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**THE INTERNATIONAL GRAPHIC NOVEL AND COMICS CONFERENCE**

**10-12 JULY 2024**

**UNIVERSTY OF EAST ANGLIA, UK**

**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

**(A-Z)**

 

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**KEYNOTE**

**From Golden Legacies to Afrofutures: The common themes in how Black cartoonists use communications technologies**

**Darnel Degand (he/him)**

**Thursday 11 July**

**17.00-18.00**

**Lecture Theatre/Online**

**Abstract:** This talk will give a sociocultural and historical overview of how technology has been used by Black cartoonists. I start by sharing my own personal observations as a consumer of comics from the late 80s to now. I’ll discuss how my experiences inspired my research interests in comics, media, and education. And then I will share themes from my research that support my arguments for how Black cartoonists have consistently used communications technologies to remind us of Black people’s contributions to society (and more specifically, comics culture).

**Biography:** Darnel Degand is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at University of California-Davis (UC Davis). He explores social processes within media production environments and media consumption experiences (with a special focus on comics during formal, nonformal, and informal instruction). He received his Ed.D. in Instructional Technology and Media from Teachers College Columbia University, M.S. in Digital Imaging and Design from New York University, and B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics from the University of Pennsylvania. Before joining UC Davis, Darnel acquired two decades of professional experience as an interactive media producer. A sampling of his resume includes roles as a game designer/developer for Sesame Workshop, technical development manager for an advertising company acquired by Amazon, and multimedia designer for the City University of New York. Some of his publications can be found in the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *Studies in Comics*, and *The Comics Grid*. More details at [www.darneldegand.com](http://www.darneldegand.com).

**KEYNOTE**

**Experimenting with Comics**

**Karrie Fransman (she/her)**

**Friday 12 July**

**11.00-12.00**

**Lecture Theatre/Online**

**Abstract:** Comics have long held the ability to harness and adapt to emerging technologies. If, like Will Eisner, you define comics as 'sequential art' you can easily unleash them from their paper cages into any physical (or indeed virtual) space. All you need is a sequence and a story. In this keynote talk comic creator Karrie Fransman will present her own (and others’) experimental comic work; from comics on paper, in 3D spaces such as dolls houses and jewellery boxes, to digital spaces embracing emerging technologies from iPads to virtual reality. We will also look back into the past at the ways comics have moved off cave walls to tapestries and sculptures to see how this might inspire future experiments. With the threat of AI looming over us, we will need to find innovative ways to protect artists’ work and preserve the human soul of our artform so that we may create and share visual stories for generations to come.

**Biography:** Karrie Fransman’s comics have been published by The United Nations, The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, the BBC, The Arts Council and The British Red Cross. She has published 4 books: ‘Gender Swapped Fairy Tales’ (2020) and ‘Gender Swapped Greek Myths’ (2023, Faber & Faber-) both co-created with Jonathan Plackett and two graphic novels: ‘The House That Groaned’ (2012, Penguin Random House), and the award winning ‘Death of the Artist’ (2015, Jonathan Cape). She created an installation for the British Council and Southbank Centre and was commissioned to make a ‘Selves Portrait’ for an exhibition with Manchester Art Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery. She is Creative Director at PositiveNegatives.org who uses comics and animation to amplify academic research. She is a founding member of The Comics Cultural Impact Collective (CCIC) that aims to raise awareness of the value of comics in the UK. You can find more of her work at www.karriefransman.com.

**MEETING**

**Comics and Performance Meeting**

**Thursday 11 July**

**15.00-16.00**

**Room 0.01**

Interested in the intersections between comics and theatre, music, film, television, dance, live art, poetry, circus, stand-up comedy...? Drop by this session to discuss the aims and organization of the Comics & Performance Network, ask questions and get involved!

This is an in-person session. If you can't make it in person, but would like to join / know more please email: Geraint (G.Darcy@uea.ac.uk), Damon (d.herd@dundee.ac.uk), and /or Maggie (m.gray@kingston.ac.uk)

**PANEL**

**Publishing Panel**

**Thursday 11 July**

**15.00-16.00**

**Lecture Theatre/Online**

Want to find out more about academic publishing in Comics Studies? This Q&A session brings together representatives from many major publishers of Comics Studies journals and publishers to introduce their publications and answer your questions. It’s a chance to hear from editors and publishers representing journals such as *The Comics Grid, European Comic Art, The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics,* and *Studies in Comics*, and book series like De Gruyter’s Comics Studies, Palgrave’s Comics Studies, and UP Nebraska’s Encapsulations about what they are looking for and how to get your work published.

**Exploring the Emotional and Cultural Landscape of Gender-Based Violence in Una’s *Becoming Unbecoming***

**Şükran İlkay Akarçay (she/her)**

**Abstract:** With a focus on Una's *Becoming Unbecoming* (2015), this paper explores the medium-specific strategies employed in graphic narratives to shed light on the hidden complexities of gender-based violence and trauma.

*Becoming Unbecoming* recounts Una’s experiences of sexual violation and her ensuing PTSD as a young girl. Situating her personal narrative of trauma in the broader socio-historical context dominated by the gendered crimes against women at the time, Una explores gender-based violence not as an isolated incident but as part of the fabric of the everyday. It details the psychological violence in its aftermath, the anguish of feeling and being made powerless by family and society.

This paper explores how the affordances of the medium can effectively capture the psychological realities of gender-based violence. Additionally, it examines how Una utilizes an innovative page layout to underscore the pervasive nature of gender-based violence.

The detailed examination of Una’s *Becoming Unbecoming* reveals how graphic narratives may both narrate and deepen an understanding of sexual trauma's impact and its pervasive nature, encouraging a more empathetic and informed perspective on the experiences of survivors.

**Biography:** Şükran İlkay Akarçay received her PhD from Middle East Technical University, Turkey. Her recently completed dissertation explores the representation of trauma and gender-based violence in graphic narratives. Her research interests include Graphic Narratives and Visual Studies, Memory and Trauma Studies, Affect, Narrative and Rhetorical Theory.

**“Us vs. What/Whoever”: Technology as (Para)Military Extremism in the post-9/11 American Comic Books**

**Ibrahim Mertcan Alcinkaya (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Advancements in the technological frontier — specifically in the second half of the 20th century — have largely been pioneered by military institutions of the global superpowers, most of which apparently aimed to gain a competitive edge over each other. Partially through the utilization of technological advancements — GPS, radar, and the Internet being the initial examples — nations assert dominance over territorial and political spheres. Alongside the usage of technology as a supplement in national security, law enforcement agencies are provided with cutting-edge equipment and weaponry in order to maximize efficiency in crime prevention. This particular focus on technology as a guarantor of internal and external security demands further questioning — as certain police critics such as Pete B. Kraska, Radley Balko, Stuart Schrader, and Alex Vitale extensively argue against such claims — find unique representations in American comics. Comic books such as DMZ (2005-2012), We Stand on Guard (2015), and Officed Downe (2010) appear to offer a critical lens to view the arguably (para)military extremism adopted by military and law enforcement institutions, primarily through the visual characterizations of military equipment and weaponry. While Brian Wood and Riccardo Burchielli’s DMZ depict paramilitary police units as the arbiters of justice during chaotic circumstances, Brian K. Vaughan and Steve Skroce’s We Stand on Guard portray gigantic robots potentially as a symbol of military and territorial dominance of US, and Joe Casey and Chris Burnham’s Officer Downe visualize the technological enhancement of patrol officers who are given complete authority to eliminate suspects. All three comic books mentioned above present unique perspectives on technology as a fundamental component of (para)“militarism” — as it is defined by Kraska (1996). Such representations of advanced military technologies further potentially contribute to the romanticization and normalization of police and (para)military use of force.

**Biography:** Ibrahim Mertcan Alcinkaya is a fourth-year post-graduate student at Doctoral School of Humanities, University of Warsaw. He is currently writing his dissertation on the reconceptualization of American comic books as a representation of invisible police power. His research interests include police militarization, superhero narratives, speculative fiction, and post-2010 video games. Alcinkaya currently provides lectures at American Studies Center, University of Warsaw, including courses such as “History of Police Militarization in the US” and “American Superhero Comics”. He also owns his online English Course named “English with Mert.” He enjoys playing video games such as Age of Empires IV, watching and playing basketball and American football.

**Navigating the Artistic Journey Through 3D Tech, Digital Design, and AI**

**Tasos Anastasiades (he/him)**

**Abstract:** At the upcoming conference, I want to talk about my journey in making comics and digital illustrations over the last twenty years. In teaching others, I realized the importance of using 3D technology, Photoshop, and digital sketching. Recently, I've also incorporated AI into my work. In my presentation, I'll share how AI has become a valuable tool for me in creating comics and digital illustrations. But the key point is finding a balance. I'll discuss how to use AI without losing the unique artistic touch that makes a visual piece special and how technology can enhance, not overshadow, the art of making comics.

**Biography:** Tasos Anastasiades is an Associate Professor at the European University Cyprus. In 2019 he illustrated the graphic novel titled ‘The Traveller’ which was done in collaboration with Neil Gibson publisher of T-Pub comics in London. Currently, he is involved in various comic book projects including the ‘The Traveller’ volume 2.

**The Changing Face of Banshee**

**James Bacon (he/him)**

**Abstract:** The *X-Men* character Banshee debuted in*X-Men* #28, published on 10 January, 1967, and was written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Werner Roth. Intended as an Irish character, Banshee’s look was distinctive; however, his mannerisms and language were subtle, and he utilised only one “Irish” prop, a clay pipe.

In the first issue, Banshee initially appears to be a villain pitted against the X-Men. Early on, the narration sows doubt on this first impression as we learn that Banshee is subjugated and dominated by the real villain, the Ogre, an ape-like character working for Factor Three. The debut was popular, and by the second appearance of Banshee in *X-Men* #35, during which the X-Men battle against Spider-Man in error (a very common comic book trope), the Banshee works for the X-Men to track down the foe of Factor Three.

 Banshee was presented as male from the outset, a disappointment to Thomas who said he “felt that the Banshee should be female, as in legend, but Stan Lee wouldn't allow it,” as Lee didn’t want to show “five X-Men (even if one of them was Marvel Girl) fighting a woman.”

In the last twenty years, readings of the Banshee character as derived or influenced by racist portrayals of the Irish from Victorian times have gained traction. This has progressed to accusations of the portrayal of Banshee actually being racist and being described as “startlingly racist.” The long-running comic podcast *Cerebro* even compares Roth’s Banshee portrayal to “draw[ing] a character named The Golem [in a Jewish] blood libel pamphlet.”

At first glance, while one may be tempted to see an influence, the progression of accusations and assertions need challenging.

With the documented influence of W.B. Yeats in the Marvel world, coupled with examination of the character himself, it becomes evident that the Banshee depiction was born from a place of respect, rather than any racist notions at all. Even if it was not the ideal portrayal, Banshee was styled as an adult-sized leprechaun, like an aristocratic Dandy, complete with the pointed ears of the Fae.

Following considerable research, speaking to writers and artists, examination of historical

testimony, interviewing contemporary fans of the time – importantly including actual Irish fans – I make the argument that the Banshee’s visual styling was drawn from Irish mythology rather than a choice to recycle Victorian racist caricatures.

**Biography:** James is a train driver living in London, a comic fan from Dublin, and an independent scholar. He has just been nominated as a finalist for the 2024 Hugo Awards for his Fanzine Journey Planet. James has presented *V for Vengeance, The Deathless Men* at IGNCC in 2022 and “The Value of Diversity in Marvel” at the 2022 Worldcon in Chicago.

**Assimilation and Subversion of Visual and Narrative Mythology in the Graphic Novels of Amruta Patil**

**Ananya Banerjee (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The vast array of visual, oral, and written traditions of mythology in India has been a matter of great scholarly. The basic nature of such rich and complex networks of texts can be most simply described through the paradigm developed by A K Ramanujan through his reading of Charles Saunders Pierce, particularly on the levels of iconic, indexical and symbolic relationships between different versions or variants of a myth or a mythology. This paradigm is handy in the discussion of texts of the ancient and the medieval pasts of the people in India as well as of the recent times. Keeping this in mind, here we would like to focus on three graphic novels published in the last decade of the present century, as those have been composed by Amruta Patil (1979 -) who is both an excellent visual artist and a story teller. Patil’s first graphic novel *Kari* came out in 2008 where she made her mark as a female novelist through her moving account of a young girl depicted from feminist angle focusing on the problematic themes of sexuality, friendship and death. But thereafter Patil rendered tales from the *Mahabharata* in *Adi Parva: Churning of the Ocean* (2012) and *Sauptik: Blood and Flowers* (2016) and finally the *Brihadaranyak Upnishad* in *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest* (2019), all brought out by Harper Collins, India. We would try to read these three texts on both visual and narrative planes underscoring their inter-relationship. As an artist, Patil seems to be aware of several mythological renderings of the olden times in Indian sculptures, miniature paintings, and other art-works and this is one of the traditions she falls back upon besides her assimilation of modernist western visual art as championed by Gauguin, Cezzane, Matisse, Picasso, Frida Kahlo and Georgia O’Keefe. The East and the West seem to be at a dialogue in her use of lines and colours, in the treatment of figures as well as of the backgrounds. And as a story-teller of great intellectual depth, she is deploying the techniques of flash-back and flash-forward, interior monologues and multiple narrators in exposing gaps in conventional telling and retellings of those mythologies, often subverting various discourses of power from women’s perspectives and also deconstructing the many central and the marginal binaries created by religious dogma, patriarchy, socio-economic disparities, and age-old moral and ethical values. The river Ganga in *Adi Parva*, the character of Ashwatthama in *Sauptik*, and shadowy figure of Katyayani in *Aranyaka* play the roles of *Sutradhar* which generates the effect of estrangement in these graphic novels, as one may generally come across in Brecht’s epic drama. Patil as a woman artist and author thus blends her twine talent creatively in an entirely new genre which finds double contexts – the past and the present, in her works.

**Biography:** Ananya Banerjee is a PhD scholar at the Department of English, Kazi Nazrul University, Asansol, West Bengal, India. Her research interests are based on mythology, environmental issues and feminism as represented in Indian English Graphic Novels.

**Stripped Bare: Rube Goldberg, New York Dada, and the Mobilized Object**

**Jonathan Bass**

**Abstract:** The cartoonist Rube Goldberg enjoys a long history of intersection with the artistic avant-garde and, in particular, with Marcel Duchamp. My paper will look at an early but as far as we know *missed* intersection between Goldberg and Duchamp, when both were working in Paris in 1914, at the start of World War I. I want to consider the representations of the French military mobilization in Goldberg’s Paris cartoons and Duchamp’s more abstract but perhaps no less comic representations of the same in his preparatory work for his early masterpiece, the *Large Glass*. I want to compare these with their later work made in response to the American mobilization (1917), when both artists were working in New York.

Goldberg and Duchamp would become famous for visual work that transfers everyday objects into the mixed material and imaginary spaces of the comics page and the art gallery – notably, but not limited to, Goldberg’s elaborate machines for completing simple tasks and Duchamp’s readymades, such as *Fountain*. In relation to this work, I will argue that their transformations of everyday objects can be appreciated in terms of what each artist represented as happening to such objects during military mobilization.

Attention to the mobilized object in their work illuminates Goldberg’s and Duchamp’s respective views of the relations between comics, technology, and modernist visual art. To this end, I will look at Goldberg’s mobilization of artists and artworks in his screwball machinery, often in accidentally Duchamp-alluding ways, and Duchamp’s deliberate mobilization of a murder-machine from Goldberg’s *Boob McNutt* in *New York Dada*, an experimental publication edited with Man Ray.

**Biography:** Jonathan Bass teaches comics, multimodal composition, and information design in the English Department, Writing Program, and School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

**The Future Is Post Digital? UK Digital Comics Creators, Publishers, and Readers Creating the Comics Ecosystem(s)**

**Linda Berube**

**Abstract:** Some scholars claim we are in a post digital future (Cramer and Jandric, 2021) when not quite 25 years ago the future was set to be all digital (McCloud, 2000; Poe, 2001; Gomez, 2008; Price, 2012). The current reality for the creation, production, and consumption of digital comics is more complex. The creation and production processes, “the nexus of practice” (Bramlett, 2015) in the digital comics publishing ecosystem, so to speak, combine in diverse ways to create a comic first, “a formation of discrete interactions” (Antonini et al., 2020) even, then to be manifested in print or digital form depending upon where the readers are, the intentions of the creator, and what the publishers’ business model is.

