it, she was certain that her new classmate seemed familiar. During break, Alice notices Aisha approaching her while she is eating lunch alone in her respective seat beside a window. Her classmate introduces herself and offers to show her around the school, to which Alice weakly nods.

Soon after, the two began growing closer through sleepovers. For their first night, Alice invited Aisha to her dorm. Aisha notices the room's lack of decorations and comments on it, but Alice weakly protests by saying that she just moved in and doesn't have time to decorate her space. The two set their bags down and got their notebooks out to start working on their homework. Somewhere in a conversation, Alice mentions that she recently relocated from another city but declines to answer Aisha's question regarding her reasoning. The second sleepover happens at Aisha's dorm this time. When Alice looks around the room, she notices the vibrant wallpaper, the soft toys haphazardly arranged in a pile at the corner of the bed, and a number of posters on the wall next to a body-sized mirror.

Aisha saw a gradual change in her friend's behavior over time. Observing how she changed from being a shy mouse to having characteristics that resembled her. She frequently observes her using stuff similar to hers, furnishing her room similarly to hers, and even beginning to interact with people. It didn't bother Aisha: in fact, she adored it. She is thrilled to see how her new friend is beginning to come out of her shell. Alice invites Aisha to spend the night once more in her dorm. This time, posters and soft toys have been used to nicely decorate the room. When midnight arrives, Alice hovers over Aisha's sleeping form and begins to murmur incoherent words. Aisha awakens to the sounds; she is startled by her friend. Alice seized her and mashed her face against hers before Aisha had a chance to speak. The two faces merge into one as her flesh quickly dissolves. It didn't take long for Alice's body to completely fuse with Aisha's, uniting the two into one.

The following day, Alice tells her teacher that her friend will be spending a few days somewhere else. After school, Alice strolls down an alley and begins to transform into a different person. Turning her attention to a cracked mirror that had been carelessly flung to the ground, she discovers that her identity has changed into Aisha's. She then sets off in search of a new city and perhaps a new girl to prey on.

Following the completion of the initial draft of the story, the next step is to finalize it to proceed with script writing. The finalized story draft will function as the blueprint for the script, as it primarily encompasses the development of visual descriptions, dialogues, time and location, and props.

Storyboard Format Script

BOUND TOGETHER

MATERIAL: Graphic Novel

AUTHOR: Nicholet Angel L. Melitante

ILLUSTRATOR: Nicholet Angel L. Melitante

-STORYBOARD FORMAT SCRIPT-

SEQ/SCN	VISUAL DESCRIPTION	DIALOGUE	TIME/LOCATION	PROPS
SEQ.01 = FIRST APPEARANCE (CHAPTER 1)				
SEQ.01 /SCN 01	Panel showing a curtain blowing in the wind		EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.01 /SCN 02	Close-up side view panel of Alice's face with the curtain in the background		EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.01 /SCN 03	Back shot panel of Alice looking at the mirror straightening her uniform. The curtain blows on her left side		EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	Body Mirror
SEQ.01 /SCN 04	Close-up panel of Alice's eye turning to her left to look outside the window		EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.01 /SCN 05	Bird's eye view panel of Alice looking outside the window on her left		EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.01 /SCN 06	Panel showing missing posters taped on the wall across her		EARLY MORNING/ STREET	

SEQ.01 /SCN 07	Close-up panel of Alice's face still looking outside, deep in thought	"Hmm", <i>(Alice)</i>	EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.01 /SCN 08	Panel showing Alice's side profile	"Girls my age should be careful next time", <i>(Alice)</i>	EARLY MORNING/ BEDROOM	
SEQ.02 = FIRST DAY (CHAPTER 2)				
SEQ.02 /SCN 01	Panel showing a school shoe stepping inside a room		MORNING/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 02	Front view panel of the whole classroom with Alice's head peeking at the bottom	"Settle down class" "We have a new student today. Please introduce yourself to the class" <i>(Mr. Sein, their teacher)</i>	MORNING/ CLASSROOM	School Bag
SEQ.02 /SCN 03	Waist-up shot panel of Alice with a meek smile in front of the class	"Hello, I'm Alice Evangelista!" <i>(Alice)</i> "It's a pleasure to meet you all!" <i>(Alice)</i>	MORNING/ CLASSROOM	School Bag
SEQ.02 /SCN 04	Front view panel of Aisha on her desk, with her head tilted and resting on her left propped-up hand. Her face expresses curiosity. Her classmates are sitting behind her	"That's all? Alright, you can sit beside that window" <i>(Mr, Sein)</i> <i>'She caught me staring... so embarrassing...'</i> <i>(Aisha)</i>	MORNING/ CLASSROOM	School Bag, Notebooks, Pencil Case
SEQ.02 /SCN 05	Panel showing a clock striking 12 o'clock		NOON/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 06	Front view panel of someone's shoes walking forward		NOON/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02	Close-up panel of Alice's		NOON/ CLASSROOM	

/SCN 07	side profile with a sausage midway. A window in the background		CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 08	Panel showing Aisha peering down at Alice with a smile	"Hi, I'm Aisha Magdrigal!" <i>(Aisha)</i>	NOON/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 09	Back shot panel of Aisha with Alice in the background staring at her from her seat, listening	"Would you like for me to show you around the campus?" <i>(Aisha)</i> "This place is quite big you might have a hard time finding your way" <i>(Aisha)</i> "I can also accompany you on the way home if you want" <i>(Aisha)</i>	NOON/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 10	Panel showing Alice weakly nodding		NOON/ CLASSROOM	
SEQ.02 /SCN 11	Close-up bird's eye view panel of Alice's lunch container	"Great! Meet me by the gate after class. See ya!" <i>(Aisha)</i>	NOON/ CLASSROOM	Spoon and fork, lunch container
SEQ.03 = ALICE AND AISHA WALKS HOME TOGETHER AFTER CLASS				
SEQ.03 /SCN 01	Panel showing the sky with a street wire in the middle. A group of crows are resting on it	"You don't talk that much, do you?" <i>(Aisha)</i>	EVENING/ STREET	
SEQ.03 /SCN 02	Close-up panel of Alice's side profile with Aisha on her left side leaning forward to get a good view of her face	"I do most of the talking and you can be my listener," <i>(Aisha)</i> "Kinda like your personal podcast. Just kidding HAHA" <i>(Aisha)</i>	EVENING/ STREET	School Bags
SEQ.03 /SCN 03	Bird's eye view panel of Alice and Aisha walking side by side	"Anyway, Mr. Sein sure gave us a whole load of assignments today... don't you just hate it?" <i>(Aisha)</i>	EVENING/ STREET	School Bags

