

# Hooked on Grawlix

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**L**anguage possesses power to convey personal thoughts and feelings. Authors keen on rendering reality have a choice to include profanity or invent some type of alternative swear. An option not considered in writing is grawlix. Predominantly seen in comics, grawlix modifies a profane word into a series of symbols, “@#%\$!” These symbols do not portray the precise content of the message, depending on the number of symbols used there may be more than the amount of letters, yet the relational, or emotion, of the word is transmitted.

The popularity and periodicity of grawlix in comics raises the question why it is not seen in other forms of literature. Perhaps grawlix is absent because it does not adapt into mediums other than comics or dialogue in novels is utilized differently. Truthfully, comics have long been viewed as childish and goofy whereas prose is esteemed as a mature and creativity stringent medium. Thus, comic creators are not bashful when including a dialogue bubble containing, “Hey you piece of %#@&!” while most novelists feel inclined to admit the

swear.

The aspiration that drives a young adult fiction author to create



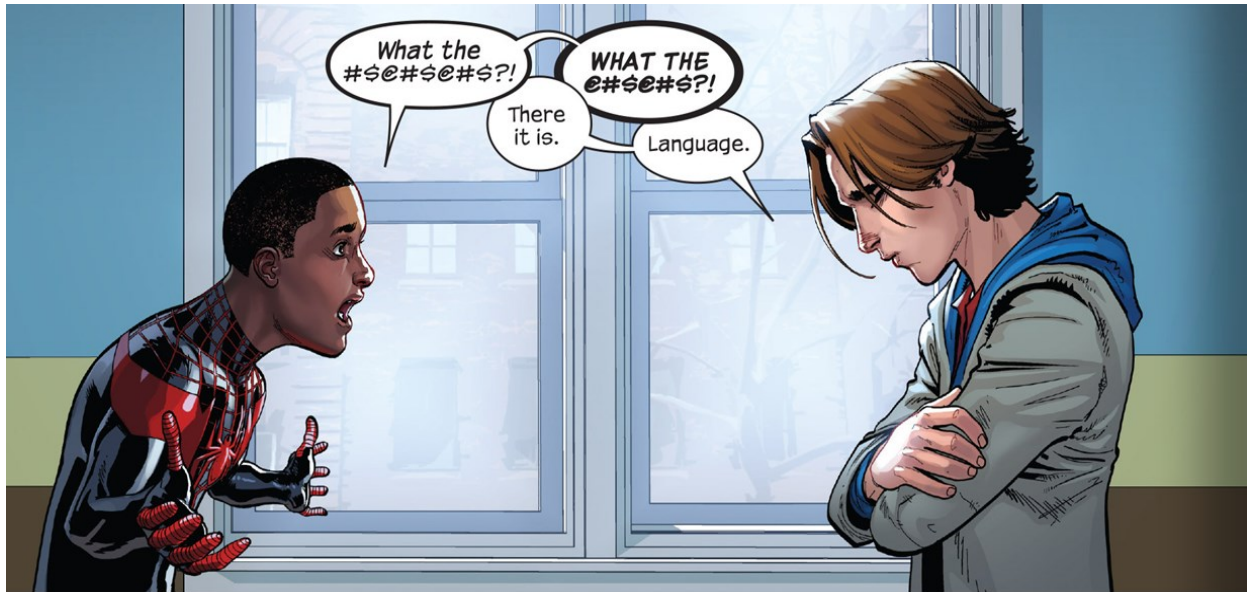
a set of alternative profanities to extend readability to a wide audience is the same goal of a comic creator at Marvel or DC who utilizes grawlix to interchange harsh words to obtain the desired rating of a book. Displays of auxiliary profanities are made with the objective to not affront readers. A great deal of teens and children read Spider-Man or Batman and if their parents see swears in the dialogue bubbles, funding for purchase would discontinue. Therefore,

**Not seen in other forms of literature.** grawlix placates readers while expressing negative emotional dialogue.

The visual element of comics, conducive to feature grawlix, is absent from prose, which depicts exclusively through text. Comics are a complete experience; readers probe artwork and analyze script. Comic creators experiment with scratch and sniff odors and others include reading playlists, a group of songs that enhances the reading experience. Contemplating the non-

traditional format that comics are, it is apparent why something like grawlix has found a home in the medium. There are no implicit rubrics governing comics as there

needs be considered a valid option in prose for authors who wish to maintain a younger audience while including dialogue for mature readers.



are in prose. Authors experiment with certain methods in their prose, yet nothing compares to the expanse of freedom comic creators enjoy. Grawlix is one of many creative formulas comic creators employ to develop a unique visual experience for their readers.

Being created for comics may constrain the use of grawlix strictly to comics. The ability to convey messages with symbols sanctions writers to establish a serious tone without including harsh swears. This welcomes creators to tell stories with profanity, yet use symbols for younger readers to enjoy the story without offense. A successful form of substitution in the comic vehicle, grawlix

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