According to this comic first-format second perspective, it is not useful to consider “‘analog’ and digital algorithmic magic to be two different things. Instead, you would analyse them as one comprehensive phenomenon…In such an analysis, one may end up finding that the criterion of ‘analog’ versus ‘digital’ is not the most important (Cramer and Jandric, 2021, p. 968). In this sense, the “one comprehensive phenomenon” is the comic, the digital and print manifestations only important within the particular ecosystem within which the comic is read. Indeed, the more casual, incidental readers of digital comics, often encountering them in a non-comic setting (social media and messaging apps, for instance), are not so much focused on the material aspects of comics but on what meaning the comic has for them, how it demonstrates and strengthens their views and experiences. These can also be reinforced through haptics, the physical encounter with the containers of devices and platforms.

The findings from my doctoral digital comics research, based on such Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) methods as interviews and iterative talk aloud (ITA) reading sessions with UK creators, publishers, and readers of digital comics, while revealing that all comics are essentially “born digital”, suggest a mixed economy, a mash-up, between print and digital practices creating a comics ecosystem (or multiple ecosystems) informed by comic and non-comic communities. In this presentation, I will review these findings and discuss the ecosystems in which comics are found, including the many types of interactions between the digital environment and those who experience it.

**Biography:** Linda Berube is an AHRC Collaborative Partnership doctoral researcher investigating digital comics creation, production, and consumption processes, supported by the British Library and City, University of London. She has published on reader interaction with web archives and is the author of Do You Web 2.0? Public Libraries and Social Networking (Elsevier, 2011).

**“Oh my God! I feel so objectified!”: Decoding the Discrimination, Discomfort, and Disgust through Comics in Ayesha Tariq’s Sarah**

**Partha Bhattacharjee (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Within the postulates of comics studies and the techniques for decoding the strategies of colour used in comics, this paper broadly discusses how comics facilitates Ayesha Tariq to demonstrate the nuances of discrimination in a house where a boy is more favoured than a girl through the medium of colour, illustrations, and imageries. Ayesha Tariq’s Sarah: The Suppressed Anger of the Obedient Pakistani Daughter (2015) records the discriminated life of a 17-year-old girl named, Sarah, focussing on the hazards she needs to perform to be a “perfect daughter.” Refraining from the notions of the orthodox ‘graphic novel,’ Tariq figuratively features both in colour usage and unique illustrating style to portray the diverse dimensions of gender discrimination in society. This article meditates on the role of comics and the implications of colours employed in interpreting gender discrimination. However, it is sometimes tough to present the minor nuances of it in the visual medium. Since the role of visual literacy splits into three categories: visual thinking, visual learning, and visual rhetoric/communication, it corroborates the very concept of the “ability to understand pictorial information” (Duncan 14). Comics creators find it a suitable medium that can be used in a highly effective and impressive way to sensitise the readers to the major and minor cruxes of discrimination in society.

**Biography:** Partha Bhattacharjee is currently working as an Assistant Professor of English in SRM University Andhra Pradesh (4th July 2022 – till date). He earned his Doctoral Degree from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Patna on 15th April 2019. He has published in reputed journals, Journal of Visual Communication in Medicine (Taylor & Francis, Q1), Studies in Comics (Q1), Journal of International Women&#39;s Studies, Journal of Gender Studies (Taylor & Francis, Q1), Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics (Taylor & Francis, Q1), The Translator (Taylor & Francis Q1), IUP Journal of English Studies (Q3), Atlantic Literary Review, to name a few. He (along with Dr. Priyanka Tripathi) received funds from the Postcolonial Studies Association, UK for organizing an International Conference on Postcolonial Studies in Comics and Graphic Narratives from South Asia at IIT Patna (25th – 26th September 2021).

**The Auteur as Algorithm – Subjectivity, Trace and Automation in Comics Self-Publishing Practice.**

**Gareth Brookes (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Resistance to AI-assisted production has been vocal in alternative comics self-publishing communities. These communities place value on the auteur and the expression of subjectivity through drawing, often in the context of autobiographical comics. In practice this auteur model is enabled by an array of digital and mechanical tools automating procedures of production and distribution through online sharing. This paper will consider the inscription of the indexical trace of the body in small press comics practice to critique this resistance.

European small press has been described in modernist terms by Bart Beaty as an ongoing attempt to reinscribe the aura of the work of art into the mechanically reproduced object. As such, small press comics practice can be theorised as a set of continuously adapting re-inscription strategies responding to reproduction technologies.

AI image generation systems pose a particular challenge to these strategies. Through the training of AI programs on image information available on the internet, these systems simulate both the subjective trace of the body and the intersubjective trace of bodies in comics history. The auteur subject as cultural worker becomes estranged from lineages of cartooning which value commitment to history and craft.

Through an analysis of recent comics in which the redrawing of subjective digital experiences become both subject matter and procedure, I will argue that performances of drawing from, and sharing through online platforms contribute to an ecology of digital reconfiguration which increasingly reflects operations carried out by AI image generation systems.

**Biography:** Gareth Brookes is a PhD Candidate at the University of the Arts London. He has contributed to the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics, Studies in Comics* and *ImageText.* He is a practicing comics creator who has published three graphic novels, most recently *The Dancing Plague* (SelfMadeHero).

**Roger that? The Importance of the Radio in Rwandan Genocide Comics**

**Shawna Browarsky-Quigley (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The assumed profound effect the radio had on inciting and encouraging violence during the Rwandan genocide has only recently come into question. While most scholars would agree the radio did impact feelings leading to genocidal actions in Rwanda, to what degree remains contested. Using multimedia discourse analysis of several comics depicting and discussing the Rwandan genocide, I analyze how the radio has been presented to draw conclusions concerning its perceived importance in inciting violence in the genocide. Drawing on the findings of Gordon Danning (2018), my paper furthers his research using qualitative information to discern whether the radio had any meaningful contribution to violence. My analysis is based on the following comics: Smile Through the Tears: The Story of the Rwandan Genocide, Alice on the Run: One Child’s Journey Through the Rwandan Civil War, and Deogratias: A Tale of Rwanda. Through analyzing the function and representations of the radio in comics on the Rwandan genocide, I demonstrate that for victims and those writing on their behalf, the role of the radio in contributing to violence is marginal at best. I conclude that the radio, as discussed in comics, is most important for providing information to allow Rwandans to make informed choices on relocating and with whom to socialize to avoid violence. The assumption that the radio had a profound influence on impacting the actions of an entire ethnic group to commit genocide undermines the complexity of genocide while simultaneously reducing the Rwandan population to uneducated slaves of media.

**Biography:** Shawna Browarsky-Quigley is a second year PhD student at the University of Leicester. Her project examines comics about genocide with a particular focus on the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Cambodia. She is interested in exploring ideas concerning memory, commemoration, identity, and ethics. Her email is sabq1@leicester.ac.uk.

**AgAInst? Comics creation, cultural capital, participatory cultures, and stakeholders**

**Giorgio Busi Rizzi (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper aims to examine the creative, ethical, economic, and legal implications of generative AIs in comics production after the early 2020s paradigm turn that has been called “AI spring”.

Although the landscape is frantically evolving, one can sketch a provisional scenario: generative AIs are hybrid actors between a tool and a co-author, performing a partially synthetic creation of original art based on training performed on billions of existing text/image pairings; almost all existing products are paid, and corporations that have so far been caught off guard by this technological acceleration (Google, Meta, Apple, but also Adobe and other graphic design and editing-related companies) are launching, or about to launch, their own generative AIs; a first batch of graphic novels realized with AIs - by authors with a considerable cultural capital - has been published; controversies ensued, mostly concerning the gathering of data on which AI training is carried out; Europe is discussing an AI act that, amongst other measures, envisions copyright enforcements against AI-generated art.

My talk will streamline and discuss key issues emerging from these premises, related to the potential democratization of comics creation, the foregrounding of its (non-)creative process, the role of the Internet as a repository of easily available data and of stakeholders in exploiting it, and the potential impact of all these tensions on the symbolic and economic configuration of the comic field. I will argue for the need for a radical economic-legal paradigm shift in the face of a technological paradigm shift that has already taken place.

**Biography:** Giorgio Busi Rizzi is FWO post-doctoral fellow at Ghent University, where he is also adjunct professor, teaching the English Literature and the Comics and Graphic Novel courses. He holds a PhD in Literary and Cultural Studies from the Universities of Bologna and Leuven. He has mostly written on nostalgia and comics and digital comics.

**From dust to data to drawing – Archival research and emerging technologies in the creation of graphic history**

**Richard Conyngham (he/him)**

**Abstract:** No stranger to the dusty ‘dead matter’ of neglected state archives, Richard Conyngham is a South African writer-researcher who found his niche in reviving lost stories of anti-colonial struggle through the medium of collaborative graphic history. Court records, so often dry and inhibitory to storytelling, have emerged as his key inspiration, even where documents were written centuries ago, in dialects and scripts he cannot decipher. In this presentation, Conyngham gives insight into how his research and creative methodologies evolved while creating the graphic history anthology All Rise: Resistance and Rebellion in South Africa, and This Here Land, a forthcoming collection of illustrated frontier stories based on eighteenth century archival discoveries. He reflects on the role of technology at each step of these processes – from collecting and making sense of source materials (e.g. optical character recognition and neural machine translation) to overcoming challenges of remote research and collaborative storytelling. And he draws on examples of experimental graphic history by other creators, including Angola Janga by Brazilian author-illustrator Marcelo D’Salete, in an effort to demonstrate how a careful balance of technology and visual storytelling can stretch the boundaries of historical enquiry, broaden learning, and salvage previously untold stories of powerful contemporary relevance.

**Biography:** Richard Conyngham is a South African writer and educator with a background in civil-society activism. He is the author of the legal graphic history All Rise: Resistance and Rebellion in South Africa – 1910-1948, and he is currently completing a second book while undertaking visiting fellowships at St John’s College, Cambridge, and the Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory.

**Telling Time: Temporality in Comics by Brain Tumour Patients**

**Neal Curtis (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper makes a claim for the uniqueness of comics as a method for exploring time. This means going beyond the argument that comics is a medium with specific properties or affordances enabling representations of time to making a stronger claim about comics as a technology allowing us to explore time from the premise that time (diachronic) and space (synchronic) are the same, or through the tension between the co-presence of sequence (narrative) and simultaneity (image). The paper deploys an understanding of technology as generative and creative (*techne*), as a craft or process of revealing a truth about time that is hard to reproduce in other media. To do this, the paper focuses on examples of graphic medicine that explore the experience of living with a brain tumour. In particular, it focuses on the four issues of *Rick* that Gordon Shaw completed just prior to his death, and *Parenthesis* by Élodie Durand. These comics use a range of techniques to explore subjective and narrative time while also offering evocative representations of the ways a tumour can effect a patient’s experience of time. Both comics are incredible testimonies to the medical condition and the medium that carries the patients’ stories.

**Biography:** Neal Curtis is a professor in media and screen studies at the University of Auckland. He is the author of *Sovereignty and Superheroes* with Manchester University Press. He is currently writing *Comics and Communication: Graphic Storytelling from Activism to Science* with the University Press of Mississippi. He is also currently working on seven comics about brain tumours.

**Beep-ksssshhhhhhk-vrooop: Sounds of the Future**

**Geraint D’Arcy (he/him), Brian Fagence (he/him) and Elizabeth Allyn Woock (she/her)**

**Abstracts:** This panel aims to tackle the phenomenon of sound in futuristic and sci-fi comics with a three-pronged approach: a framework to map the staging of sound in comics, an examination of practices for writing sound in comics worldbuilding, and an exploration of existing practices of sound in comics. While sharing a theoretical framework, these papers will include a range of case studies and models, and will deepen the conversation through an interdisciplinary engagement with the topic.

**(Mise en scéne, acting, and space) . . . AND WORDS (and voice) in comics**

Words, like communications technologies, will settle to remain inscrutable black boxes of instrumentality and words in comics were never a problem for me until I started writing about them. Mise en scéne analysis requires walking a wire between the logo~ / icono~ ~phobic/ ~phillic gravities of comics scholarship (D’Arcy 2020, 49-51) and the spatial transmutability of locus and platea (2020, 113-121). That wire, it turns out, is strung over a minefield. Walking it may help us map the position of words and sounds in comics spatially and visually, and words themselves may lean towards semiotic stability, but the visuals push them back towards polysemy. They aren’t “just” words, they are sounds, they are voices. Who says the words? What makes the sounds? Who plays the music and sings the songs? Voices have accents, dialects, tone and timbre too. These are not just dialectically intimated through textual signifiers or lexical contractions, they can be calligraphic, typed, inked in contrasting colours; come from characters in a panel who mumble, be shouted by aliens out-of-frame or intoned by narrators who take no embodied part of the narrative and seem to exist somewhere between the universe that we are looking at, the paper it is printed on, and our eyeballs. All of this and how they “sound” still only happens in your imagination.

Mapping that, is far more complex. So, this paper will tease out the problem of words in comics in terms of character inference, spatial coordinates, graphic affordance and calligraphic implication. I wish I’d never spoken up.

**Sounds of Entropy: Science Fiction, Technology and Authentic Worlds**

The science fiction genre presents and is recognised through speculations and interrogations of humanity’s engagement with suppositional extrapolations of science and technology. It “is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin.” (Amis, cited in Jakubowski and Edwards 1983).

From a practitioner’s perspective when building worlds, it is essential to consider how the elements that comprise the world combine logically and cohesively. The central conflict of the storyline should be clear, as well as who populates it, their cultures, as well the ‘Magic and Technology’, and its ‘Currency and Economy’ (Hungerford 2012, p.107). Building a science fictional storyworld necessitates extrapolations of our world and scientific and technological ‘innovations’, the various components of the world must still though demonstrate an authenticity and believability in its design.

Entropy is a science fiction comics story set in a dystopic far future. It follows High Marshall Aban Ro, a Redeemer-Enforcer for the Pact, an organisation of multi-planetary governments whose rigid ideologies control their universal expansion. Through an analysis of my scriptwriting practice in the pre-production stages of creating Entropy, this talk will discuss the relationship between transformed technologies and sound in the pre-production stages of its development. It will discuss how authenticity and believability are key aspects for comics world building and explore through these creative processes what this may reveal of the use of technology and sound in comics.

**Soundscapes that flash forward, flash back**

Does the sight of a loudspeaker blaring over a barbed-wire fence raise your hackles, even when set on one of Jupiter’s moons? How many laser blasts before the page becomes deafeningly reminiscent of trench warfare? How many frames of clip-clop-ing horse hooves are needed to emphasize that the home planet was charming and rustic? By looking at the staging of soundscapes in sci-fi and futuristic comics, I would like to outline a possible methodology to bridge sound studies and memory studies with comics-based research.

This paper will combine Ian Hague’s framework for describing sound phenomena, Geraint D’Arcy’s conception of mise-en-scene in comics to structure the staging the soundscape on the page, and it will contextualize the soundscape into the existing practices of sound in cultural memory, building on the work of Karin Bijsterveld and Carolyn Birdsall. I will look at how comics set in a futuristic storyworld draw upon received practices of visualization already established in the storytelling of history to create soundscapes which echo medieval and 20th century warfare, urban and rural settings, and landscapes. This is not to argue that comics imagining the future lack originality; rather, by utilizing the shorthand indicators of established soundscapes, futuristic comics can more readily present an atmosphere which is immediately accessible and readable. In this way, the truly innovative, new *vrooooop*s of the storyworld stand out with dazzling strangeness, buttressed by the well-known and remembered. This paper utilizes examples from series such as *Promethea*, *Judge Dredd*, *The Incal*, *Bitch Planet* and *The Mercenary* to demonstrate a range of soundscapes which reach to the past to represent a sci-fi alternative present or future.

**Biographies:**

Geraint D’Arcy is Head of Media and Lecturer in Media Practice at The University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK. Geraint teaches across film, television and theatre forms and specialises in the application of design theory in theatre, film, and comics. He has been published in a variety of fields from theatre technology and design, to science fiction, spy fiction and gothic adaptation. Geraint is a practicing scenographer, performance poet and filmmaker and is the author of *Mise en Scène, Acting and Space in Comics* (Palgrave, 2020) and of *Critical Approaches to TV and Film Set Design* (Routledge, 2018).