		“I mean, it’s your first day of school too...” <i>(Aisha)</i>		
SEQ.03 /SCN 04	Front view panel of their feet walking	“I don’t really mind...” <i>(Alice)</i>	EVENING/ STREET	
SEQ.03 /SCN 05	Back shot panel of Alice and Aisha walking	“Just don’t hesitate to ask for help! I’ll be more than happy to lend a hand!” <i>(Aisha)</i> “Thanks” <i>(Alice)</i>	EVENING/ STREET	School Bags
SEQ.04 = FIRST VISIT (CHAPTER 3)				
SEQ.04 /SCN 01	Panel showing tree leaves swaying in the wind Close-up panel of Alice’s hand opening the door to her dorm room	“I’m sorry. I know how busy you must be, and naturally, I wouldn’t want to take up too much of your time. I just can’t seem to get today’s assignment” <i>(Alice)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	
SEQ.04 /SCN 02	Panel showing a door opening with Alice’s silhouette. The whole place is dark aside from the light outside	“I already told you, I’m more than happy to lend a happy!”	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags
SEQ.04 /SCN 03	Panel showing Alice’s room	“...”	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	
SEQ.04 /SCN 04	Bird’s eye view panel of Alice and Aisha walking inside. Aisha is looking around	“This place looks kinda lonely. It looks like someone doesn’t even live here!” <i>(Aisha)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags
SEQ.04 /SCN 05	Close-up panel of Alice’s side profile with Aisha behind her		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	

SEQ.04 /SCN 06	Close-up panel of Aisha's side profile with Alice in front of her	"I did just move in here so..." <i>(Alice)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	
SEQ.04 /SCN 07	Panel of a bag being set down on the floor	"Don't worry we'll make it look alive some day." "But first, let's get this started with so we can finish early" <i>(Aisha)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags
SEQ.04 /SCN 08	Panel showing Alice taking a notebook out of her school bag		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags, Notebook
SEQ.04 /SCN 09	Bird's eye view panel of Aisha lying on her stomach with a book laid in front of her	"Thank you by the way" <i>(Alice)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags, Notebook
SEQ.04 /SCN 10	Extreme close up panel of Aisha eye looking to her right	"For what?" <i>(Aisha)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	
SEQ.04 /SCN 11	Extreme close up panel: side view of Aisha's book, calculus	"For approaching me on my first day here" <i>(Alice)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	Notebook
SEQ.04 /SCN 12	Close-up panel of Alice face while reading a book	"Don't get me wrong, I don't like meeting new people. It drains me." <i>(Alice)</i> "I always find it difficult to socialize with others" <i>(Alice)</i>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	Notebook
SEQ.04 /SCN 13	Extreme close up panel of Alice's plain bag	"Plus, this whole place is new to me. I haven't got the time to explore and get to know everything. It's so suffocating" <i>(Alice)</i>		
SEQ.04 /SCN 14	Close-up panel of Alice's side profile	"But, for some reason, you're different" "It's like I don't mind	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags, Notebooks

		<p>your presence at all. Even though you're the embodiment of the one thing I despise the most, surprisingly you're not overwhelming to me"</p> <p>"I think I might keep you" <i>(Alice)</i></p>		
SEQ.04 /SCN 15	Bird's eye view back shot panel of Alice sitting with Aisha's laid form in front of her. Alice is leaning on her bed	<p>"HAHA! Is that your way of asking me to be friends with you?" <i>(Aisha)</i></p> <p>"If so, yes, I do! I'm surprised, that's the most you've ever talked to!" <i>(Aisha)</i></p> <p>"So? Are we friends?" <i>(Aisha)</i></p> <p>"Friends... of course" <i>(Alice)</i></p>	NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	School Bags, Notebooks
SEQ.05 = FIRST SLUMBER PARTY (CHAPTER 4)				
SEQ.05 /SCN 01	<p>Panel showing it's night time</p> <p>Panel showing Aisha on bed with Alice looking at a mirror</p>	<p>"You like anime, right? There's a convention this weekend and I don't have anyone to accompany me. Will you come with?" <i>(Aisha)</i></p>	NOON/ OUTSIDE	Lunch containers, Tumblers
SEQ.05 /SCN 02	Panel of Alice face looking at her reflection with Aisha in he background	<p>"Sure. But what about your other friends?" <i>(Alice)</i></p> <p>"Sadly, they don't like that kind of stuff" <i>(Aisha)</i></p>	NOON/ OUTSIDE	Lunch containers, Tumblers
SEQ.05	Close-up view of Alice	"For someone who	NOON/	Lunch containers,

/SCN 03	<p>looking back at Aisha</p> <p>Aisha looking up at Alice</p>	<p>seems to be friends with everyone, you sure often enjoy things on your own” <i>(Alice)</i></p> <p>“Why is that?” <i>(Alice)</i></p> <p>“Just because I have many friends doesn’t mean I’m close to them. My bond with them is different from yours.” <i>(Aisha)</i></p> <p>“And it’s genuinely hard to find someone who shares common interests with you” <i>(Aisha)</i></p>	OUTSIDE	Tumblers
SEQ.05 /SCN 04a	Close-up panel of Alice in front of a mirror	<p>“So, you’re only close to people you think share a common interest with you? Not even one of them? Why do you associate with them then?”</p> <p>“You shouldn’t force yourself on people” <i>(Alice)</i></p>	NOON/ OUTSIDE	
SEQ.05 /SCN 04b	Panel of Aisha’s side profile	<p>“It’s not like I force myself on people. I don’t mind their company, it’s just that I’d rather spend a day with someone who actually knows and enjoys what I like” <i>(Aisha)</i></p>		

SEQ.05 /SCN 05	Close-up panel of Alice's eyes	“Hehe~” “Plus, we wouldn't be this close if I didn't 'force myself on you'” <i>(Aisha)</i>	NOON/ OUTSIDE	
SEQ.05 /SCN 06	Black Out		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	
SEQ.06 = AISHA'S DEMISE				
SEQ.06 /SCN 01a	Full panel of the moon hiding behind the clouds		NIGHT/ OUTSIDE	Soft toys
SEQ.06 /SCN 01b	Panel shows Aisha sleeping alone on Alice's bed. The room is dark, aside from the moonlight peeking through the window next to the bed			
SEQ.06 /SCN 02a	Close-up panel of Aisha's side profile on bed		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	Soft Toys
SEQ.06 /SCN 02b	Ant's eye view panel of Alice looming over Aisha's form			
SEQ.06 /SCN 02c	Close-up panel of Alice's side profile, eyes are dull			
SEQ.06 /SCN 03a	Bird's eye view panel of Alice jumping over Aisha's form on bed		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	Soft Toys
SEQ.06 /SCN 03b	Close-up panel of Aisha's surprised face, with Alice's hands covering her mouth, muffling her noise			
SEQ.06 /SCN 03c	Panel shows side view of Alice pressing her face against Aisha. Aisha still fighting against Alice surprisingly strong grip			
SEQ.06	Closed-up side view panel		NIGHT/	Soft Toys

/SCN 04	of Alice's body slowly absorbing Aisha's		DORM ROOM	
SEQ.06 /SCN 05a	Close-up panel of feet struggling and kicking, accidentally kicking one soft toy		NIGHT/ DORM ROOM	Soft Toys
SEQ.06 /SCN 05b	Close-up panel of the soft toy on the ground			
SEQ.07 = LAST APPEARANCE (CHAPTER 5)				
SEQ.07 /SCN 01a	Panel showing the sky with a street wire in the middle. A group of crows are resting on it		EVENING/ OUTSIDE	
SEQ.07 /SCN 01b	Panel shows a side view of Alice walking by an alley. Her silhouette can be seen in the distance			
SEQ.07 /SCN 01c	Bird's eye view panel of Alice in the alley, with her head down			
SEQ.07 /SCN 02a	Panel shows the shadow of Alice on the wall next to her, tilting her head back so far as if she's possessed		EVENING/ ALLEY	School Bag
SEQ.07 /SCN 02b	Panel shows her grasping her face			
SEQ.07 /SCN 03	Close-up panel of Alice's face slowly morphing into another person's face 59	*Groans*	EVENING/ ALLEY	
SEQ.07 /SCN 04a	Lights are flickering		EVENING/ ALLEY	
SEQ.07 /SCN 04b	Close-up panel of a shattered mirror on the ground.			
SEQ.07 /SCN 04c	Ant's eye view panel of Aisha looking down at the shattered mirror with a			

	blank face 60			
SEQ.07 /SCN 05a	Close-up side view panel of Aisha		EVENING/ ALLEY	
SEQ.07 /SCN 05b	Back shot panel of Aisha as she continues walking further into the alley with a cat watching closeby 61	“Girls my age should be careful next time”		
SEQ.07 /SCN 06	Bird’s eye view of a close-up panel of a missing poster on the ground, next to a garbage bin. This time, the poster is no longer ripped or the person on the poster is no longer blurry. Alice’s picture and her previous address can be seen printed on the poster 62		EVENING/ ALLEY	

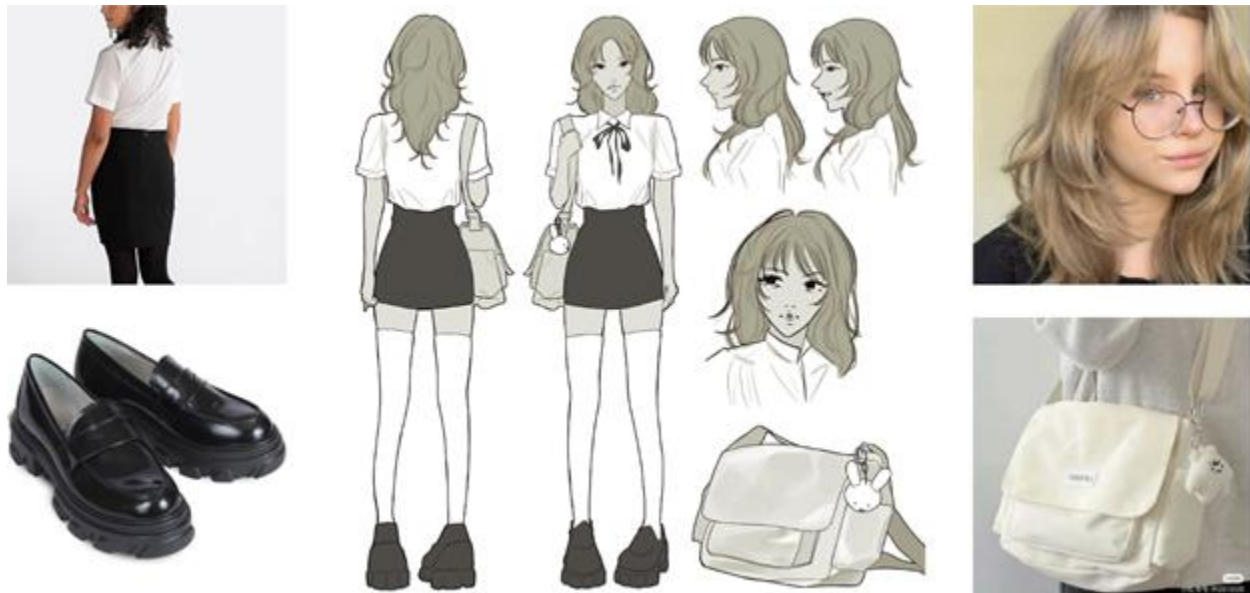
The creation of the character studies comes after the script has been written. These character designs were deliberately created along with the mood board and references to capture not only the physical appearance of the characters but also to portray their personalities, motivations, and relationships within the story. Moreover, distinctive and memorable features are integrated into the characters' design to contribute to the overall branding of the work.

Character Studies



Alice Evangelista, characterized by her dark hair, possesses two identical beauty marks beneath each of her eyes. Throughout the story, the characters are mostly depicted wearing their school uniforms, which consist of a standard white collared shirt paired with a black pencil skirt and a black ribbon tied around their collars. Other than her beauty marks, Alice's character is intentionally designed to appear plain and devoid of

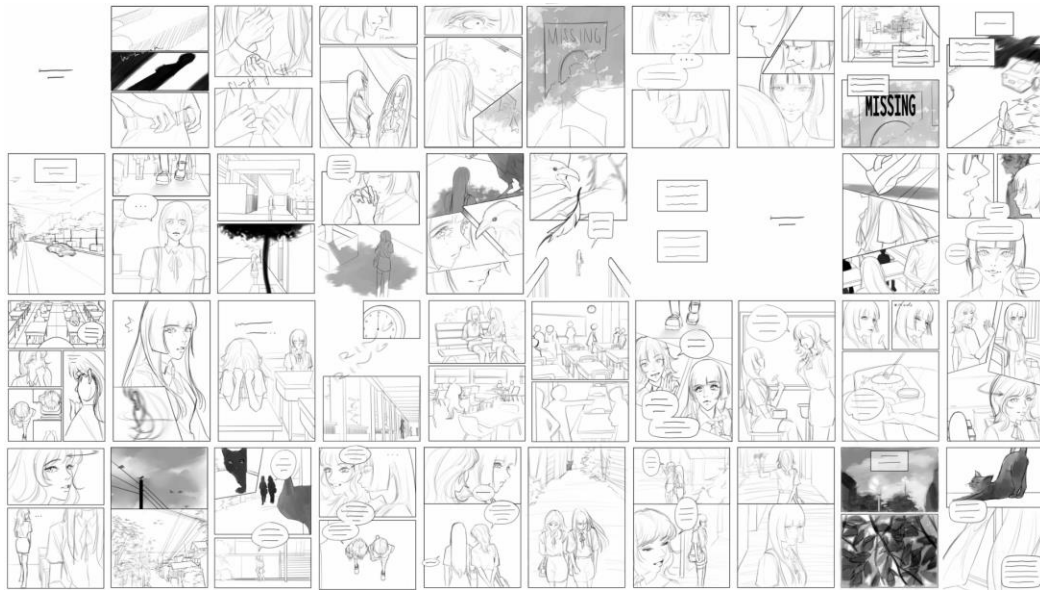
distinguishing features, highlighting her enigmatic and mysterious aura. This design choice highlights the absence of background information about her, arousing curiosity among both the story's characters and the audience.