Brian Fagence is Course Leader for MA Animation and lecturer in Critical Studies and Scriptwriting at the University of South Wales. He has been lecturing since 1998 and has published articles in the *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*, *Studies in Comics* and the *International Journal of Creative Media Research.*

Elizabeth Allyn Woock is an assistant professor at Palacký University, in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Her research ranges from medieval monastic disputes to medievalisms in comic books. She is currently working on a book about the poetics of medievalist spaces in comics and she is eagerly following the development of comics as a form of scholarly communication within comics-based research.

**Ordering Off-Menu: Otome Game Play and the Quest for Survival in Gwon Gyeoeul and SUOL’s Villains are Destined to Die (2020-Present)**

**Sarah Jessica Darley (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Recently, we have witnessed a rapid increase in the Western readership and consumption of East Asian graphic narratives. In addition to an influx of Japanese manga within the English-language market, the accessibility of Korean manhwa – taking the form of scrollable, full-colour webcomics found within both official apps and unofficial ‘scanlations’ – has garnered an explosive level of popularity. Coinciding with this growth of readership there emerges a cross-cultural interest in ‘Reincarnated Villainess’ narratives. These narratives exist upon an axis. They are, at heart, metafictional experiments in genre. Their proposed source material is either a romance (web-)novel or a female-demographic otome game; either a fixed narrative path or one with multiple potential variations. Whilst their protagonist, the villainess, is positioned as the subject of an isekai transportation from our modern world, or else shown to regress through time – usually from adulthood, at the precipice of execution, to childhood – and thus given the opportunity to correct the mistakes of her past-life.

Gwon Gyeoeul and SUOL’s Villains are Destined to Die (2020-present) falls upon this axis as an otome inspired isekai manhwa. Waking within the body of Penelope Eckhart, our protagonist discovers she is trapped within her favourite game: ‘Daughter of the Duke – Love Project’. Further, she finds herself stuck on ‘Hard Mode’, a secret prologue of the main narrative. Here, playing as Penelope, she must try and win the affection of those around her whilst working from a deficit, afforded none of the heroine’s natural advantages. To succeed means surviving the main narrative of the game. However, the limited multiple-choice options only lead to death. Thus begins Penelope’s active manipulation of option mechanics within an unbeatable game.

**Biography:** Sarah Jessica Darley (she/her) is a PhD candidate at the University of East Anglia, currently completing her thesis: ‘Like the Wild Beasts, She Lives Without a Future’: The Afterlives of Angela Carter in Contemporary Fairy Tale Literature. Her first publication – 'The Magical Girl Mirror: Reflections and Transcultural Transformations of Euro-American Fairy Tales in the Mahō Shōjo Genre' – can be found within *Cross-Cultural Influences Between Japanese and American Pop Cultures: POWERS OF POP* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023).

**Picturing What it is About Materiality in the Art of Lynda Barry**

**Anna Dasgupta (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Lynda Barry’s What It Is (2008) and Picture This (2010) are both meditations on the creative acts of writing and drawing. The two narratives, which are frequently punctuated by autobiographical elements, explore the relationship between readers, artists/creators/writers, and the image itself. The author’s self-referentiality is not only limited to the autobiographical but to the material and formal too.

Barry’s work is unrelenting in ‘drawing’ the readers' attention to the shape of the book, the shape of art, the shape of thoughts, and the shape of experience. She juxtaposes various media to create a chaos of the subconscious on the page. Through techniques like collage, linocut prints, and cut-and-paste, she evokes what Aaron Kashtan terms as “tactile memory” among readers (69) . In the absence of a linear or decipherable narrative, the readers are drawn to the textures of the text.

To understand the politics of visuality, graphic narratives (which is a predominantly ocular-centric form), need to be looked at through the lens of the technologies of writing involved. This is evident in Barry’s work which includes reflections on the nature of text/image. These reflections oscillate between being in the realm of abstraction and in the realm of tangible real-world practice

Keeping these texts in mind, this paper proposes to investigate the questions of visuality, materiality, and the alive-ness of an image in subjective perception.

**Biography:** Anna Dasgupta is an illustrator, comics creator, and a PhD scholar at the School of Letters, Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Along with animal studies, visual cultures, and materiality, one of her primary areas of interest includes the epistemological prospects of the comic form. Currently teaching as a guest lecturer at Jesus and Mary College (University of Delhi), she has previously served as guest faculty at Daulat Ram College (University of Delhi), and the Non-Collegiate Women’s Education Board (University of Delhi).

**Responses, Replacements, Relations: Refugee Comics and Digital Technologies**

**Dominic Davies (he/him) and Candida Rifkind (she/her)**

**Abstracts:** This panel combines material from our forthcoming co-authored book, *Graphic Refuge: Visuality & Mobility in Refugee Comics* (Wilfred Laurier UP 2024/25), with new research to contribute to ongoing conversations about the different consequences of digital technologies for refugee comics.

**Dominic Davies: “Don’t Shoot!” Witnessing the Fabric of War in Hamid Sulaiman’s Freedom Hospital**

“If Vietnam was the first ‘television war,’” remarked the journalist Christopher Koettl, then “Syria can indisputably be called the first ‘YouTube War.’” The first global conflict to be “born digital,” the Syrian War combined smartphones with social media to turn images into weapons that were wielded by every side, preventing any stepping back to regard the pain of others. Instead, viewers must either actively like and share images of violence to keep them circulating on social media platforms or quite literally disregard them, leaving them to fall to the bottom of a thread or stream. Comics have rightly been celebrated as a form of documentary witness, but this context places new stresses on graphic narrative. This paper asks: in a world where “to see” is increasingly not “to witness” but “to shoot,” what new visual strategies have refugee comics developed in response?

To begin to answer this question, the paper turns to the Syrian artist Hamid Sulaiman’s 2016 graphic novel, Freedom Hospital, which deliberately refuses to sort fact from fiction for its readers, an ambiguity that is matched in the comic’s opaque aesthetics. Drawn in sharply contrasting shadows of black and white that bear the influence of Frank Miller’s Sin City, Sulaiman’s images interpolate his readers not as witnesses but as actors, perhaps even aggressors. Their aesthetics reference the long history of image-based warfare, inviting readers to excavate the material relationship between the destroyed Syrian landscape and the materiality of the images they hold in front of them. Through scenes of infrastructural and aesthetic ruination, Freedom Hospital invites readers to feel the materiality of its images and sense the intimacy of the war’s violence, transforming the digital transmission of distant spectacles into an intensely proximate and embodied experience.

**Candida Rifkind: “Do You Want to Replace the Sky?” Matt Huynh’s Interactive Comics and the Refugee Artist**

Vietnamese-Australian comics artist Matt Huynh is best known for his interactive online comic, “The Boat” (2015), which uses hand-drawn images, animations, and sound to immerse viewers in the perilous ocean journey of a group of 1970s Vietnamese refugees. As the child of Vietnamese refugees, many of Huynh’s interactive online comics focus on this community’s memories of war, displacement, and settlement. Huynh’s most recent online interactive comic, How to Replace the Sky (2023), initially seems distant from these earlier themes, focusing autobiographically on the process of creating interactive comics. Here Huynh shows how his body has adapted to new drawing technologies, becoming bent out of shape because of them, and laments the increased technological mediation that defines the comics creator’s relationship to the drawn image. Nevertheless, Huynh rejects a total return to the artisanal, recognizing instead how thoroughly the technologies that make interactive comics possible form the horizon of his practice, a sky that is not so easily replaced.

In this paper, I draw on theories of embodied visualities and affective technologies in both comics and game studies to argue that How to Replace the Sky constitutes a self-reflexive meditation on the very concept of interactivity. While this may seem distant from his previous concerns with forced displacement and resettlement, the connection lies in Huynh’s mid-narrative statement that he had to work hard as a commercial artist to satisfy his refugee family’s values. The debt relations of survivor’s guilt and the filial duty to succeed are part of the long duration of refugeehood that Huynh has drawn about elsewhere. Here, his autobiographical comic illustrates how the multi-generational labour of performing gratitude and becoming the ‘model minority’ takes its physical and psychic toll, even when he has achieved his dream of becoming a comics artist.

**Biographies:**

Dominic Davies is a Senior Lecturer in English at City, University of London. He is the author of *Urban Comics: Infrastructure and the Global City in Contemporary Graphic Narratives* (2019), along with many journal articles and book chapters addressing the representation of infrastructure and violence in literature and visual culture. He is also with Candida Rifkind the co-editor of *Documenting Trauma in Comics* (2020) and the co-author of *Graphic Refuge: Visuality & Mobility in Refugee Comics* (forthcoming 2024/25). His most recent book is *The Broken Promise of Infrastructure* (2023).

Candida Rifkind is a Professor in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg, Canada. In addition to numerous journal articles and book chapters, she co-edited Documenting Trauma in Comics and is currently co-writing Graphic Refuge with Dominic Davies. She has co-edited a special issue of Canadian Literature on “The Pasts, Presents, and Futures of Canadian Comics” (2022), and another for a/b: Auto/Biography Studies on “Migration, Exile, and Diaspora in Graphic Life Narratives” (2020), as well as *Canadian Graphic: Picturing Life Narratives* (2016) and the online open access resource Indigenous Comics and Graphic Novels: An Annotated Bibliography (2019).

**Sketchnoting, Analogue and Digital**

**Paul Fisher Davies (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper will offer a look back over a decade of sketchnoting at comics studies conferences and others. The aim will be to reflect on the affordances offered by sketchnoting over against (digital) text notes, and analogue, material sketchnoting versus the use of digital devices.

The paper will consider:

• The material and practical, embodied impulse to sketchnote

• The emphasis on academic work as social and material, not just textual and mode-agnostic (e.g., pdf vs physical book, video vs face-to-face)

• Affordances and limitations of physical sketchnotes vs digital ones

• Other methodologies from other practitioners

It will ask questions such as:

• Do digital affordances take away from the materiality, presence and ‘comics-ness’ of the notes?

• Are advance notes or notes made from video different?

• How does this compare to ‘verbatim comics’, the recording and transcription of academic discussion, then later, collaboration on a joint comics adaptation?

• What are the affordances of PowerPoints and the phone/iPad camera as corollaries to and material for sketchnoting?

The paper will also consider digital and physical forms of sharing of such notes:

• Sharing sketchnotes on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: limitations and affordances of these digital media

• The social value of sharing and sketchees’ pleasure in this form of material and visual representation

• Print sharing, publication, and possible limitations of this

• Ethical issues in sharing sketchnotes

The paper will give plenty of examples of these instances from my own archive, with acknowledgement of others’ work and approaches.

**Biography:** Paul Fisher Davies has published in *Studies in Comics*, the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* and others, including academic articles in comics form, sketchnotes, and more. He teaches English Language and Literature at East Sussex College, Lewes. His monograph *Comics as Communication: A Functional Approach* was published in 2019.

**From Golden Legacies to Afrofutures: The common themes in how Black cartoonists use communications technologies**

**Darnel Degand (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This talk will give a sociocultural and historical overview of how technology has been used by Black cartoonists. I start by sharing my own personal observations as a consumer of comics from the late 80s to now. I’ll discuss how my experiences inspired my research interests in comics, media, and education. And then I will share themes from my research that support my arguments for how Black cartoonists have consistently used communications technologies to remind us of Black people’s contributions to society (and more specifically, comics culture).

**Biography:** Darnel Degand is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at University of California-Davis (UC Davis). He explores social processes within media production environments and media consumption experiences (with a special focus on comics during formal, nonformal, and informal instruction). He received his Ed.D. in Instructional Technology and Media from Teachers College Columbia University, M.S. in Digital Imaging and Design from New York University, and B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics from the University of Pennsylvania. Before joining UC Davis, Darnel acquired two decades of professional experience as an interactive media producer. A sampling of his resume includes roles as a game designer/developer for Sesame Workshop, technical development manager for an advertising company acquired by Amazon, and multimedia designer for the City University of New York. Some of his publications can be found in the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *Studies in Comics*, and *The Comics Grid*. More details at [www.darneldegand.com](http://www.darneldegand.com).

**Abol Tabol and a hundred years of technology-speak in Image-Text: Re-situating the Graphic Fiction in India**

**Nishtha Dev and Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay**

**Abstract:** The contemporary Graphic novel in India is a space constituted by a capitalist technification of the literary landscape. Widely read as signifying protest , it also engages with its material context by representing sites of critique of the dominant discourses that structure this form. Unlike the intellectual histories proposed thus far, the technological turn of the graphic fiction in India has enabled us to trace their language of expression to the late colonial deliberations on the same. Much like the conversations around technology in the late colonial period, Graphic fiction in India institutes for itself a mediative role that plays on its ambivalence.

The paper engages with these dominant studies of Graphic fiction in India and suggests a realignment of the historical consensus about Indian Graphic novel beginning with Orijit Sen’s The River of Stories (1994). It proposes that Sukumar Ray’s Abol Tabol (1923) is one of the first works of Graphic fiction in India, and a text that in its ideological constitution represents the political radicalism and a stance of protest, seen as a defining feature of the form in India by contemporary scholarship. Analyzing the similarities between the aesthetic and ideological constitution of Abol Tabol and the contemporary Graphic novel, the paper proposes a rereading of the scholarly discussion about the origins of the Graphic novel in India to include Sukumar Ray’s visual-verbal text Abol Tabol as contributing to the growth of the Graphic novel in its current form.

**Biographies:**

Nishtha Dev (she/her), and alumnus of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, has been teaching in the Department of English, Sophia College for Women as Assistant Professor since 2013. Her current research interests include Translation (Theory and Practice), Popular Culture, Graphic Narratives, Visual Literacies and Critical Theory. She finished M.Phil in English Literature from University of Delhi in 2010 and is currently pursuing Ph.D. from SNDT University, Mumbai, on Graphic Fiction in India, an area on which she has also published articles in books and journals, and presented papers in national and international conferences.

Dr. Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay (she/her) is an Associate Professor at the Department of English, SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai. She has been trained in Literary Studies at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, Jawahralal Nehru University(M.A.), New Delhi and Ruprecht Karls Universitat, Heidelberg(Ph.D). Post-colonial Studies, Culture Studies Digital Humanities and emerging literatures are her areas of interest.

**Feelings of the Uncanny: Robot Representation in Manga through Osamu Tezuka’s and Naoki Urasawa’s Pluto**

**Meriel Dhanowa (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This paper will explore the depictions of robot characters in manga through the examples of Osamu Tezuka’s ‘Greatest Robot on Earth’ narrative from Astro Boy, and Naoki Urasawa and Takashi Nagasaki’s acclaimed 2004 reimagining, Pluto. I will be using both manga, since while Tezuka’s original remains an undisputed classic, Urasawa elevates and expands on many philosophical ideas and themes for which Tezuka laid the foundation, and as such can be considered a masterpiece in its own right.

Manga has the ability to effectively deliver narratives on the posthuman from both a visual and storytelling perspective. This is evident in Pluto through the range in existing character designs. Some have a stereotypically mechanical build while others resemble humans so closely many people are initially unable to tell the difference. This is accentuated with Urasawa’s creative inclusion of human bodies for the significant robot characters. The core narrative takes place in a futuristic world where robots are established as an existing staple, leaving the manga free to examine the lives of several robots as they process complex emotions, and reflect on their diverse experiences and worldviews. Reactions of human characters to their presence is also a recurring element as many often voice surprise or disbelief at the robots’ ability to process such advanced emotions, strongly demonstrating how they are determined to view the robots as an uncanny other.

As a result, the boundaries between the human and the posthuman other are constantly challenged through the poignant questions posed on the futility of spreading hatred.

Due to current developments with AI technology, both versions of the narrative remain relevant as they examine both the limits and freedom of Artificial Intelligence. Therefore this paper will demonstrate how the manga medium can provide innovative and engaging storytelling with complex emotional depth through posthuman characters.

**Biography:** Meriel Dhanowa is a Ph.D. candidate in Text/Image Studies at the University of Glasgow. She completed an M.Phil in Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge. She has presented papers at the Joint Conference of IGNCC and IBDS in 2021 and 2023 and IGNCC22, as well as the University of Glasgow College of Arts PG Conference 2021 and 2022.Her research interests include Text/Image Studies, Manga, Bande Dessinee, British Girls comics, Animation, Comics and Children’s Literature.

**Born of Earth and Fire: making comics using ancient technology**

**Zu Dominiak (they/them)**

**Abstract:** Comics reflect the technological trends of their era, and as a medium, they are particularly tied to dominant mass production methods (Kunzle, 1973). Early comics made use of printing methods such as etchings; 20th century comics were litho and digital press based; and we now exist in a time of fully digitally produced, non-material webcomics. In many cases, the manufacturing-like approach of comics-making involves tight schedules for artists and results in predictable, pre-planned and reliable outcomes. This paper asks how we might protest this approach, using technology in the comics making process that is purposefully ancient, material and unpredictable. In particular, my paper will delve into exploring the use of technology older than agriculture, dating back to the Palaeolithic period: ceramics (Craig et al., 2013). Despite modernization, ceramics creation remains a slow, unpredictable process that demands practical skills, knowledge of technical processes and most of all: patience.