Aisha Magdrigal stands as a stark contrast to Alice in both appearance and personality. While Alice possesses a fair complexion and sleek, lengthy straight hair, Aisha's tanned skin and medium-length, wavy blonde hair offer a striking contrast. Where Alice gravitates towards dark hues, Aisha embodies the essence of their opposites. In contrast to Alice's reserved demeanor, Aisha's is intentionally crafted to radiate outgoing energy, accentuating her vibrant and sociable nature.

After the development of character studies, the next step is sketching the storyboard, which will serve as the initial sketches of panels for future rendering. It's important to note that all panels are subject to change during this sketch phase, as revisions are inevitable in the future.

Storyboard



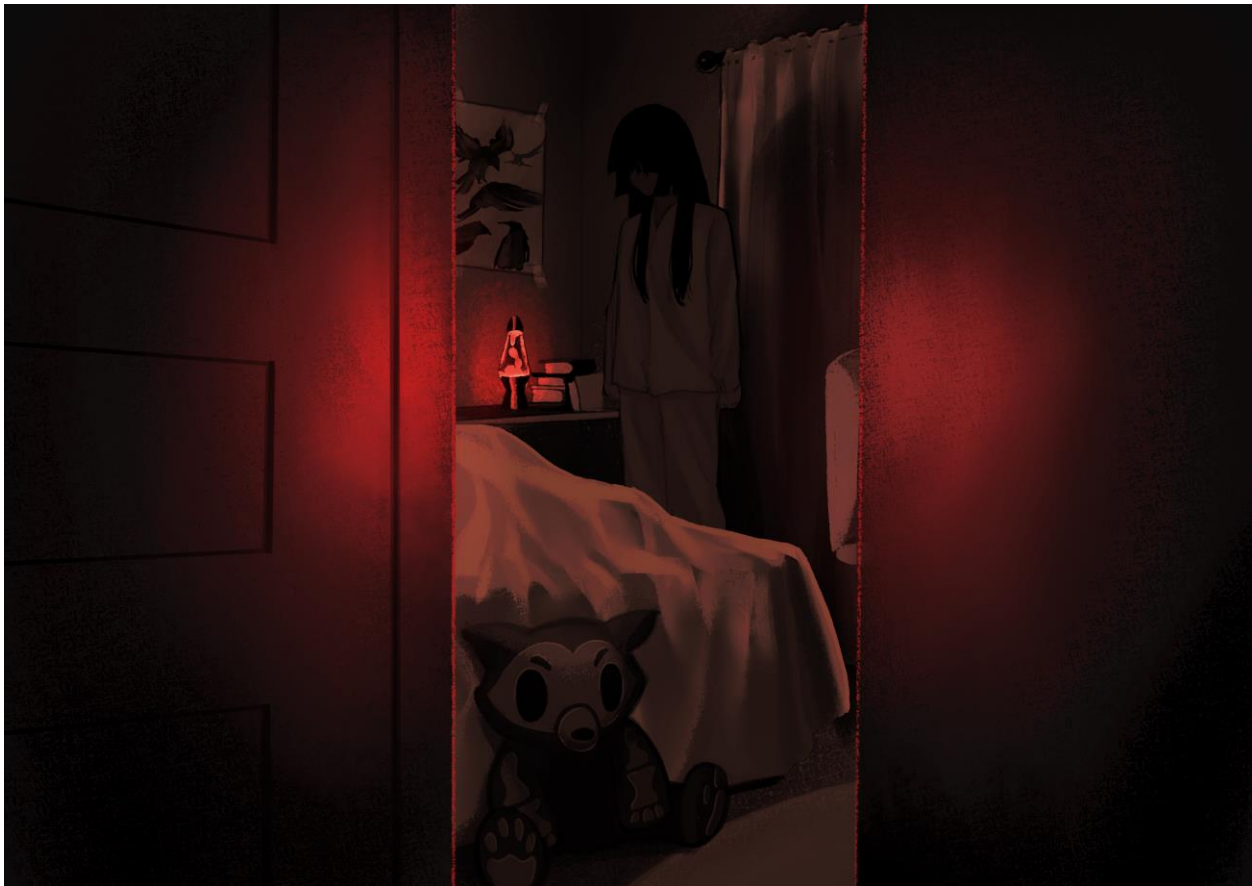
Environment and scene studies are essential for getting a glimpse of the design treatment and art style that I aimed for.

Environment Studies





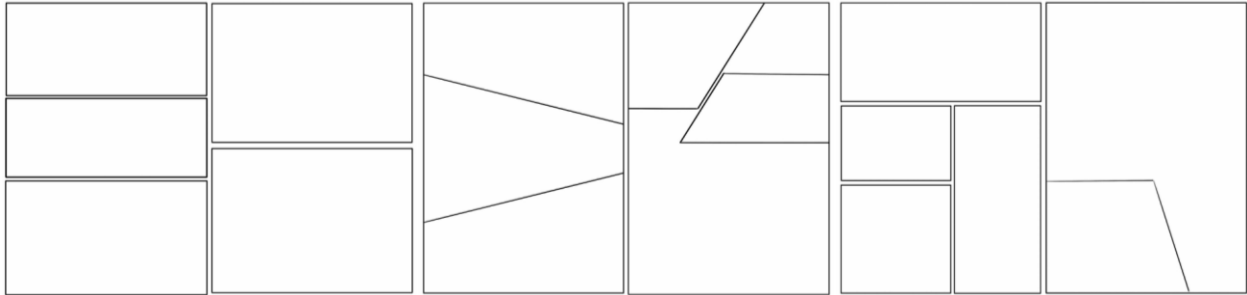
Scene Studies



Production Stage

The production stage will mainly involve creating cover page iterations and finalizing the story. This is the creative process where I will start rendering the spreads and arranging the page layout.

Page Layout



Cover Page Iterations



During the production of cover pages, I made at least three iterations, during which I explored different uses of elements, compositions, and techniques before seeking input from my thesis adviser for the final version. Each iteration contained unique elements carefully employed to convey subtle hints and symbolism that will gradually unfold in the story as it progresses.

Sample Spreads





Post-Production Stage

The post-production stage will follow after the rendering process for the spreads and cover page is completed. This stage mainly involves refining the spreads, organizing the graphic novel, and revising elements in consultation with the thesis adviser. Afterwards, I will arrange the layout using Adobe Indesign and export the file for printing.

The final product is intended to be printed on a 210 x 297 (A4-sized) paperback book featuring perfect binding and a gloss-laminated cover.

Review of Related Literature

This chapter provides literature, articles, studies, and discussions that further expand the understanding of human personality and behavior, as well as the characteristics and methods that manipulators use to prey on the vulnerable. The sources will place emphasis on the essence of vigilance and critical thinking, particularly as exemplified in our interactions with other people. Moreover, this chapter also provides information regarding graphic novels as my multimedia project output.

Jungian Psychological Type Theory

A fundamental factor in understanding the complexity of human personality and behavior is the study of personality typology. In psychology, personality typology is the concept of distinguishing people by their personality traits, with the latter embodying a smaller grouping of behavioral tendencies. It plays a key role in helping people understand themselves and grasp different aspects of their personalities. Jung worked out a typology of eight psychological types upon coming to the observational conclusion that, in addition to individual differences, there were many typical characteristics in human existence.

The typology reveals groups of counter-psychic mechanisms: attitudes (extraverted and introverted), as well as four mental functions, divided into two classes: a class of rational functions (thinking and feeling—how people make decisions or judge) and a class of irrational functions (sensation and intuition—how people perceive environments and gather information), all of which are thoroughly discussed in the paper written by Makhaev et al. (2022).

	Thinking	Feeling	Sensation	iNtuition
Extrovert	analytical, strategic, plans, implements, organises others	sociable, sentimental, seeks personal and social success	practical, hands-on, pleasure-seeking, hard-headed	adventurous, innovative, seeks novelty, proposes change
Introvert	contemplative, discovering, theoretical, seeks self-knowledge	inaccessible, enigmatic, self-contained, seeks inner intensity	intense, obsessive, detached, connoisseur, expert	idealistic, visionary, esoteric, mystical, aloof

Figure 8 Jung's 8 Psychological Types

The significance of this study correlates to building a strong foundation for my story, particularly in the characters. Moreover, it is crucial to note that, while these categories help us distinguish different personality types, human behavior is complex and can't be generally captured by these categorizations. Such models cannot fully account for the fluidity of different traits that people often exhibit in different situations.

The Introvert-Extrovert Spectrum

Carl Jung's proposed personality type theory provides a clear distinction between extraversion and introversion, highlighting how individuals channel their energy. The different aspects of the two attitudes were emphasized enough in the journal article written by Petric (2022), defining extraverts as someone who expresses their energy outwardly, actively engaging with the external world, and introverts as someone who directs it inward, placing emphasis on their inner experiences.

Carl Jung's proposal of the concept is one of the fundamental factors that will offer authenticity to the exploration of personality and behavior aspects in my story, particularly as exemplified by the characters. The journal article further discusses the difference between introversion and extraversion, stating that introverts tend to value introspection and depth, often seeking solitude to recharge and preferring written communication over verbal interaction. In contrast, extroverts thrive in social interactions and excel in group settings and social professions, but might struggle with introspection and be more sensitive to others' opinions.

Moreover, introversion emphasizes independence and reflection, while extraversion highlights social skills and teamwork. Each has its own unique strengths and weaknesses. It's worth noting that while extroverts may have an advantage in terms of likeability, introverts who lack emotional skills might face social challenges.

Reasons People Trust Easily

Before I delve further into the psychological manipulation aspect, I first looked for studies that generally explored the reasons people trust so easily. According to a journal article written by Kramer (2009), he explains that human beings are naturally predisposed to trust due to their genes and childhood learning, and it's additionally been a good survival mechanism that has served us well. Regardless, the article is able to list factors that drive a person's sense of trust to kick in. One factor says that people are more likely to trust others who have similarities to them in some aspects. This tendency may be rooted in the possibility that such people might be related to them or have a lot in common. Another factor says that physical touch also has a strong connection to the experience of trust.

Moreover, it is important to note that, while trust is something we inevitably can't avoid as humans, it sometimes places us in a vulnerable state for exploitation, especially with the difficulty of distinguishing between trustworthy people and untrustworthy ones. Hence, the article also focuses on the tendencies that affect the way we judge people's trustworthiness. Particularly, it can be disastrous when one judges someone's trustworthiness only based on their physical appearance and other outward indications. One tendency that skews judgment is the propensity to perceive only what one wants to see. The fact that people frequently believe their own judgment—including their understanding of whom to trust—is superior to the average only serves to make matters worse. As a result of their overconfidence in their own judgment, they are more susceptible to con artists who impersonate trustworthy individuals.

Fortunately enough, the article also covers some preliminary rules for tempering trust that will help people make a good start ahead of what will be a lifelong process of learning how to trust wisely and effectively. That involves enhancing cue reading for people who trust too much and developing more adaptable behaviors for distrustful people. Overall, this article highlights the importance of practicing good judgment when participating in social interactions. Even though it is psychologically uncomfortable to do so, revisiting trust that requires questioning the individuals we trust is highly considered when it comes to circumstances in which our physical, emotional, or financial security is at stake.

Psychological Manipulation within an Interpersonal Relationships

While the previous article served as a foundation for understanding the reason why humans are so prone to trust, it's worth noting that my graphic novel will also explore psychological manipulation and its characteristics. To understand how to reevaluate personal connections and use greater judgment when participating in social situations, the psychological aspects of manipulation within an interpersonal interaction must be considered.

The journal article written by Hrebin et al. (2020) compares approaches used by various authors' understanding of manipulation as well as their understanding of the person's propensity for manipulation in interpersonal relationships. Manipulation, according to H.W. Franke falls into the covert category and typically harms people using subtle, barely noticeable, or non-physically aggressive tactics like lying, bribery, or intimidation. Other authors (O. Yokoyama, V. Znakov, and V. Sagatovskiy) emphasize the manipulator's attitude toward others as an instrument that is used for his or her own advantage while ignoring the genuine interests of those who are exposed to the manipulative impact.