**Biography:** Zu Dominiak (they/them) is a comics creator, researcher, and Programme Leader in Concept and Comic Arts at De Montfort University, Leicester. They completed their PhD, Comics Art in Museums and Galleries: New Methods for Engagement and Education at the University of Dundee. Their research interests are mainly in formalist approaches to comics, curation and exhibition of comics art. As a creator, they produce public information and healthcare comics, having worked for a wide range of clients, including the Imperial College of London, Bournemouth University and the NHS. In their spare time, they dabble in breaking the comics form.

**Ecologies of a Mediatized Cityscape: Bhagwati Prasad and Amitabh Kumar’s *Tinker.Solder.Tap. A Graphic Novel***

**Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This paper will analyse the alternative universe built through media devices starting in the early days of the VCR’s arrival in India and the contributions of this to forms of neocolonialism in Bhagwati Prasad and Amitabh Kumar’s graphic novel *Tinker.Solder.Tap.* I will argue that, through the use of the comic medium, the authors zero in on the construction of an alternative reality that integrates traditional forms of life within global consumption networks, while also problematising the necessary reinvention of an ecology of interhuman relations when faced with increasing mediatized person-to-person interaction.

As we witness the gradual replacement of singers by CDs and cassettes (people replaced by devices) and the ways in which virtual reality overlaps and sometimes replaces local habits, we see the ways people interact in traditional Indian society changing from traditional ways to technology-assisted ones. In the sequential portraying of life offered by the comics medium, modern technology challenges traditional handicraft and mobile phones invade the world of old artisanship as parts of a fast global spread of technology, in which we recognize a pervasive form of device-assisted neocolonialism.

I will interrogate the structure of these neocolonial practices at the interface between environmental postcolonial theory (understood mostly in Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin’s sense, as a postcolonial ecology of interhuman relations, questioned as they face the challenge of human-replacing technology) and the study of postcolonial comics as a critique of postcoloniality (in the light of the 2015 edited collection by Binita Mehta and Pia Mukherji).

**Biography:** Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru is a Reader in English at the University of Bucharest. She has a PhD in postcolonial literature from UEA Norwich and is interested in global writing in English, ecocriticism, visual culture, gender and multiethnic identities. Her forthcoming book is Ecological Privacies: From Alternative Landscapes to Private Spaces of the Mind in Contemporary Women’s Writing (under contract with Brill).

**Mapping Hypercomics onto Architectural Spaces**

**Alex Fitch (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Between 2000 and 2014, cartoonist Daniel Merlin Goodbrey created semi-interactive webcomics termed ‘hypercomics’. These webcomics - with the medium’s ability to be read in up, down and across screen - added the ability for the reader to follow different paths when choosing branches in narratives.

While initially created for screens, Goodbrey also added comics to architectural spaces, with the paths one might follow on an interactive device being mapped onto the walls of buildings, so that the movement of a mouse or swipe across the screen is translated into traversing a corridor or staircase, to read a print version of the same narrative. Examples of this include his installation at Avicenne Hospital in Bobigny, 2009 (in collaboration with graphic novelist David Baillie and architect Valerio Ferrari), and at the Pumphouse Gallery, Battersea in 2010.

Comics scholars Ian Hague and Simon Grennan have noted the ludic possibilities of graphic novels that mix architectural forms with the presentation of board games in Chris Ware’s Building Stories (Grennan & Hague, 2014), as well as in Goodbrey’s work (Hague in La Cour, Grennan & Spanjers, 2022), suggesting this is a new sub-genre starting to emerge in the 21st Century, but related to other interactive elements of earlier comics. This paper will explore the haptic and sensorial experience of reader interactions with hypercomics on screens and in physical locations, with reference made to other practitioners in this mixed media field such as Lars Arrhenius, Peony Gent and Dave McKean.

**Biography:** Alex Fitch presents the UK's only monthly broadcast radio show on comics: Panel Borders. Alex has been published widely on the topics of comics and film – topics he lectures on at the University of Brighton, where he is also pursuing a PhD investigating "The Depiction of Architecture in Comic Books".

**Oil, Forest, Arctic: Technologies of Extraction in Graphic Narratives from North America and Sweden**

**Mike Classon Frangos (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper looks at two resource extraction narratives in the form of documentary comics from the region of the circumpolar arctic and subarctic, one from North America and one from northern Sweden: Joe Sacco’s Paying the Land (2020) and Mats Jonsson’s Nya Norrland [The new north] (2017). Both works use documentary comics to take up issues of resource extraction in arctic and subarctic contexts—as well as Indigenous perspectives. Sacco’s Paying the Land has been analyzed in comics research as an Anthropocene/Capitalocene narrative and a witness of Indigenous responses to resource extraction and climate catastrophe. Jonsson’s Nya Norrland is an autobiographical comic documenting the author’s own return to his hometown in northern Sweden, with a focus on the effects of the lumber industry and contemporary neoliberalism. Both works raise issues of colonialism and capitalism in the development of arctic and subarctic environments and the stakes for Indigenous communities—as, for example, Jonsson explores his own family’s suppressed Same heritage in the context of Sweden’s ongoing exploitation of the north.

In this paper, I pay attention to the documentary comics form as employed by practitioners such as Sacco and Jonsson in the specific context of the circumpolar north. Documentary comics, I argue, visualize extractive practices and their technologies, and emphasize the urgency of response to social and ecological devastation, particularly relevant in arctic and subarctic environments. In this context, I show how documentary comics emerge as a form for recording and responding to extractive industries and their technologies, precisely through the verbal-visual affordances of the medium.

**Biography:** Mike Classon Frangos is Senior Lecturer in English literature at Linnaeus University, Sweden, and affiliated researcher at the Linnaeus University Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies. He has published articles and book chapters on English and Swedish-language comics and graphic novels, queer and feminist comics, postcolonial and migration literatures, and digital humanities.

**Experimenting with comics**

**Karrie Fransman (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Comics have long held the ability to harness and adapt to emerging technologies. If, like Will Eisner, you define comics as 'sequential art' you can easily unleash them from their paper cages into any physical (or indeed virtual) space. All you need is a sequence and a story. In this keynote talk comic creator Karrie Fransman will present her own (and others’) experimental comic work; from comics on paper, in 3D spaces such as dolls houses and jewellery boxes, to digital spaces embracing emerging technologies from iPads to virtual reality. We will also look back into the past at the ways comics have moved off cave walls to tapestries and sculptures to see how this might inspire future experiments. With the threat of AI looming over us, we will need to find innovative ways to protect artists’ work and preserve the human soul of our artform so that we may create and share visual stories for generations to come.

**Biography:** Karrie Fransman’s comics have been published by The United Nations, The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, the BBC, The Arts Council and The British Red Cross. She has published 4 books: ‘Gender Swapped Fairy Tales’ (2020) and ‘Gender Swapped Greek Myths’ (2023, Faber & Faber-) both co-created with Jonathan Plackett and two graphic novels: ‘The House That Groaned’ (2012, Penguin Random House), and the award winning ‘Death of the Artist’ (2015, Jonathan Cape). She created an installation for the British Council and Southbank Centre and was commissioned to make a ‘Selves Portrait’ for an exhibition with Manchester Art Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery. She is Creative Director at PositiveNegatives.org who uses comics and animation to amplify academic research. She is a founding member of The Comics Cultural Impact Collective (CCIC) that aims to raise awareness of the value of comics in the UK. You can find more of her work at www.karriefransman.com.

**Putting the X in Comix: social media platforms, creation, and remediation in Quarantine Comix and Nap Comix**

**Thomas Gebhart (he/him)**

**Abstract:** As products of digital tools and technologies, digital comics provide a compelling lens to examine how comics cultures and networks have developed in the digital environment. Nowhere is this more apparent than the number of comics creators that use social media platforms to publish, promote, and build communities online. Using social media makes comics publishing accessible to creators from diverse and marginal backgrounds. Sean Kleefeld (2020) argues for a very personal side to how creators use social media, not just as a promotional tool or revenue stream but to build meaningful connections with creators and readers around shared identities and values. Publishing a comic on social media platforms means creators can attract a readership that is both specific and broad.

Taking Rachel Smith's *Quarantine Comix* and *Nap Comix* as case studies, this paper will explore aspects of the relationship between digital comics and social media platforms. It will examine how digital comics distributed via social media provide an interface for connection and collaboration between creator and reader. From here the paper will explore potential conflicts between the themes and content of digital comics and the technologies they rely on. It will argue that using social media platforms problematises the idea that the Web lets creators “explore the comics medium with an ethical dimension and a networked culture” (Fenty, Houp and Taylor 2004, p.10) because the cultural and social contexts of digital comics may be at odds with the cultural, social, and political contexts of the platforms they rely on.

**Biography:** Thomas Gebhart is an AHRC CDP PhD student at University of the Arts London and the British Library. His research explores the social, cultural, and technological factors of digital comics that foreground marginal voices. The research will address the opportunities and challenges these comics present for UK Legal Deposit.

**Comics, Oral History and the Opioid Overdose Crisis**

**Aaron Goodman (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This presentation will focus on the use of technology to create comics in order to educate the public and policy makers about the role that peer harm reduction workers play in the midst of the ongoing opioid overdose, as well as work-related stressors and stigma they frequently experience. Since a public health emergency was declared in 2016, over 32,000 people across Canada have died from causes associated with substance use. Harm reduction workers, also known as peers, have personal experience with drug use. They play a critical role in ensuring that at-risk people have access to lifesaving health care services. Yet many peers report being traumatized by frequently witnessing overdose, feeling exploited at work, having difficulty accessing affordable housing, and more. This community-based participatory research project was conducted in British Columbia (B.C.) and led by Aaron Goodman, Ph.D, faculty member in Journalism and Communication Studies at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, B.C. As part of the study, a team of student researchers conducted multiple, in-depth oral history interviews — and produced comics — with harm reduction workers across the province. Researcher-artists used a range of technologies on their own to produce art and in collaborative ways with some peers, who are also artists. The study also engaged peers in graphic-elicitation interviews. In these conversations, comics were used to invite collaborators to communicate in nuanced ways about their work-related stressors as a means of challenging stigma about them and people who use substances.

**Biography:** Aaron Goodman, Ph.D. is a faculty member in Journalism and Communication Studies at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, B.C., Canada. His community-based participatory research involves oral history, collaborative testimony, and comics production with marginalized groups impacted by the opioid overdose crisis.

**Divine Mystery: Morpheus and God**

**Dominick Grace (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Neil Gaiman’s Sandman visits and revisits key Christian themes across its run, while never naming the Christian God. Named gods there are aplenty, and Hell, and Lucifer, and angels, and even a version of Heaven, but Gaiman leaves that God invisible. We must, as Morpheus himself harrows Hell to find that which has been lost, descend into the text to see what is hidden beneath its surface. Is God there? What might He (or it) be in this universe?

The series was marketed as horror when it began, and manages to be genuinely horrific in its early stories. Gaiman sets Morpheus up not as a conventional hero but as mysterious and potentially dangerous. Indeed, other characters often believe that Morpheus is a monster—as Lyta Hall deems him, for instance. He is also on several occasions thought to be literally a demon or devil.

However, Morpheus is also frequently analogized with God, or a god. For instance, his riddliness about his name echoes Jesus’s when questioned by Pilate, especially in issue 30, when Morpheus meets the Emperor Augustus. Augustus repeatedly asks if he is a God, and who he is. Morpheus’s response, “I am myself” has an “I am who am” resonance. But can Morpheus have both devilish and divine echoes? Well, though God does not appear in the series, it does suggest that the idea of God as infinitely good is problematic at best. Indeed, we might find ourselves seeing Lucifer and God as not far removed from each other, ethically. That which appears good and Godlike may not be, and that which appears to be the opposite also may not be. The good/evil binary, so often central to superhero comics, does not work for Gaiman. Instead, he requires his readers to parse choices and actions carefully, giving them a Mystery.

**Biography:** Dominick Grace spent thirty years as a university professor of English before being put out to pasture, but he figures he still has a few good years left. He is coeditor of several books on comics, including The Canadian Alternative, with Eric Hoffman, and has published multiple papers on diverse topics.

**Visual journalism, image technology and the business of periodical print in 1870s London**

**Simon Grennan (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper will consider the emerging activities, characteristics, identities and roles of a new type of cultural producer, the visual journalist in the London periodical press of the 1870s.In common with nineteenth-century entertainments and news media of all types, from stage performances to novels, periodical publishing was a complex and dynamic collaborative enterprise (Smith 2016).The visual journalist’s role intersected a wide range of other roles in the business. Further, the reading environments for periodical publications were also extremely heterogeneous. This paper will outline the ethical imperative of print products of all types, resulting from the civic promotion of literacy, creating a politically contested environment for the business of periodical publishing (Brake, Bell and Finkelstein 2000: 3). The paper will describe the place of the visual journalist in the cycle of management, production and consumption of journals (Beetham 1996). Every role in the business was mediated through engagement with the machinery of print (Greenwood 2015). It will highlight the significance of relationships between visual journalists, image engravers, typographers, print and paper technicians (Modern Wood Engraving 1838, Maidment 2016). It will consider the feminisation of journalism, founded in concepts of spectatorship and the significance of spectacle for readers (Campbell 2000), the inadequacy of visual arts training relative to engraving (Huxley 1923) and the adoption of “visual slang” (Grennan 2020). It will map changes in the generation, description and allocation of gendered characteristics relative to types of labour, child-rearing, domestic lives, leisure and industrial production (Tusan 2004, Macdonald 1904, Echo 1869). Finally, the paper will briefly consider the significance of the contingencies of the business of periodical publishing, for visual journalists, through aspects of Marie Duval’s 1870s drawing career at Judy, or the London serio-comic journal.

**Biography:** Dr Simon Grennan is an awarded scholar of visual narrative and graphic novelist. He is author of *Thinking Through Drawing* (Bloomsbury 2022), *A Theory of Narrative Drawing* (Palgrave 2017), *Drawing in Drag by Marie Duval* (Book Works 2018) and *Dispossession* (Cape, 2015, one of The Guardian Books of the Year 2015). He is co-author and editor of *Key Terms in Comics Studies* (Palgrave 2022) and co-author of *Marie Duval, Maverick Victorian Cartoonist* (MUP 2020), *Marie Duval* (Myriad 2018) and The Marie Duval Archive (www.marieduval.org). Since 1990, he has been half of international artists team Grennan & Sperandio, producer of over forty comics and books. Dr Grennan is Professor of Art and Design and Associate Dean for Research and Innovation at the University of Chester, UK. He is Principal Investigator for the research project Marie Duval presents Ally Sloper: the female cartoonist and popular theatre in London 1869-85 (2014–16) and Co-investigator of Remediating Stevenson: Decolonising Robert Louis Stevenson's Pacific Fiction through Graphic Adaptation, Arts Education and Community Engagement (2022–25), both funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council UK. www.simongrennan.com

**Unveiling the Kaleidoscopic Spectrum: Decoloniality and Indian Femi9 Comics**

**Rounak Gupta (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Women’s comics of India are a potential ground for the emergence of decoloniality in the overall comics structure and form. They carry a non-essential in-betweenness in the traditional idea of comics and the new. Thus, this paper shows how Dyuti Mittal and Ikroop Sandhu achieve this phase of comic stylisation through their avant-garde drawing which decolonises comics from their western strongholds and introduces the medium to a new world. Within the liaisons of structural comics studies and decolonialism, this paper uses image function analysis (Duncan 2012, 43) to look at select works of Mittal and Sandhu – “The Taboo” (2013) and “Ellipsis” (2016). The main objective is to fetch out the minute details of Dyuti’s “cloud-like frame” (Nayar 2016, 585) and Ikroop’s “foreground against background style” (Badar et al. 2023, 308) to establish a direction for the decolonial fervour in Indian women comics. Also, this paper will show how these unique stylizations are liberating themselves from their Western counterpoints. Finally, and most importantly, it will try to understand how they refute and shatter the Western glass ceiling of comics stereotypes and reintroduce Indian comics in a novel, decolonial way.