Moreover, the article also emphasizes that manipulations can be employed unconsciously. Unconscious manipulation occurs when a person attempts to exert pressure on another without being aware of doing so. People frequently seek influence to advance their interests and meet their demands, not because they believe they are entitled to make decisions for others. Therefore, manipulations are often applied unconsciously, which, however, does not reduce their effectiveness.

In relation to a person's propensity to manipulate interpersonal relationships, S. Bogomaz and A. Makarenko propose that manipulation stems from a person's constant need for power and influence over others, more specifically, by playing on human vulnerabilities. Whether it is done purposefully or not, when we hear the word "manipulation," we frequently associate it with something negative. That is typically true; manipulation frequently carries a bad connotation.

Surprisingly, the article also emphasized that not every manipulation is evil. For instance, if someone employs manipulation for a noble purpose, it can be perceived as a covert means of having a positive impact on others, and society generally supports this. It's seen as negative when used selfishly but can be okay when used for a greater good.

Overall, the issue of whether a manipulation is condemned or not lies in the individual's intention and moral choice.

Effects of Psychological Manipulation

To understand the severe effects of psychological manipulation, I looked for books that showcased other methods that people employ to exploit others and came across a book that focused on the author's experience. In the book titled "Covert Narcissism: Signs of a Covert Narcissist, Ways to Protect Yourself from Their Manipulation, and How to Deal With Their Narcissism" by Cox (2019), she shared her personal experience with a covertly narcissistic ex-lover and provided guides as well on how to deal with one.

Regarding my story, this book is significant since it also approaches psychological manipulation within an interpersonal relationship. Common behaviors and characteristics such as gaslighting, self-absorbedness, lack of empathy, and many more—all of which were discussed detailedly in the book—can be applied to traits aligning with my character, Alice Evangelista. Likewise, this book offers a valuable guide to recognizing potential red flags and encourages individuals to reflect thoroughly on their relationships.

The emotional abuse is severe enough that it can leave lasting emotional trauma, much like any other form of abuse. Dissociation is a common aftereffect, where victims tend to lose grasp of their surroundings, emotions, and even their own bodies as a defense mechanism against the overwhelming emotional abuse. Louisa Cox's words serve as a powerful reminder to anyone that dealing with any kind of psychological manipulation within a relationship is a complex and deeply distressing experience, one that requires careful consideration and understanding to navigate effectively.

Benefits of Graphic Novel

According to Margarita (2022), graphic novels were considered an inferior form of literature for a long time. Contrary to historical biases, graphic novels now play a crucial role in fostering a love for reading while contributing significantly to visual and verbal literacy. In our increasingly visual and digital world, emphasizing the significance of actively and critically engaging with the images we encounter on a daily basis becomes important. Graphic novels, with their combination of text and illustrations, serve as powerful tools for the simultaneous development of verbal and visual literacy.

Reading a graphic novel extends beyond the mere consumption of text; it requires active interpretation of the accompanying images to fully grasp characters and plot development. This interactive engagement not only enhances the reading experience but also cultivates critical thinking skills. As a result, dismissing graphic novels as an inferior literary form overlooks their unique capacity to offer a rich and immersive narrative experience, making them valuable contributors to the contemporary literary world.

Color Theory in Storytelling

The utilization of a chosen color palette in filmmaking surpasses mere aesthetics; it serves as a powerful storytelling tool with the ability to evoke specific emotions and

communicate subtle hints. As Rothstein (2020) stated, colors play a crucial role in eliciting emotional responses from viewers. Whether it's the use of red to symbolize blood in a horror film or a strategic shade of green to denote jealousy, the color scheme becomes a silent narrator, guiding the audience through a range of sentiments.

Beyond emotional resonance, color in film serves a practical purpose by directing attention to crucial details. A red balloon in the middle of white balloons, for instance, becomes a focal point, illustrating how color can guide the viewer's focus within a scene. In the creation of my graphic novel, I intend to harness this cinematic technique by incorporating subtle hints through color to enrich the narrative experience.

Furthermore, color has the remarkable ability to set the overall tone of a story. The use of red, for instance, can create a palpable sense of danger, contributing to the film's atmosphere. This reinforces the notion that color in storytelling is a multifaceted tool, not only influencing emotional aspects but also shaping the narrative environment. In essence, recognizing the narrative potential of a color palette is important for filmmakers and graphic novel creators alike, as it can elevate storytelling to a visually resonant and emotionally impactful level.

Red Color Theory

The significance of color is fluid and open to interpretation, allowing any color to convey a specific meaning. However, there is a silent agreement that the presence of red in a frame inevitably draws the viewer's attention. According to Sudhakaran (2024), research indicates that red evokes the strongest emotional response in the majority of humans. This heightened reaction is primarily attributed to its association with diverse concepts such as war, danger, strength, power, passion, desire, and love. Above all, red commands more attention than any other color, a quality that is crucial in visual communication. Thus, in the pursuit of captivating audiences, cinematographers often prioritize red as their first selective choice to create a profound impact.

Review of Related Works

In the pages that follow, I will discuss several creative works from any form of art medium that utilize different factors that I will be incorporating into my creative project. Factors such as choosing the correct color scheme—which are influenced by the mood and intent of the artwork—and unique approaches regarding storytelling. The following related creative works will vary from movies to short films to manga series.

Coloring Techniques Used Based on Intent

We've all heard of the well-known phrase 'Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' before, not just in the context of Aesop's fables; however, it can also be used in more metaphorical terms. It's a saying that's versatile, and it seems like Yea An's short film has given it a contemporary spin. The message delivers points at the digital predators lurking on the internet and the sinister aspects of online interactions, which are highly emphasized in the short film's portrayal of a wolf wearing a sheep mask and a lamb engaged in a texting conversation.

What makes this film impactful is the exceptional animation, which superbly captures the preciseness of the characters' behavior despite the subtle movements. This new level of attention to detail gives you chills to the bone because it depicts the reality that many of us have encountered. Rather than relying on classical horror elements like jump scares or graphic gore, the film delivers a more unsettling, true-to-life portrayal of our society, offering a clear lens through which we can scrutinize its less desirable aspects.

The film's capacity to evoke a sense of horror without resorting to the elements of the genre is what adds to the brilliance of this animation. In a time when social media and online communication mostly dominate our lifestyle, this film powerfully reminds us of the potential dangers lurking beneath the surface. It compels us to face the very real horrors of the digital age and encourages us to handle our online interactions with vigilance and responsibility.



Figure 9 *Coloring Techniques Used in Other Mediums Note. Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (2023) by Yea An*

The color direction of my creative project is greatly inspired by this short film as well, where they used black and white with a red accent. Likewise, the color red will be used as a way to give subtle hints and warnings that the audience will undoubtedly not miss, as red captures a viewer's attention and is one of the most visible colors.