**Biography:** Rounak Gupta is a PhD research Scholar at SRM University – AP under the supervision of Dr Partha Bhattacharjee (1st August- ongoing). He completed his Master of Arts in English from Banaras Hindu University and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Calcutta. He takes a general interest in reading, writing, and talking about South Asian graphic narratives, alternative comics, and visual representations of trauma, among others.

**Closing ComiXology: Fragility in the Digital Comics Ecosystem**

**Ian Hague (he/him)**

**Abstract:** On the 4th of December 2023, the ComiXology app, which had once been a tent-pole product for the tablet computing category, was discontinued. Its contents were merged into users’ Kindle libraries and Amazon (which had bought ComiXology, the company, in 2014) maintained that users could ‘continue to access [their] Comixology comics, graphic novels, and manga titles in the Kindle app’ (Amazon, 2023). In some ways, this event had a relatively minimal impact: the ComiXology app’s functionality had been brought progressively closer to Kindle’s since the 2014 acquisition, and the two apps’ libraries had already started to overlap. Nevertheless, the shuttering of ComiXology represents an interesting case study to explore the interconnectedness of digital comics. It points to the complex relationships between files, software and hardware, and the ways in which these relationships impact on the experiences that we have of digital works. In this presentation, I outline a framework for the understanding of digital comics that situates the work within a broader context of digital infrastructure, and then reflect on how interactions between elements of this framework produce complicated situations for the creators and readers of digital comics. The presentation focuses particularly on the implications of digital interconnectedness for economic and historical understandings of comics and shows how ComiXology’s demise casts light on the fragility of certain types of digital comics.

**Biography:** Dr Ian Hague is Reader in Graphic Narrative at the University of the Arts London (UAL). He wrote *Comics and the Senses: A Multisensory Approach to Comics and Graphic Novels* among other works. He founded Comics Forum (https://comicsforum.org/) and co-founded UAL’s Comics Research Hub (http://comicsresearch.arts.ac.uk/). Find out more at www.ianhague.com.

**Technologies of the Future: A Study of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind***

**Sk Tousif Hasan (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Hayao Miyazaki’s masterpiece *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, was serialized as a manga from 1982 to 1994. Miyazaki’s prowess of visual storytelling has acquired a major space for research in academia. This manga series, metaphorically visualizes a post-war Japan and disasters of a nuclear bomb. As the manga is concerned, technology has raised some serious question since its inception, post-industrial period technologies have put forward some deeper issues of its usage. Dystopian world building in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* includes many alternative possible technologies that seem sustainable and eco-friendly, while some others are not, mainly the instruments of the imperial forces. Two rival sides are seen heavily relying on different types of mechanical instruments to survive in this dystopian land. The central character, Nausicaä, got her name from Nausicaa of Homer’s *Odyssey*, meaning burner of the ships, as her name suggests, she is seen taking on enemy fleets. This paper will try to analyze the visual technologies and their interaction with nature and human lives. This paper will also aim to find alternative interactions and possible usage of sustainable technologies in a dystopian land.

**Biography:** Ph.D research Scholar, Dept. of English, Aliah University, Kolkata.

**“Third Spaces”, Digital Reading Communities, and Reader Interaction in Alison Bechdel’s dykestowatchoutfor.com**

**Cassia Hayward-Fitch (she/her)**

**Abstract:** It is well documented that Alison Bechdel’s *Dykes to Watch Out For* (1983 – 2008) originated as a syndicated newspaper comic strip which was subsequently turned into a series of twelve comic books. In these two formats, Dykes built an interactive reading community through letter writing both to Bechdel herself and the newspapers that published her work, where fans offered feedback and suggestions. However, the strip did not only exist within physical publication spaces but, from early 2006 until 2008, was also published online on Bechdel’s blog https://dykestowatchoutfor.com. This changed how fans interacted with both the work itself and with each other.

In this presentation, I show how the new technology of the internet enabled Bechdel to publish *Dykes to Watch Out For* on her blog – a paratext over which she had complete control. I analyze how this new publication space changed how readers consumed and interacted with the work. I argue that online publication enabled more instant communication and show how the publication of reader feedback on the same page as the comics presented both texts as equally important, thereby closing the gap between creator and reader. I look specifically at how the comments section under each strip enabled readers to respond not only to Bechdel’s content but also to each other — something not possible until then outside of physical meeting spaces. Through this, I argue that *Dykes to Watch Out For*’s comments sections became digital “third places” in which readers could build communities.

**Biography:** Cassia Hayward-Fitch (she/her) is a Ph.D. student in American Studies at the University of East Anglia. She is working on a thesis titled “Drawn this Gay: Queer Community Activism in the Serial Comics of Alison Bechdel and Howard Cruse”. She can be contacted at c.hayward-fitch@uea.ac.uk.

**Digital Databases and Donald Duck Weekblad (or Double Data Entry is Double Dutch to Me)**

**Mark Hibbett (he/him) and Ian Horton (he//him)**

**Abstract:** This paper introduces a project examining fan understanding of the character coherence of transnational variations of Donald Duck in stories appearing in pan-European comic books, with those published in the Netherlands providing a central case study.

During the 1950s the Dutch publication Donald Duck Weekblad gradually started to introduce locally produced strips alongside their usual American reprints. Other European Disney magazines did the same, and soon began sharing material with each other. Strips produced in these other national centres of production would have to be translated and occasionally redrawn to fit the local context, such as dollar signs being redrawn to reflect the local currency, and thus the character coherence of Donald Duck was often unstable and subject to change.

This transnational translation and re-presentation of characters forms the focus of this project. It builds on the theoretical and methodological model developed in Hibbett’s book Data and Doctor Doom (2024) which provides a practical tool for measuring transmedia character coherence over time and media types.

The project engages with the online community based around the I.N.D.U.C.K.S. database, using their expertise to crowdsource data entry about the character. This will test the robustness of data entry systems and allow large amounts of data to be collected across Europe. Outputs from the project will include a re-useable data entry system and two datasets; the data generated by use of the tool, along with a separate survey of fan attitudes towards the character.

**Biographies:**

Mark Hibbett is Head of Research Information Systems at University of the Arts London and a member of the Comics Research Hub. His academic research focuses on transmedia character cohesion.

Ian Horton is Reader in Graphic Communication at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His present research is focused in three related areas: comic books, graphic design and illustration and he has previously published work on: oral history and text-based public art; colonialist stereotypes in European and British comic books; the relationship between art history and comics studies; public relations and comic books.

**Comics in Colour: Graphic Novels and Racial Literacy in British Educational Settings**

**Kavyta Kay (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Graphic novels serve a particular function in enhancing discussions on racial literacy and diversity as its visual grammar can help teachers to engage students of different skills and learning styles and open up engagement with social issues. As such, this is a versatile medium and while it is widely acknowledged by teachers and parents that comics and graphic novels can foster creativity and critical thinking, it is a largely under-utilised medium, particularly in British schools.

Taking this as a point of departure, this paper shares a subset of initial findings from a work-in-progress with practitioners in the comics space (trainee teachers, creators and bookstore owners) and reflects on the production, circulation and reception of comics in schools. It also explores the limited degree to which comics are used to initiate discussions around diversity and inclusion in educational settings, and concerned with identifying questions around authenticity and representation in comics.  There still persists a dismissal of the medium as infantile in comparison to prose, and a general lack of understanding of the benefits of the medium in fostering cultural competence and racial literacy. I aim to advance a perspective through which we can understand various issues related to race and diversity in a school setting and more closely in the classroom, a place where the work of socially just praxis must begin. In this vein, comics and graphic novels can be used as a creative pedagogical tool to support brave spaces and courageous conversations around diversity and inclusion.

**Biography:** Dr Kavyta Kay (#mynameis Ka-vee-ta) is a senior lecturer in race and education at Leeds Beckett University. She teaches on various dimensions of equality, diversity and inclusion in formal educational settings as well as in popular culture. Her teaching, writing and research interests lie in intersectional ways of thinking through race, gender and identity from multiple platforms namely academic, popular culture and social media. Her work, so far, has been on unpacking discourses of decoloniality and South Asian identities in comedy, film, sport, education, and more recently comics and graphic novels.

**Artificial Ink: Creativity, Convergence and AI in Contemporary Comics**

**Miriam Kent (she/her**)

**Abstract:** This paper represents the early stages of an exploratory project examining the social, cultural and artistic dynamics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration into the comics medium. While debates about AI’s capacity for “human” abilities are not novel (cf. Dreyfus 1972), influx of AI generated artworks has been accompanied by these recurring discussions. Comics offer a valuable case study for the exploration of these discussions. As a multimodal, intertextual and complex medium, the use of AI artwork in these forms raises questions about specific kinds of creative labour and the very nature of the concept of “comics” itself. Initial public responses to AI-generated comics in popular media outlets and news sites were locations of complex negotiation relating to not only the comics art but also broader considerations of human creativity. Critically analysing these discourses sheds light on the messy terrain of human-machine interactions within creative media amid technological disruption.

Subsequently, through textual analysis, I focus on the AI-generated comic book, *Zarya of the Dawn* (Kashtanova, 2022), which was widely publicised as a watershed moment within AI-comics debates. However, these discussions were predominantly focused on issues of commerce, ownership, and copyright, with limited attention to arguably more "human" elements such as story and artistic style. Linking interdisciplinary discussions about creativity, commerce, accessibility and authorship, I draw together ongoing debates over the implications of AI on creative labour with a reflection of what AI-generated comics can tell us about comics form, or put simply, what comics are (or could be). In doing so, I seek to highlight new insights into understandings of human-machine interactions within creative media.

**Biography:** Miriam Kent is a Lecturer in Film and Media at the University of Leeds. She holds a PhD in Film Studies from the University of East Anglia. Her research is primarily concerned with gender, identity, and feminism in historical and contemporary superhero media. She has recently turned her attention to the intersections of screen media, digital technologies and comics.

**Evolving Webtoon Platforms in South Korea’s Digital Era**

**Soonbae Kim (he/his)**

**Abstract:** In the digital age, the South Korean webtoon market has exhibited rapid growth, becoming an important component of the country’s content industry. The paper would explore the dynamic intersection of webtoons and digital technology, focusing on the transition from traditional, episodic consumption to immersive digital engagement. Despite the market’s expansion, a notable gap exists in dedicated community platforms for webtoon readers, hindering the formation of engaged fandoms, a hallmark of Korean cultural consumption. Addressing this,

the study would investigate the (in)adequacies of current webtoon platforms in facilitating deep

reader engagement and proposes a novel framework for enhancing interactive experiences.

Utilizing digital methodologies, it would also analyze reader interactions within webtoon

comment sections, by identifying key patterns of engagement: active participation in

discussions, extracting and sharing webtoon elements, and forming opinions through

community interaction. However, existing platforms predominantly offer limited engagement

opportunities through basic features like comment sections. The research advocates for an

innovative approach in webtoon platforms, integrating content and reader interactions more

cohesively. The system aims to bridge the gap between content creators and consumers in the

digital sphere, fostering more profound and meaningful fan experiences. It emphasizes the need

for platforms that not only disseminate content but also cultivate digital communities, reflecting

the evolving nature of content consumption in the digital era. This study would contribute to

the understanding of digital media’s role in transforming narrative experiences and community

building, offering insights for the future development of webtoon platforms and similar digital

content industries.

**Biography:** Soonbae Kim, an associate professor at Chungbuk National University in

Republic of Korea, specializes in areas that encompass graphic novels, digital literature, and

the media and forms of literary narratives. His academic focus extends to modernism and

literary ontology, reflecting a keen interest in the evolving intersection of literature and digital

mediums.

**Töpffer and the (secret) Art of Autography**

**Gunnar Krantz (he/his)**

**Abstract:** The literature on Töpffer and his work is extensive. What strikes the informed reader, however, is the lack of a clear description of *autography*, his "technical 'secret' " as Kunzle puts it (2007) when describing the technique he used to produce his *littérature en estampes*. So, what then is autography? A closer look reveals that the technique that allowed Töpffer to both draw and write without having to reverse image and text, is nothing else than transfer-lithography – already described by the inventor of lithography, Alois Senefelder (1818).

In “notice sur Essais d’autographie” (1842) Töpffer mentions drawing with ink and a steel-nib pen as part of the method. This is especially notable since this method still is considered industry standard (McCloud 2006). But what kind of tools did Töpffer use? And did he, as Kunzle suggests, trace his own drawings? (Kunzle 2009). What did his artwork look like and how does autography relate to contemporary methods. By experimenting with autographic print on stone – as I understand Töpffer’s method – I have discovered both similarities and noticeable differences with today’s praxis of drawing comics. In this paper, I will present both the process of autographic print as well as my reflections of the result.

Autographic comic strip transferred to stone, treated with gum arabic, water and nitric acid.

Image: Gunnar Krantz 2024

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*Manieren, belegt mit den nöthigen Musterblättern, nebst einer vorangehenden ausführlichen*

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Töpffer, Rodolphe, 1799-1846. - L' invention de la bande dessinée / Töpffer ; textes réunis et présentés par Thierry Groensteen et Benoît Peeters. - 1994.

**Biography:**

Gunnar Krantz, professor within the arts of Visual communication at Malmö University. Krantz has contributed to contemporary comics as an artist, pedagogue, editor, critic and researcher since the late 1970s. His research focuses on artistic production, forms of publications and the emergence of the field of comics

**Moebius’s digital work, between curation and remediation**

**Nicolas Labarre (he/him)**

**Abstract:** The catalog of the 2012 exhibit, *Moebius Transe Forme*, reprints a familiar image, initially published in *Métal Hurlant* #3 (1975): a group portrait or a police lineup of extraterrestrials. However, the 2012 image also tweaks and rewords that image, changing certain characters and adding an aging, balding Moebius1in the line-up.

These alterations to an iconic image underlines Moebius’s reliance on digital art in the final decade of his life, at a time when he was trying to recapitulate his career (concluding *Blueberry*, going back to Arzach, the Incal or the Major). *Inside Moebius* (published 2004-2010 but started in 2000) documents his learning process with these new tools, and in particular the hesitation between using the graphic tablet to produce rough sketches or finished drawing, as if teasing out the affordances of these tools and their potential position in the creative process. Furthermore, *Le Chasseur Déprime* (2008) the third book in the *Airtight Garage* series – leaving aside the aborted volume published in *Moebius Comics* and the spinoffs published by Marvel/Epic – further suggests that Moebius’s embrace of these tools may have been a necessity, a way to compensate for declining eyesight and motor control, sometimes with debatable results. In this presentation, I will seek to examine how Giraud embraced these functions of digital tools to curate his own legacy, revisiting and recombining his earlier work, while giving himself the means to explore graphic territories that might otherwise have become out of reach.

**Biography:** Nicolas Labarre (he/him) is a professor in American Studies at University Bordeaux Montaigne, France, where he teaches US political institutions, comics and video games. He is the author of *Heavy Metal, l’autre Métal Hurlant* (2017), of *Understanding Genres in Comics* (2020) and of an upcoming critical biography of Jean Giraud-Moebius (UP Mississippi).

**Mr Töpffer goes to America; the role of a forgotten print technology**

**Guy Lawley (he/his)**

**Abstract:** This paper discusses a key moment in comics history; the 1841 English translation of Rodolphe Töpffer’s *Monsieur Vieux Bois* in London as *The adventures of Mr Obadiah Oldbuck.* Republished in New York in 1842 with great success, *Oldbuck* launched the early comic strip in the USA. This was enabled only by the specific affordances of a largely forgotten print technology, gypsography, which has been mis-identified, misunderstood, and literally written off as a joke by comics historians. Furthermore, after apparently dying out for want of a market niche in its native Britain, gypsography resurfaced under a new name decades later as a crucial factor in the spread of illustrations and cartoons in American newspapers; another vital seed-bed, of course, of the modern comic strip. Töpffer’s publication of his own books in Geneva, which established his later reputation as the ‘father of the comic strip’, was only possible because of an earlier innovation in printing, transfer lithography a.k.a. autography. Unauthorised versions of the books printed in Paris in 1839, also lithographic, further disseminated the Töpfferian picture-story form and led to several French imitations. However if *Obadiah Oldbuck* had been printed lithographically in London, it would not have reached the USA. This is demonstrated by the English translation of Töpffer’s *Monsieur Jabot*, which was lithographed by the same publisher a few months later, and didn’t cross the Atlantic. The two crucial roles played by gypsography in comics history undoubtedly require explication.