Body Horror in Manga



Figure 10 *Body Horror in Similar Mediums Note. Tomie (1987)*

"Tomie" is one of the related works that my creative project is greatly inspired by. Junji Ito's mastery of body horror in his renowned manga series, particularly exemplified in this series, provides a captivating exploration of not only the grotesque but also the profound themes of manipulation and the human psyche. "Tomie" is proof of Ito's ability to push the boundaries of horror storytelling, captivating readers with its unique blend of supernatural body horror and psychological manipulation.

In the series, Tomie's ability to regenerate and mutate from her own dismembered body parts creates a chilling and surreal landscape where the boundaries between life and death, beauty and repulsiveness, are constantly blurred. This physical transformation serves as a metaphor for the malleability of human flesh and the horror that lies in its mutability.

However, what truly sets "Tomie" apart is its exploration of psychological manipulation. The use of both elements inspired me to create my project, as well as my interest in exploring the complexity of the human psyche. Overall, "Tomie" is a compelling work that stays popular with horror fans thanks to Junji Ito's singular approach to the genre, which pushes the limits of norms and provides readers with a disturbing and thought-provoking experience.

Body Horror in Films



Figure 11 *Body Horror in Other Mediums Note. The Thing (1982)*

John Carpenter's direction makes "The Thing" a timeless masterpiece in the horror sci-fi genre, primarily because it adeptly exploits the concept of unseen terror. This film thrusts viewers into a nightmarish world where the enemy is an enigma, impossible to compromise or negotiate. "The Thing" is another creative work that heavily explores the concept of body horror.

Aside from Junji Ito's "Tomie", this movie is one of my great inspirations in developing my creative project. Director Carpenter superbly encapsulates the raw emotions of isolation, separation, and the crippling anxiety of confronting the unknown. This unique approach to horror has had a profound impact on my creative project. It acts as a sobering reminder that real dread frequently results from our inability to predict or manage our situations.

The movie "The Thing" instills a constant dread in its audience because it continuously violates expectations and keeps viewers on edge, never letting them get comfy in their seats. In my creative project, I aim to capture the raw feeling of self-doubt, similar to how Carpenter does it in "The Thing". Carpenter accomplishes this by putting us in the protagonists' shoes and evoking a similar feeling of dread and uncertainty in us. Like the characters, we viewers are in a situation where we are unsure of the nature of the threat. We won't know that anyone, at any time, could be the unsuspecting host for the alien threat until "The Thing" transforms before our eyes.

Page Layout Approach in Horror Story

As stated by Junji Ito in an interview, "It's difficult to make manga as scary as a film. There are no noises, among many other things. So compared to films, the scary parts don't have as much impact. You really can't afford to pull any punches." Similar to any silent medium, where the pacing of the story is determined by how quickly the reader turns the page, Ito was able to successfully evoke the same raw feeling of horror by using the "page turning" format to his benefit.

In the process of laying out a scary scene, he would often make a page of buildup and reactions to something unseen, which would leave the readers with the courage to turn the page and witness the horror for themselves. For instance, he used this method in one of his works, "The Enigma of Amigara Fault". It is a short horror story included as a bonus story in the second volume of GYO, a two part graphic novel. In the story, two

characters went to the location where a fault was discovered in Amigara Mountain after a severe earthquake.



Figure 12 Page Layout Techniques Used in Manga Note. *The Enigma of Amigara Fault* (2001)

Upon turning the page, the readers are presented with a textless, full illustration displaying the horrors the characters have witnessed. This approach is equivalent to a film's "Jumpscare". Junji Ito's brilliant sense of design will serve as a major source of inspiration for my approach to eliciting reactions from readers. The design of the pages is arranged in a way that plays with the reader's mind as they are placed alongside the main character in the story, experiencing the same situation along with them.

Psychological Manipulation in Film

"Single White Female" by Barbet Schroeder is a film that mostly emphasizes the exploration of human emotions and interpersonal relationships, providing an insightful discussion regarding the darker aspects of envy, obsession, and manipulation. In relation to Alice and Aisha's bond throughout the story, this movie perfectly captures the toxic, manipulative dynamic of their relationship, even down to one of them impersonating the other. The plot revolves around Allison Jones and Hedra Carlson's relationship as roommates after Allison found out about her boyfriend, Sam Rawson's, infidelity and kicked him out. The moment Allison's decision to reconsider her engagement with her boyfriend was made, Hedra's growing hatred was sparked.

Overall, the relationship between Allison and Hedra throughout the movie offers an insightful look at the effects of toxic relationships and how individuals will do everything to maintain a connection with one another, no matter how harmful those ties are. Which is seen in the way Hedra practically takes on Allie's identity by dressing like her, adopting her haircut, and even taking her lover. This is an exemplification of the extreme end of the spectrum, where one's own identity merges with that of another individual, which is what makes this topic more compelling.



Figure 13 *Single White Female* (1992)

Furthermore, "Single White Female" challenges our understanding of what makes interpersonal connections meaningful as well as what trust really is. The feeling of unease at the prospect of allowing someone into one's life and home only to discover later that this person is attempting to completely take over that person's identity is superbly conveyed in this movie.

Semi-Realism Art Style



Figure 14 AISHA (2020)

Firstly, the semi-realism art style employed in "AISHA" elevates the visual experience beyond traditional comic book aesthetics. Unlike purely abstract or hyper-realistic styles, semi-realism strikes a delicate balance between the familiar and the fantastical, offering readers a visually stunning yet relatable portrayal of characters and environments. This unique approach not only enhances the overall appeal of the artwork but also fosters a deeper connection between readers and the narrative world.

Moreover, "AISHA" distinguishes itself through its impeccable world-building, a testament to Zhang's storytelling skills. Each brushstroke serves a purpose and is meticulously crafted to breathe life into every corner of the fictional world. Furthermore, the strategic use of texture within the artwork of "AISHA" adds an additional layer of depth and realism to the visual experience. Whether depicting the weathered surfaces of ancient ruins or the delicate details of character expressions, the interplay of different textures serves to enhance the overall realism of the artwork, allowing readers to fully immerse themselves in the world of the story.

Drawing inspiration from Jing Zhang's artwork, particularly her graphic novels, has been the key to igniting my enthusiasm for developing a narrative illustration within the genre of psychological horror. Beyond admiring the techniques and approaches evident

in her work, I am particularly drawn to the meticulous composition of each panel, a quality I strive to employ in my own thesis project.

Result and Discussion

In this study, I conducted a comprehensive desk research analysis that allowed me to explore the spectrum of psychological types and investigate the characteristics and methods associated with psychological manipulation. By garnering existing studies, documents, and creative works, I was able to gather insightful information that deepened my understanding of these complex phenomena and provided a foundation for further exploration. This process not only further elaborated my perspective but also pointed out potential ways for creative expression within the context of psychological manipulation.