**Biography:**Guy Lawley (he/him; guy.lawley@btinternet.com) is pursuing a PhD on printing technology and the 19th century origins of comics at Central Saint Martins, with supervisors Roger Sabin and Ian Horton. Past conference papers include “Four Colours on Newsprint: The Printed Comic 1894–1986” and “Roy Lichtenstein vs. the Comic Book: Materiality, Process and Colour.”

***Bande dessinée* colourists and the quest for artistic authorship**

**Irène Le Roy Ladurie (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Four-colour printing became a major feature of the Franco-Belgian comics (or *bande dessinée*)ecosystem very early on. *The Adventures of Tintin* rose to fame in the 1940s just as Hergé’s publisher Casterman converted its production to the offset-printed colour album model (Moine 2022). Yet in the history of *bande dessinée*, little is known about the contribution of the colourists, which we want to examine.

French comics gradually evolved into a *ninth art* in the 1960s-1970s, but that evolution was made possible by the invibilisation of both the colour and the colouring process, so as to distance comics from its photomechanical reproduction (Lesage 2023). Understanding the role played by colour artists questions the possibility of an art that is reproductible through photomechanical printing.

One of the key ways for comics to earn the dignity of an art form art was to exhibit “planches originales”: original art before it entered the reproduction process, so as to display comics as an individual creation – and not as an semi-industrial process. *Bande dessinée* is torn between the book world for its economic model – illustrators are treated as authors, and paid as such – and the art world for its symbolic recognition – museums, festivals, exhibitions. The colourists fall between the cracks of this dual affiliation, and in doing so, highlight the tensions underlying the artification of “minor arts” (Heinich and Sapiro, 2012).

Based on archival fieldwork and interviews (Le Roy Ladurie & Lesage, 2022), this presentation will examine the role of colourists as intermediaries between comics artists and technical printing workers in France and Belgium, from the 1960s to the 1990s. How did these workers accompany the changes in printing techniques, from rotogravure to offset? How did they accompany the shift of the industry from the press to the book? In what ways did their work contribute to distinct aesthetics? How does their work question authorship in the age of mechanical reproduction?

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**Biographies:**

Irène Le Roy Ladurie is doctor in Comparative Literature. Her work focuses on body and senses in contemporary culture (literature, comics and cinema) and cultural studies.

**Time and Relative Dimensions on the Page – The Power of Doctor Who Comics**

**Jonathan Macho (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Comics are ideally suited for *Doctor Who*. This is made evident by the long, unbroken association between the series and the medium, from 1964 to the present day. With the first of the show’s 60th Anniversary specials being an adaptation of a *Doctor Who Weekly* comic strip (Mills and Gibbons, 1980) and the first adventure of the Fourteenth Doctor being told in comics printed in the same publication forty-three years later (Barnes and Sullivan, 2023), it is the perfect time to consider why *Doctor Who* flourishes on the comics page and what taking full advantage of the medium could lead to over the next 60 years.

While comics befit the Doctor’s adventures in numerous ways, this paper focuses on how the medium can be a time machine, reimagining the comics page as a TARDIS. Space dictates the representation of time in comics (Morton, 2016) with panels acting as pockets of time located spatially on the page (McCloud, 1993) existing sequentially and simultaneously alongside one another (Kuttner, Weaver-Hightower, and Sousanis, 2021). As a result, readers traverse time and space as they read and re-read, crossing the fourth dimension in a way not afforded by television or prose. Through analysing two stories published almost fifty years apart which employ the same conceit, that of time flowing backwards (Main, 1965; Williams and Fraser, 2014), I will demonstrate how the time machine of the comics page offers exciting opportunities for the Whoniverse and propose where (and when) it might take readers in the future.

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**Biography:** Jonathan Macho is a third-year Creative Writing PhD student at Cardiff University. His thesis involves representing what he loves about the medium of comics within a prose novel through the process of stylistic remediation, demonstrating the versatility and vitality of both mediums.

**Creativity at the Crossroads: Brain Booster or Thought Thief?**

**Lisa Macklem (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Is Artificial Intelligence friend or foe? *Inside AI: An algorithmic adventure* is an online graphic novel produced by UNESCO whose main aim is to educate the public about Artificial Intelligence. It’s clear that this UNESCO initiative ties into the Sustainable Development Goals of education, innovation, and human rights. The aims of the project are broad as UNESCO hopes to help educate both policymakers and young people. To that end the four chapters end with pedagogical tools, including glossaries of terms, references, and further reading suggestions. The artwork and stories are fairly basic and geared toward a fairly uneducated audience. The larger effects of AI, particularly in the graphic novel space, have exploded since the fall of 2022. The UNESCO novel was first published on August 8, 2022 and last updated on August 31, 2023. In that time, countries around the world have scrambled to put regulations on AI in place. It is now possible to generate the images of an entire graphic novel using a few prompts. AI can help writers with basic outlines or write entire scripts from basic prompts. The SAG-AFTRA and WGA unions went on strike at least in part over AI and the dangers posed by studios wishing to replace human creativity with AI generated content and images. Studios also wanted ownership over content – both written and visual – in order to train AI to produce that new content. Sarah Anderson, Kelly McKernan and Karla Ortiz sued Stability AI, DeviantArt, and Midjourney for copyright infringement. On October 30, 2023, U.S. District Judge William Orrick dismissed all of the charges except Anderson’s direct copyright infringement claims against Stability AI. More lawsuits are pending. Creation does not occur in a vacuum, but instead relies on works to train new creators. Is AI just useful technology or is it a threat to creativity itself? This paper will explore the basic nuts and bolts of AI in addition to the legal ramifications affecting graphic novel creators and educators.

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**Biography:** Lisa is a PhD Candidate in Law at the University of Western Ontario. Her dissertation focuses on digital content delivery and how the entertainment industry both helps and hinders cultural production and access. In addition to her studies in law, Lisa is an active researcher in popular culture, graphic novels, and fandom studies and is especially interested in where these areas intersect. Lisa was the 2018 winner of the Sabin Award for Comic Scholarship for a paper on Lucy Knisley. She has co-edited two books on *Supernatural* with Dominick Grace. Her most recent scholarly paper “Fair Dealing, Online Teaching and Technological Neutrality: Lessons From the Covid-19 Crisis” was co-written with Samuel Trosow for the *Canadian Intellectual Property Journal* and was cited in the Supreme Court of Canada case *York University v. Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright).*

**Shamanising the Scotch: A Comic Critique of Industrial Whisky Tech (Workshop)**

**Rachel MacNeill (she/her) and Melanie Hughes (she/they/our Mel)**

*Please Note: Over 18 only. Two small glasses of single malt Scotch whisky included.*

**Abstract:** Meet the girls of volume one, *An Comaig an t’Uisge Beatha* *(The Whisky Comic): Beyond the Barley, a story of single malt Scotch in a newly created comic of historical reimagining*.

Their tale begins with bringing barley from the Fertile Crescent to Scottish soil. Come join us on a Shamanic journey savoring single malt Scotch, raising our spirits and celebrating our connections with Mother Earth. Sitting in Circle, we regenerate a new, hopeful story through music and magic. We explore herstory of Scotch whisky-making technologies and participants engage in comic art creation using whisky-related drawing tools (charcoal from barrel staves, barley, and uisge beatha). Discover how the colonisation of Scotland and the Industrial Revolution changed whisky making. Journeyers use comic imagery to create a new story of their own relationship to land regeneration.

What’s in the glass, is not born in isolation, but is a historic reflection, distilled in harmony with the sun, moon, water, land, and turns of the year.

Prerequisites for Attendees: Come prepared to tell about the land where you’re from or where

you’re currently residing. Go out to nature on a walk, as you’re able. Connect with something that’s

growing. Converse with a plant, a pollinator, or a farmer, or a gardener.

Journeyers are encouraged to bring a writing utensil (pencil provided) or markers for drawing and

writing exercises. Participants are welcome to bring a notepad (analog) to make notes.

**Biographies:**

Rachel MacNeill(RAY-chel Mac-NEEL), founder of the 5-Star Islay Whisky Academy, provides whisky education for beginners, enthusiasts, and professionals alike. Her mission–*Sharing the Spirit of Scotland* whilst advocating for women’s empowerment in the world of whisky--is illustrated in her first comic creation. whiskyforgirls@gmail.com

Melanie Hughes (Mel-uh-KNEE Hyooz), Librarian and Archivist, serves Indiana University Southeast. Our Mel endeavors to save Planet Earth with STEM picture books and comics, practices comic midwifery, and analyzes subjects of sustainability, Scottish Jewry, women and whisk(e)y, presented in panels.

**“The Computer Can Only Reproduce What the Artist is Capable Of”: Michael Götze’s Pioneering Computer-Generated Comic *Das Robot-Imperium***

**Paul M. Malone (he/his)**

**Abstract:** The artist Michael Götze (b. 1948) had worked his way up in the tiny German comics industry from self-publishing fan works to drawing licensed material for the mass-market publishers. His ambition, however, was to publish his original work, and he finally interested the multinational publisher Carlsen in *Das Robot-Imperium* (“The Robot Empire,” 1988-92)—the first mainstream German comic with computer-generated artwork, produced on an Atari 520ST. The series depicted a dystopian future in which the development of artificial intelligence had led to a robot uprising that reduced humanity, decimated by the “Robot-Imperator,” to living underground.

*Das Robot-Imperium* followed in the technological footsteps of *Shatter* (“THE FIRST COMPUTERIZED COMIC!”), published by First Comics in the US from 1985 to 1988. The German comic, aware of this antecedent, disparaged *Shatter* in its supplemental materials (Götze, vol. 1, p. 52); and Götze’s work could boast both a technical and an aesthetic improvement over the American comic.

Nonetheless, *Das Robot-Imperium* lasted only three albums, spread over four years, before Carlsen pulled the plug, leaving the series’ convoluted plot unresolved. The comic’s visual appeal—the art became smoother and more colourful—was increasingly outweighed by the slow production pace; and once the novelty wore off, the criticism that Cuno Affolter and Urs Hangartner had once made of *Shatter*: that “whoever can’t offer new stories, but rather only presents hackneyed science fiction visions, will only with difficulty be able to set off a ‘comics revolution’” (135), proved equally true of *Das Robot-Imperium*.

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**Biography:** Paul M. Malone is Associate Professor of German in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He is the author of *Franz Kafka’s The Trial: Four Stage Adaptations*, and has also published on Faustian rock musicals; German theatre and film; and on German-language comics, from 1920s newspapers and periodicals to contemporary superhero comics and *manga.*

**Slow Tech: A Playful and Participatory Workshop on the Whys and Hows of using paper and crayons in your comics scholarship and teaching** **(Workshop)**

**Alison Mandaville** **(she/her)**

**Abstract:** Comics has been a labor-intensive form; new technologies have, in many cases, somewhat eased that labor – and its costs. As electronic tools become more sophisticated, is there any difference between “slow” tech and high tech creativity and reading experiences? Does it matter if we hold a graphite vs. electronic pencil to draw? Does it matter if comics text is hand lettered to the reader? Does scholarship itself benefit from play with slow or high tech “comics” pedagogical tools? In fact, there is research, though not specific to comics, suggesting significant differences in the effects of different tools used for reading and writing – and perhaps thinking and learning.

Paper and pencils and ink and books are technologies. In this hands-on, interactive, workshop, we will practice a variety of comics teaching and learning/thinking strategies using slow-tech tools to consider questions of maker and reader access, creativity, and explicitly multi-modal ways to teach -- and investigate – the comics form. From more than 20 years teaching and writing about comics pedagogy at the K-12 and university levels, I offer examples of powerful comics pedagogical moves, supported by examples of student work and we play with slow tech teaching strategies that both advance the study of comics and help students (and ourselves!) learn to be more critical perceivers, actors, and makers in a world of “fast and seamless” media.

All creative tools and materials will be provided, but you are welcome and encouraged to bring more!

**Biography:** Alison Mandaville teaches English studies, including comics, and prepares future English teachers at California State University Fresno. Her articles on comics have appeared in comics focused journals and in several book collections including *Teaching the Graphic Novel, Comics and U.S. Cultural History,* and *The Ages of Wonder Woman.*

**“They made Grendel possible”: Monstrosity and Technological Transformation in David Hutchison’s *Beowulf* (2006) and Santiago García and David Rubin’s *Beowulf* (2017)**

**Dragoș Manea (he/him)**

**Abstract:** David Hutchison’s manga-inflected, science-fiction adaptation of *Beowulf*—also published in black-and-white as *BIOwulf* in 2007—reimagines its titular character as a technologically-enhanced super-soldier mercenary in a distant, seemingly neo-feudal society. While the miniseries largely borrows only a few names and plot points from the Old English poem—Beowulf fights Grendel, a fellow technologically-modified super-soldier, rendered monstrous by scientific experimentation, and his mother/creator—it still places particular emphasis on the scene of dismemberment. Unlike the poem, the comic also sees Grendel rip out Beowulf’s arm after Beowulf has dismembered him. Beowulf’s technologically-modified body, though, allows him to prosthetically graft Grendel’s arm onto himself in a scene in which “the parallel between human and monster is blurred to the point of elimination” (Nokes 2023, 120). The miniseries offers readers a visual metaphor that literalizes the intermingling of the monstrous and the human often found in contemporary adaptations of *Beowulf* and in perpetrator narratives more broadly.

In this paper, I would like to read Hutchison’s version of *Beowulf* alongside Santiago García and David Rubin’s 2017 adaptation, a comic book that is significantly less radical in its approach but still employs elements of science-fiction. García and Rubin’s Grendel is not a victim turned perpetrator—as in Hutchison’s *Beowulf*—but a monstrous killer whose depiction, as Tito W. James notes, has “more in common with Predator or Alien than any traditional mythological beast” (2018, n. pag.). Although set in the Early Middle Ages, García and Rubin’s *Beowulf*, much like Hutchison’s, employs the visual language of science-fiction to explore the blurring of lines between the human and the monstrous—particularly through its depiction of human anatomy—and to question simple, and often specious, classifications.

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**Biography:** Dragoş Manea is a lecturer in the American Studies Program at the University of Bucharest, where he teaches courses in contemporary American literature, cultural memory studies, perpetrator studies, and media studies. His main research interests include the adaptation of history, cultural memory, and the relationship between ethics and fiction.

**Technology understandings in superhero comics of the right wing**

**Alexandra Mehnert (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The paper examines the technological aspects and distribution of superhero comics produced by German right-wing publishers. Using Grounded Theory by E. Clarke, it analyses the superpowers of these superheroes, which are made possible by technology. The focus is on the conditions and purposes for which the superheroes of right-wing comics acquired their superpowers and how they use them. Answering the question about the use of superpowers primarily affects right-wing discourses on immigration, environment/climate change, gender, and health.

The second part of the paper will examine the political and communicational research to determine under what conditions the technological understanding of right-wing actors calls for vigilant action by superheroes and comic recipients. The paper analyses internet-based platforms, including online shops, podcasts, and YouTube channels, to highlight how right-wing publishers create a cross-media network using modern technology.

The conclusion summarizes the characteristics of technology understandings in comics of the right wing and how right-wing publishers use cross-media forms of communication, such as comics, to spread their ideology.

**Biography:**

* Degrees: Master of Arts in Political Science and Bachelor of Arts in German Studies (University of Leipzig)
* Affiliation: PhD student since Mai 2023 at University of Leipzig, Topic: “Printmedia of the Right Wing”, Scientific Associate in a Right Wing - prevention project at Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft “Ausstieg zum Einstieg” e.V.

**Technological Leverage for Comic Artists**

**Shuchita Mishra (she/her)**

**Abstract:** In the introduction to Edena, Moebius says "We artists can only go as far as the people can follow us." In the conclusion to his introduction, he adds that his stories are the same as science

and technology - "a discovery begins with a scientist alone in his laboratory; then ten years later,

everybody has "it" in their living room".

This futuristic sentiment of Moebius has actually come true for any comic artist with a social

media presence including myself. Technology has made the comic industry into a self

sustainable business. A business that leverages technology by improving production, easing

distribution and marketing globally.

My paper aims at exploring different facets of business supported by digital tools such as

Procreate, IbisXPaint and Adobe Suite products used in comic production to the availability of

different distribution platforms present on the internet like Webtoons and Tapas to finally

reaching a global audience through the use of social media. Media Networks like Instagram,

Facebook and Tiktok help comic artists such as myself gain visibility and employment by

engaging with a worldwide audience at a greater frequency than ever before.

I conclude the paper with case studies and examples of brand creation by individual comic

artists capitalizing on the latest technology in the industry.