As I navigated through the review of related literature, several key themes emerged, notably the central role of trust in human relationships and the inherent vulnerability it entails. We recognize trust as a fundamental aspect of human nature that facilitates social interactions and fosters meaningful connections. However, it has become apparent that trust also reveals its paradoxical nature, as it can leave individuals vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation, particularly in interpersonal relationships where distinguishing between trustworthy and untrustworthy individuals can be challenging. With this in mind, certain individuals' propensity to trust blindly without exercising due vigilance and discernment further increases their vulnerability, making them prime targets for manipulative tactics.

Moreover, the failure to address the complexities of trust and manipulation with deliberate consideration can have far-reaching consequences, significantly impacting an individual's ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships. By exploring different personality types and their accompanying behavioral tendencies, individuals can gain valuable insights into human connection and refine their discernment skills. This highlights the importance of integrating knowledge of psychological types into interpersonal dynamics, empowering individuals to navigate relationships with greater awareness and resilience.

Conclusion

Psychological manipulation manifests in numerous subtle forms, often overlooked by individuals. Neglecting to confront this issue with careful consideration can severely impede one's capacity to form meaningful connections and stifle personal development. Drawing from both personal encounters and empirical evidence, it's clear that psychological manipulation can manifest within any deeply bonded relationship.

Therefore, I've chosen to utilize a graphic novel as a medium to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of overlooking people's motives. Through visual storytelling, I aim to highlight the importance of vigilance and discernment in recognizing psychological manipulation. My research confirms the critical need for deliberate consideration of this matter, particularly for individuals who are still developing their ability to discern such tactics, as many unwittingly fall victim to manipulation tactics.

Recommendation

Research Topic

The research topic will remain open for future enhancements through further analysis of the gathered data and the inclusion of additional stories regarding psychological manipulation. The current study centers on understanding human personalities and behaviors in the context of psychological manipulation. Further research could expand to incorporate additional narratives that offer deeper insights into various manifestations of manipulation across different contexts and relationships, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subtleties and complexities involved in interpersonal manipulation dynamics.

Creative Process

The creative process of developing my graphic novel as my thesis output could benefit from enhancements in terms of design consistency and production efficiency. Given time constraints, a graphic novel is the most effective medium for conveying the topic. Making the story brief and concise can improve audience engagement by avoiding unnecessary length that might bore readers. The illustrations could be more consistent; I've been experimenting with new textures and compositions during production. The overall layout design could also be further explored through panel experimentation and strategic dialogue placement. Furthermore, each illustration receives meticulous attention to detail, fostering a stronger connection between the audience and the graphic novel.

In conclusion, the Gantt chart and the production timeline can significantly enhance my workflow and output efficiency. Furthermore, having well-prepared techniques and references will streamline the creation process. Effective time management is paramount, particularly in making the most of the allocated time for both MMAPROJ1 and MMAPROJ2. Given the one-week trimestral break between terms, it's advisable to address any suggestions provided by panelists during this period. To ensure effective communication of the issue to the target audience, future researchers should heed these recommendations as valuable guidance.

References

- Baron, M. (2023, May 03). What are the Actual Reading Trends for Gen Z? Retrieved from Book Riot: <https://bookriot.com/gen-z-reading-trends/>
- Borruso, J. (2022, Sept. 14). EVERYTHING WRONG WITH GEN Z. Retrieved from Southwest Shadow: <https://southwestshadow.com/features/everything-wrong-with-gen-z/>
- Cox, L. (2019). Covert Narcissism: Signs of a Covert Narcissist, Ways to Protect Yourself from Their Manipulation and How to Deal With Their Narcissism. *Escape The Narcissist*.
- Greene, V. (2019). The Thing (1982): Suspense-filled, Psychological Horror at Its Savage Best. Retrieved from Horror Obsessive: <https://horrorobsessive.com/2020/03/25/the-thing-1982-suspense-filled-psychological-horror/>
- Hrebin N. V., S. A. (2020, October). Psychological Aspects of Manipulation within an Interpersonal Interaction: Manipulations and Manipulators. *Personality in Society: Psychological Mechanisms of Activity : Collective Monograph*, 34-53. doi:10.36059/978-966-397-209-1/34-52
- Kramer, R. M. (2009, July). Rethinking trust. *Harvard Business Review*(113), 68-77. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26266773_Rethinking_trust
- Lawson, K. N. (2020). Personality Factors that Influence Truthfulness and Deception. *Kentucky Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship*, 4(1). Retrieved from <https://encompass.eku.edu/kjus/vol4/iss1/4/>
- Loughran, E. (2019, September 22). Designing Nightmares — Junji Ito. Retrieved from Medium: <https://medium.com/@ekloughran/designing-nightmares-junji-ito-2f41f1385d59>
- Mairbeck Ruslanovich Makhaev, K. E. (2022, November). Jungian Psychological Types Theory: Introduction To the New Cognitive Conception. *International Scientific Conference: Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism*, 420-428. doi:10.15405/epsbs.2022.11.58
- McCarty-Simas, P. (2022, August 14). 'Single White Female' at Thirty: The Legacy of the Women Stalkers of the 1990s. Retrieved from Filmdaze: <https://filmdaze.net/single-white-female-at-thirty-the-legacy-of-the-women-stalkers-of-the-1990s/>
- MPLMargarita. (2022, May 2). 5 Benefits of Reading Graphic Novels. Retrieved from Markham Public Library: <https://markhampubliclibrary.ca/blogs/post/5-benefits-of-reading-graphic-novels/#:~:text=Graphic%20novels%20help%20simultaneously%20develop,on%20characters%20and%20plot%20development.>
- Petric, D. (2022, January). The Introvert-Ambivert-Extrovert Spectrum. *Open Journal of Medical Psychology*, 103-111. doi:10.4236/ojmp.2022.113008

Rothstein, A. (2020, Aug. 20). Color Theory in Film: A Video Producer's Guide. Retrieved from IPR: <https://www.ipr.edu/blogs/digital-video-and-media-production/color-theory-in-film-a-video-producers-guide/#:~:text=Red%20is%20a%20color%20of,fire%20trucks%20and%20stop%20signs>

Sudhakaran, S. (2024). How Great Films use the Color Red. Retrieved from Wolfcrow: <https://wolfcrow.com/the-power-of-red-in-cinema/>

YourFinalGirl. (2017, November 19). Tomie: The Femme Fatale of Body Horror. Retrieved from Wordpress: <https://afinalgirl.wordpress.com/2017/11/19/tomie-the-femme-fatale-of-body-horror/>