**Biography:** I, Shuchita Mishra, graduated with an MFA in Comics from California College of the Arts. Apart from running my comic and basic animation workshops across the US schools, I am an Assistant Professor at the School of Art and Design at Kennesaw State University.

**“I didn’t want them to call me a weeb”: The social transactions inherent in the childhood reading histories of emerging U.S. adults**

**Robin A. Moeller** **(she/her)**

**Abstract:** For children and teens, the social aspects of reading often impact what and how they read. For individuals who read or wish to read potentially contentious texts, such as comics, social influences may become a more significant factor to a child or teens’ reading. For many school and public librarians, the social transactions that impact reading, especially comics reading, are often left unexplored. The purpose of this research was to examine the reading histories of emerging adults (aged 18-30 years old) who identified as childhood and/or teenage comics readers, in order to better understand what and how social aspects influenced their comics reading. After individually interviewing 34 emerging adults, the researcher found themes that reflected those social transactions that impacted the participants’ comics reading, including: the influence of belonging (or not) to a community of readers; the role of personal relationships; and conscious and subconscious stigma assignments. The vast majority of individuals who responded to the request for participants for this study identified as women, a phenomenon which will also be discussed. The implications of this research include the role that librarians can play in creating and/or fostering communities of comics readers; the importance for librarians to acknowledge that gender continues to impact comics reading performativity and stigma; and, imperatively, how librarians themselves can act as censors and self-censors when it comes to comics reading.

**Biography:** Robin A. Moeller is a former high school librarian and professor of Library Science at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, USA. Her research interests lie in visual representations of information as they apply to youth and schooling, as well as the reading habits and interests of children and teens.

**Nature vs Development: An ecocritical reading of Orijit Sen’s *River of Stories***

**Rituparna Mondal (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Postcolonial eco-criticism focuses on the intersection of literature, culture, and environment to analyse the role played by colonial legacies in exacerbating ecological crisis. In a globalised world, development is the new buzz word, which leads to growth and economic prosperity. However, it fails to take into cognisance the effect of such endeavours on dispossessed indigenous populations whose lands are often forcefully occupied rendering them homeless. Analysed through a Marxist lens, these incidents allude to the neoliberal tendencies of the postcolonial state and how they increase the economic divide between the rich and the poor. In this paper, I undertake a close reading of the graphic novel *River of Stories* (1994) by Orijit Sen to examine how the postcolonial Indian state encroaches on Adivasi (indigenous population of India) lands in the name of land development. Highlighting the effects of such forceful displacement, the paper analyses how neoliberal economic policies profit capitalists by oppressing indigenous communities and taking ownership of their land and resources. The paper also discusses the significance of the form of graphic novel in illustrating historical injustices, suffering and violence perpetrated by hegemonic forces of the society. It looks at the role played by graphic novels in drawing attention to important social and political issues and highlights the increasing popularity of graphic novels in being considered as an appropriate medium to portray resistance movements against systemic oppressions.

**Biography:** Rituparna Mondal is a second year Ph.D. student in the School of English at the University of Kent. Her thesis looks at the experiences of Dalits and Adivasis in their lived spaces and how such marginalised spaces nurture conditions for resistance. She also works as an Assistant Editorial intern for *Wasafiri* Magazine.

**The New Age Comics of India**

**Arockia Licy Monika C**

**Abstract:** In India, Comics and Graphic Novels have become latent on the traditional (print) publishing front in the last three years. The lack of papers that created shortage in printing sector of comics during Covid 19 (Joshi 2022) made the industry to adapt digital platforms (Rai, 2022) at a quicker phase, even though Webcomics have been prevalent alongside print comics since 2010s (Verma 2015). As a result, there is a rise in comic author entrepreneurs (F6S community 2024) expanding the reach of comics to a larger readership population, but not in entirety. However, print comics in India are known to have its own cultural impact (Khanduri 2010) by reflecting on socio-economic and political issues, thereby making digital comics a cultural noise even though there is a lack of access to social media platforms and internet usage among the economically marginalized (Nayek 2021). Also the demand for old comic books resulting in price hike and the widespread belief that comics don't exist anymore (Bose, 2022) showcases the need for print comics. It also denotes it popularity as first hand comic books or, by assumption, as books for resale or disposal.

Though comics exude subcultural attributes, it still serves to be a voice of advocacy and not a voice of agency, due to disparity in accessibility, production and distribution of comics. The study, by adapting an in-depth interview method aims to explore the changing dynamics of print publication of comics and graphic novels from 18 (tentative) established authors and 39 (tentative) leading publishing houses of comics on their preferences. Thus, by comparing their reasons for print and digital preference perspectives, the study hopes to unearth the ‘Indian scenario’ of the new age comics industry.

**Biography:** Ms Arockia Licy Monika C is pursuing her doctoral research from the Department of English and Cultural Studies, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. Her area of research includes Graphic novels from India, urban studies, representational studies and Literary Cartography. She is a recipient of ICSSR short term doctoral fellowship and has begun her publication journey with *Literature and Aesthetics*, a Web of Science indexed journal.

**The Comic as Interface Image**

**Áurea Muñoz del Amo (she/her) and Ana Rosa González Diánez (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This presentation explores the conceptualization of comics as an *interface image*, a notion

articulated by Josep María Catalá, a Doctor in Communication Sciences, in his work "La

imagen interfaz." Catalá defines the interface as the communication form that emerges when

the distance between the viewer and the medium dissolves, creating a dynamic space of

relationships.

In both physical and digital manifestations, comics serve as a medium through which readers

actively decipher symbols, prompting engagement beyond mere contemplation. The concept

of interface extends past viewer interaction, considering how meaningful elements within

comics seamlessly transition across various dimensions. From the broadsheet to the page,

from the page to the panels, and from the panels to the speech bubbles, comics create a fluid

interplay of visual and narrative elements.

**Biographies:**

Áurea Muñoz del Amo, a University of Seville Professor with a Ph.D. in Fine Arts, specializes in contemporary graphics. She serves as a Principal Co-Investigator in the ongoing "Aster" project and has held academic management roles including Vice-Dean of Quality and Students.

Ana R. González Diánez, a Ph.D. student and Fine Arts graduate with two master's degrees,

conducts research focusing on graphics and "the grid." Selected to participate in the European

comic project Comic Art Europe, her work evolved from in-depth comic analysis.

**Navigating the Enigma: Spatial Dynamics and Self-Discovery in *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest***

**Sohini Naiya**and **Prof. Smriti Singh**

**Abstract:** The graphic novel *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest* (2019) by mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik and illustrator and author Amruta Patil is related to the 3000-year-old Vedic literature and the central significance of forests in Vedic mythology. The central theme revolves around natural elements and the world around us. It shows human transactions in the forests and how life evolves amidst nature. This study discusses how blurry the lines between self and others are and whether we truly “see” others and, in turn, ourselves. Domestication and civilization distance us from nature. This paper intends to discuss the tactics, manipulation, and consumption of space in everyday life that the protagonist Katyayani, her husband Yajnavalakya, and others employ within the setting of the dense, dark forest. The forest here acts as a psychological forest, where Katyayani’s inner self is transformed and which, for Yajnavalkya, serves as a place where he appears in the quest for knowledge. This paper further aims to show how, in *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest,* spatial changes take place in the forest using the concepts of human geographer Yu Fu Tuan, philosopher and psychoanalyst Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, French psychoanalyst and philosopher. The paper also looks at what role the forest plays in the self-awakening of the female protagonist, Katyayani.

**Biographies:**

Sohini Naiya is currently pursuing Ph.D. in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in Indian Institute of Technology Patna. She has done her graduation in English Language and Literature from Calcutta University and masters from Rabindra Bharati University. Her area of interest includes Indian Graphic novels.

Prof. Smriti Singh is a professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Indian Institute of Technology Patna. She is the chair-person of the Prestigious Postcolonial Studies Association. Her area of interest includes English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistics and Postcolonial and Diasporic Literature.

**Outside Looking In: Refugee Comics and Tsing Chak’s Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention**

**Jonathan Nash (he/him)**

**Abstract:** On September 7th, 2023, over 30 migrant detainees inside Quebec’s Laval prison went on hunger strike, protesting their detention. With little media attention and isolation from family, detainees like those of Laval often disappear. As part of her activist and artistic practice in Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention (2014), visual artist Tsing Chak graphically documents the crisis of detention as a technology of border violence in Canada. Candida Rifkind (2020; 2017), Carrie Dawson (2016), Dominic Davies (2020; 2019; 2017), and Nina Mickwitz (2020) convincingly argue that migrant detention comics, such as Undocumented, draw Euro-American readers into the highly politicized and lived spatiality of detention centers through the spatio-topia of the medium’s grammar, making visible for readers the realities of encountering borders while also cultivating a “compassionate” (Rifkind 2017) affective relation to refugees. While this scholarship answer questions of how comics like Undocumented disrupt the representations and discourses of refugees—and the attitudes entangled with them—another question inspired by the work of Hilary Chute requires further examination. How do refugee comics such as Undocumented “counter-inscribe” (Chute 2016) the site and sight of detention centers through the re-drawing of these spaces from interviews, records, archives, photographs, etc? This presentation contends that Undocumented not only makes visible Canada’s migrant detention as an interrelation between topography, architecture, and politics. It draws the life and agency of detainees as political actors over the institutional forces that seek to make them invisible. This presentation thus brings the scholarship of comics to a better understanding of how effective and crucial the comics medium is to documenting the ways border violence is lived, contested, and refused.

**Biography:** Jonathan Nash (University of Victoria) is a PhD candidate of English at the University of Victoria, whose research investigates how refugee spaces like refugee camps, detention centres, and migrant boats are represented and contested in refugee literature and comics. He is humbled and grateful to teach, learn, and research in the place of the Lək̓ʷəŋən and WS’ANEC’ peoples.

**Establishing the Educational Role of Comic Books: An Opportunity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**Mike Nguyen (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Since the dawn of the Golden Age of comic books, researchers have considered their application in the classroom (Hutchinson, 1949; Wright, 1979). Over the past two decades, the comic book medium has enjoyed a proverbial renaissance in the mainstream media (Lo et al., 2022; Ndalianis, 2011). Unsurprisingly, comic books have become a focus for scholarly inquiry (Carleton, 2014; Kuttner et al., 2021; Wallner & Barajas, 2020). As a pedagogical tool, comic books have been used successfully in teaching a plethora of subject matter, including U.S. history (Aiken, 2010), art education (Berkowitz & Packer, 2001), microbiology (da Silva & Vieira, 2022), business ethics (Gerde & Foster, 2008), and sociology (Hall & Lucal, 1999). I argue that the efforts and efficacy of comic books as curricula should not be channeled solely into specific content mastery. Comic books in the classroom represent an opportunity to teach pro-social and egalitarian values, beliefs, and behaviors to create meaningful societal change (Strong et al., 2023). In an increasingly divisive educational climate, I provide evidence in the literature for comics books to engender and sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the walls of the classrooms and beyond (Boynton, 2018; Carlson et al., 2022; Matuk et al., 2021; Obuobi et al, 2021).

**Biography:** Mike Nguyen (he, him, his) is a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of Kentucky. His research interests include the consumption of comic media and its impact on adult core values formation. Professionally, he is the Director of Institutional Research and Decision Support at Olin College of Engineering in Needham, MA.

**Pulp science fiction and superhero fiction as an allegory of transgender experience in Leo de Sousa’s *Teen Trans***

**Paul Noguerol (Él/he/him/his)**

**Abstract:** *Teen Trans* is an Uruguayan superhero manga by artist Leo de Sousa aimed at trans children, in which the typical elements of the superhero genre coexist with those of pulp science fiction, working as allegories of transgender identity. The story characterizes transexuality as a superpower that the main characters have to learn to carry proudly in their quest for a free world with the support of characters that are superhero incarnations of Latin American travesti and transexual activists from the past and the present. My presentation explores the theoretical importance of the allegory as a pedagogical resource for queer youth and the symbolical potentialities of science fiction and superhero fiction to express and accompany queer subjectivities. I’m also using Friedick Jameson’s considerations on science fiction and his theories on the intersections between allegory and politics as a starting point. The presentation analyzes how recent theories in gender studies influenced the configuration of the new discourse and the imaginary that this piece represents. It also contrasts the configuration of the characters from this narrative to Donna Harraway’s concept of cyborg and refers to the work of P.B. Preciado to observe how the structure of biopower and technoscience are implied in this apparently naive and innocent narrative. Considering the struggles that transgender youths are facing in America and the world as the right-wing conservative narratives are regaining power, the presentation identifies the strengths and weaknesses of popular fiction aimed at young trans audiences, using the Latin American experience as a model.

**Biography:** Paul Noguerol is a PhD candidate at University of Connecticut. His field is the intersections between comic book studies and queer studies in the Spanish speaking world. His M.A. Thesis was about temporality and metaphorical meanings in the queer superhero comic book Sereno.

**Prisms of Fidelity and Change in Relation to the Hyper-Spectator: How Narrative is Negotiated in the Serial Adaptation *The Walking Dead*.**

**Derek Novosad (he/him)**

**Abstract:** The emergence of social media cultures in relation to modern technology has enabled interfaces that shift engaged segments of audiences into more active and aware involvement with the storymaking world and processes; a particularly rich field for exploration in this regard can be found in serial adaptation as stories move from page to screen and are being created simultaneously. In the case of The Walking Dead, the adapted work went from a comic expressing a fairly consistent initial readership--mostly straight, young, white males with fairly hegemonic and neocolonial views—to one of the most popular television shows in North America with an increasingly diverse spectatorship. The evolution of the storylines reveal this divide sharply. For example, the comic’s Carol remains a mostly flat, underdeveloped character who soon dies by her own hand after significant mental deterioration. In the television adaptation--and mostly due to a growing female fanbase that vocally supported her character—Carol moves from a character that starts in virtually the same place as her comic counterpart to one that evolves into one of the most developed and important characters in the entire Walking Dead world. The purpose of my study is to suggest that a hyper-active audience, coupled with the special quality of both texts existing in the mode of production at the same time, combine to allow the active viewer/spectator to exert influence on both texts as the values that a more diverse viewership hold begin to reveal themselves similarly in the original text.

**Biography:** Derek Novosad is a PhD Student in Social Sciences at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada. He is currently working on a project that examines how story and narrative are connected to protest in Canada, with a particular focus on two of the largest acts of activism/civil disobedience in the nation’s recent history. Derek has an MA in English, with a focus on adaptation in graphic literature and film. He has a BFA in Media Production and a professional background in film and video as a Producer, Director, Writer and Editor, creating mostly nonfiction documentary and broadcast work.

**The reproductive body and the medical-technological gaze**

**Małgorzata Olsza (she/ her)**

**Abstract:** Rooted in the methodology of graphic medicine and the narrative humanities, this paper discusses three autobiographical comics devoted to reproduction, infertility, and abortion in the context of the medical-technological gaze. The aim is to show how comics may resist, question, and complicate the medical-technological gaze when it comes to a topic that is both deeply personal and “technological” (as regards the widespread use of reproductive technology as such and assisted reproductive technology in particular). While these two discourses are not necessarily contradictory, they give rise to productive discussions about the possibilities and limitations of the human body, personal agency in exercising one’s reproductive rights, and society’s response to it. Keiler Roberts’s Chlorine Gardens (2018) is discussed first. Roberts opposes and merges in her drawings the reproductive and the ailing body (she has been diagnosed with MS as a young mother), both of which are also subject to the medical-technological gaze in their own right. Jenell Johnson’s “Present / Perfect” (2016), respectively, is a critique of the business of fertility treatments – not of technology itself (which has helped many people) but of how it reduces the self to the “walking, talking egg sac” (Johnson 105). Last but not least, Leslie Stein’s *I know you rider* (2020) is a commentary on how society views images of reproductive choices. Stein posts and then quickly deletes a watercolor of her sonogram on social media. Most users read the image, which in itself blends the technological and the personal, as an announcement of pregnancy and not abortion.

**Biography:** Dr Małgorzata Olsza is Assistant Professor at the Department of American Studies: Literature and Media at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. She has published on different aspects of American and Polish comics, among others, in *ImageText*, and *Image [&] Narrative* and contributed to the edited collections *Comic Art and Feminism in the Baltic Sea Region* (Routledge 2021) and *Seeing Comics through Art History* (Palgrave Macmillan 2022).

**Digital Reflections of “Comics and Education” Course**

**Genç Osman İlhan (he/him)**

**Abstract:** As well as an entertaining material, comics has been used as an educational source for a very long time. The combination of visuals, movement and sound on a printed material makes comics rich and enjoyable materials to read. Also, comics have been found advantageous for their contribution to concretization of subjects, permanency in learning, and motivation to learn. Comics have been used in a variety of lessons such as science, mathematics, medicine, language, and social sciences education. However, there are very few studies on comics education for teacher education. This study focuses on “comics and education” course for the graduate and undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education, Yildiz Technical University. The course has been taught for 5 years through digital tools, revealing diverse digital, educational and artistic reflections from students. Thus, this study aims to understand these digital, educational and artistic reflections of “comics and education” courses at the faculty of education. The reflections outline comics to be effective on upgrading students’ digital, educational and artistic skills.

**Biography:** Genç Osman İlhan works at Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Education. He has expertise in comics and education with various articles and multiple projects. He is the first instructor in Turkey who has opened a course on comics for teacher education and has been teaching the comics and education course since 2019.

**Beauty and the Beasts: The representation of the Racial Other(s) in Korean webtoons**

**Sindhoora Pemmaraju (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This article provides a critical examination of racial dynamics in Korean webtoons (online comics) within the romantic fantasy genre. I explore how the genre invents whiteness and use the concept of ‘affective whiteness’ to examine how it intermingles with narratives in this genre to lay the groundwork of women’s empowerment grounded in colonial logic. I theorize that the reproduction of female desire and its constant negotiation with whiteness can be understood by what I call White [Korean] Female Protagonist and Korean [White] Female Desire. I use Jennifer Gonzales’ concept of appended subjectivities to argue that affective whiteness in Korean webtoons reproduce the racial other as a fantasy subject to be tamed and used for women’s empowerment.

**Biography:** A PhD Candidate at London School of Economics and Political Science, Pemmaraju Sindhoora also has a master’s degree in Korean Modern Literature from Seoul National University. She is interested in studying gender, masculinity, and racism in South Korea.

**“El bueno de Cuttlas”: representation of technology and science through extreme experimentation**

**Álvaro M. Pons (he/him) and Noelia Ibarra (she/her)**

**Abstract:** From 1983 to 2022, Spanish cartoonist Calpurnio crafted one of the most captivating comic series: *The Good Cuttlas*. Initially conceived for the fanzine El Japo as a whimsical parody of the Western genre with stick figures, it swiftly transformed into a platform for formal exploration. Structured as a single-page comic strip intended for daily, weekly, or monthly publication, its straightforward narrative, featuring a handful of archetypal characters (Cuttlas, his comrade Jim, his girlfriend Mabel, the Mexican Juan Bala, the extraterrestrial 37, and the antagonist Jack the Evil), enabled Calpurnio to tackle a diverse range of themes, including his profound concerns regarding science and technology. Through a persistent exploration of the narrative potential of the comic medium, Calpurnio not only delved into the representation of technology but also meticulously integrated it into the narrative structure.

This academic essay analyzes Calpurnio's artistic oeuvre, examining its defining characteristics and recurrent elements, with particular emphasis on how scientific and technological advancements were portrayed, seamlessly incorporated as formal components within the narrative.

**Biographies:** Álvaro M. Pons is a Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of Valencia and director of the Chair of Comic Studies at the SM Foundation-University of Valencia. His research work on comics has been linked to the history of the medium and its industry and to graphic poetry.

Noelia Ibarra is Ph.D. and assistant professor at the Universitat de València. She is a member of the board of the Spanish Society of Language and Literature Didactics. Her research interests are children's literature and reading education, with special attention to comics and illustrated books.

**“As practical as an icebox in an igloo and twice as funny!”: Humor, Cultural Memory, and Modern Technology in Rube Goldberg’s Inventions**

**Mihaela Precup (she/her)**

**Abstract:** American cartoonist Rube Goldberg (1883-1970) became famous for his series of intentionally convoluted and impractical machines, humorous contraptions whose alleged intention was to make life easier for their inventors or for other people struggling with life’s little nuisances. Slipping on ice, being unable to wake up on time and stay awake, having to swat an annoying fly—these are some of the everyday annoyances that Goldberg’s inventions are meant to address. In Goldberg’s comics from the inter-war period, Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts creates assemblages of objects, animals (and sometimes animal-object hybrids), and human beings whose convoluted chain reactions postpone and complicate otherwise straightforward operations and actions.

This presentation examines Goldberg’s slapstick and absurdist humor as a means of constructing and preserving the cultural memory of lower-middle-class Americans during the inter-war period. His work, coming as it does in the wake of the Armory Show (1913), which was the most important first modern art exhibition in the United States, shares some concerns with his fellow modern artists, but it is their interest in modern technological processes that this presentation approaches. Goldberg’s inventions bring whimsy and humor to a world that was becoming increasingly reliant upon machines, but they also record (even in their most outlandish scenes) daily life in the United States at the time of their creation. This presentation also explores the contribution of Goldberg’s work to our understanding of processes that are still in motion today.

**Biography:** Mihaela Precup is Associate Professor in the American Studies Program at the University of Bucharest. She is the author of *The Graphic Lives of Fathers: Memory, Representation, and Fatherhood in Autobiographical Comics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Her latest publication is (with Dragoș Manea) “Sweet tits of Billy!”: Remaking Queer History in *Exit Stage Left: The Snagglepuss Chronicles* in *Fantastika. Journal for Imaginative Narratives*, 7.2, October 2023.

**Universal Comics-studies Repository: A Thematic Repository for Comics-studies, enabling and streamlining co-operation and the exchange of ideas & knowledge in the Comics Scholars Community**

**Jesse Prevoo (he/him)**

**Abstract:** There are many resources for Comics Studies available. Of course, the different journals offer a wealth of articles, and sites such as Comicsresearch.org and comicsforum.org provide an entrance into finding a lot more academic research. And besides these, there are several databases, such as the Bonn Database and the Grand Comics Database, as well as mailing lists and discussion forums, podcasts, YouTube channels, personal sites, and so on. Furthermore, there is a host of articles available through other channels, such as Scopus/Science Direct, Project Muse and Springer Link.

This presentation will review and discuss (some of) the various resources available, looking at usability, searchability and findability. For example: while comicsresearch.org offers a plethora of sources, a lot of links to these sources have died, or are being redirected to non-related sites. Some seem to take a lot of time in keeping them up to date, needing a person to moderate them, which takes time and effort that most of us would rather spend on other tasks. And another problem for the user of these resources: there is no central access point to all these different sites, forcing the (would-be) user to keep track of them all individually.

To collect and add to all these resources, I would like to propose an online-community for Comics Research, where Comics-scholars or those interested in Comics can not only access the resources mentioned earlier, but also share their own research, whether it is data-sets, articles, questions, blogposts or calls for papers/contributions – whatever they want, shared privately or publicly. Users should also be able to contact each other directly through the site, visit and open discussions on a public forum and keep track of events and important dates, as well as accessing as many of the resources from a single point of entry, a library accessible through the site that (automatically) harvests other resources. Lastly, the collections will be re-distributed through repository-aggregators, such as OpenAire using standardized metadata-schemas. All in all, it would offer an overview of resources, a way to search through all of them simultaneously, and the possibility to present research, seek collaborations and keep track of other developments, as well as resharing all this information.

**Biography:** Jesse Prevoo is a PhD student at Leiden University, where his main focus of research is narratology and reader interaction in Comics, and the e-Archivist for TNO (The Organization for Applied Research in the Netherlands), where his responsibilities include the Digital Archive of TNO, the public repository and collecting and disseminating research-output.

**Resisting logocentrism: exploring the technologies of comics beyond reading**

**Ernesto Priego (he/him), Hailey Austin (she/her), Peter Wilkins (he/him)**

**Abstract:** In “The Question Concerning Comics as Technology: Gestell and Grid”, Ernesto Priego and Peter Wilkins (2018) asserted that the comics grid is a technology of revealing: a system of gathering and showing images in a framework. At the time, we saw this argument as something of an antidote to treating comics as their narrative content, as literature by another means, and a critique of an overly logocentric discourse on comics. Resisting concepts like “the language of comics” (Gubern 1972; Saraceni 2003) or “the visual language of comics” (Cohn 2013) is important: by posing that drawings and images in sequence follow the same structure as (verbal) language, comics are conceptualized logocentrically. This structural approach privileges a kind of linguistic sense-making because they seem to recover comics for the world of language and “reading”. In discussing comics as technology, our premise was that the readable dimension of comics is only part of the story or picture and that there is something other in comics worthy of our attention, a medium-specificity that defies or resists the paragraph, the sentence, the word. For 2024’s IGNCC we propose a round-table featuring Hailey Austin (Abertay University, Dundee), Ernesto Priego (City, University of London), and Peter Wilkins (Douglas College) to reflect on and revise these ideas, while adding other, critical, voices to the mix. Each participant will make a brief presentation on the issue of comics as technology and/or language as they see it, followed by a round-table discussion of the issues with audience participation.

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Cohn, N. (2013). *The Visual Language of Comics. Introduction to the Structure and Cognition of Sequential Images*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

**Biographies:**

Dr Ernesto Priego is a senior lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Human-Computer Interaction Design, City, University of London, and the founder and editor-in-chief of The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship. https://ernestopriego.com/

Dr Hailey Austin is a Lecturer in Visual Media and Culture at Abertay University in Dundee, Scotland. She teaches and researches global creative industries, specifically comics, zines, video games and board games in the UK, Sweden and China.

Peter Wilkins is a Training Group Programmer at Douglas College in Vancouver, where he creates programs for newcomers and youth at risk. He is an editor at The Comics Grid. He has worked on the Parables of Care dementia project as editor and artist and is currently working on a comics project about people recovering from stroke.

**Vicious Circle: Energy Anxieties in Hiromu Arakawa's *Fullmetal Alchemist***

**Niru Raghavan (they/them)**

**Abstract:** Can limitless energy production lead anywhere except limitless disaster? This question haunts the manga *Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa, which takes techno-dystopianism about energy to its logical extreme. *Fullmetal Alchemist* posits that the collision of capitalism and biomass capital (energy drawn from renewable organic sources) would lead the state to consider humans not energy users, but energy sources, demonstrating this via the ‘Philosopher’s Stones’ used by the architects of the nation of Amestris to further their imperial agenda. I argue that *Fullmetal Alchemist* reveals and examines the following fundamental societal fears about technology, energy and energy capital. The first fear is that an oligarchic society would inevitably (seek to) develop a way to render humans into energy sources, and that this is an inevitable vector of technological research in a capitalist oligarchy, as demonstrated by the Alchemist exam and ministry. The second fear, as demonstrated by the Ishvalan genocide in the text, and in the soldier-puppets designed by the state alchemists, is that any technology created for the extraction of energy from humans would inevitably be used in a colonially violent manner. The third fear is the fear that (as our ability to access more powerful forms of energy has led to greater and greater disasters from violent use, accidental misuse, or even simply *use*) an energy source that is apparently limitless would lead to limitless disaster - and an illimitable *inevitability* of disaster, as seen in the climactic confrontation between the state authorities and rebel forces in the manga.

**Biography:** Niru Raghavan is an MA English student at the University of Alberta. Their primary research interests are in manga, postcolonial and ecocritical studies, an outcome of their enduring fascination with colonial histories and power dynamics, and the intersections of the ecological world and the eco-illogical biome we’ve made.

**The Postmodern Cowboy: *Cowboy Bebop*, Anime as Art**

**Wilhelm Haydt Richter (he/him)**

**Abstract:** In this paper, I explore the literary resources that make the *Cowboy Bebop* manga and anime postmodern works of art: self-awareness, intertextuality, pastiche, and subversion. Manga and anime, like much of postmodern art, are dismissed as inane, pure entertainment with nothing substantive to say. However, the *Cowboy Bebop* manga and anime use postmodern resources not only to engage and entertain their audience/readers, but also to tell a complex and layered story about the motivations behind people’s choices.

Up until the last 20 years, manga and anime were mostly ignored as serious art. While Susan Napier helped scholars turn their eyes to these rich, complex art forms with her work on the cultural, the formal and thematic aspects of manga and anime have not been explored as thoroughly. Mine is an effort to further expand this conversation with a literary perspective. Self-awareness, intertextuality, pastiche, and subversion combine the literary with the visual to weave a story that effortlessly fluctuates from the joyous to the tragic, from the absurd to the sublime.

**Biography:** Wilhelm Haydt Richter is a PhD student in the English program at Idaho State University. With a background in Media Arts at Brigham Young University in Utah, and applied linguistics at UIEXPRO in Mexico, he is interested in issues of adaptation, translation, and visual language and culture.

**Editing Practices in Twentieth-Century British Comics**

**Julia Round (she/her) and Jim O’Brien (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper will summarise the early stages of a project investigating editorial practices and technology use in British comics (1950s-80s). It will explore the knowledge established so far about manual editorial processes, reflect on what this material suggests about the role of technologies within comics production past and present, and argue for the importance of such research within Comics Studies and adjacent disciplines.

It opens by setting out the aims and objectives of such research, which include exploring how changes to editorial practices within creative industries like comics over these decades have informed our cultural heritage, understandings of childhood, and marketing of periodicals today. It then argues for the significance of this research, drawing on existing scholarship and interview material to demonstrate that the work-for-hire practices of this industry meant that input from editorial roles were essential to the identity and shape of each comic.

The second half of this paper will then discuss methods and findings taken from prior research into this topic and a pilot study funded by Bournemouth University’s Narrative, Culture and Community Research Centre (March-April 2024). These include elements such as pilot interviews, archival document analysis, and a scoping survey of online journalism sites and comics-based websites. It summarises the knowledge established so far about manual editorial processes and reflects on how this material can complement the role of technologies within comics production today, for example regarding the value and affect of embodied creative practice within post-pandemic contexts (such as remote working, digitised artistic production, disconnected collaboration). It concludes by setting out next steps for the project and inviting discussion on its feasibility and design.

**Biographies:**

Dr Julia Round’s research explores the intersections of Gothic, comics, and children’s literature. Her books include *Gothic in Comics and Graphic Novels* (McFarland, 2014), the award-winning *Gothic for Girls* (UP Mississippi, 2019), the co-authored *Comics and Graphic Novels* (Bloomsbury, 2022), and over fifty academic journal articles and book chapters. She has also co-edited books such as the *Companion to Literary Media* (Routledge, 2023), *Multimodal Comics* (Intellect, 2024) and special journal issues including *Gothic Studies* 25(3) (2023) and *The Comics Grid* (2023). She is Associate Professor of English and Comics Studies at Bournemouth University, UK, founding editor of *Studies in Comics* journal (Intellect Books) and the Encapsulations book series (UP Nebraska), and co-organiser of IGNCC. She shares her work at www.juliaround.com.

Dr Jim O’Brien is an independent scholar with research interests in both British comics and children’s literature, and film and illustration. He has contributed to a range of books, magazines and journals on these subjects and is co-founder of the comics history title, *Comics Rule OK*.

**Is it Future Tech? Perception of Technological Representation in the Graphic Novel 'The Wandering Earth' among Russian Students**

**Ekatarina A. Santanna (she/her)**

**Abstract:** *The Wandering Earth*, written by Liu Cixin (2017), is a well-known story that has been depicted in various forms, from the original novella to blockbusters and TV series. The focus of the current study is the graphic novel adaptation of this story, with the aim of understanding how Russian students perceive the fictional Chinese futuristic dystopia and its representation of technologies in visual narratives. Our study utilized qualitative focus groups, conducting three sessions with 3-5 students in each. The 13 volunteers from the Creative faculty in an Autonomous college in Russia provided their informed consent for video recording of the focus groups. The study centered on *The Wandering Earth* graphic novel by Bec and Rafaele (2020), prompting participants to share their insights about the future world and representations of technology. Thematic analysis revealed that students perceived the fictional world of the graphic novel as a reinvention of communist ideology, leading to the theme of "Retrofuturism." Additionally, the theme "China as a blank spot" emerged, as students lacked knowledge not only about Chinese political but also technological reality. The theme of "Contemporary technology" was based on the perception of future technologies as those already applied in China. The contra-theme was defined as an "Ordinary future," identifying future technologies as familiar ones with a few new functions. It's important to note the limitations of study, such as the small sample size and the students' lack of knowledge about China. Future studies could use a more diverse sample, including students from sinological departments.

**Biography:** Ekaterina A. Santanna is a PhD student in the School of Media and Communication with a keen interest in the intersection between cross-cultural and visual narrative studies.

**Square Eyes and Why Materiality Still Matters**

**Logan Scott (he/him)**

**Abstract:** We live in a digital world, increasingly occupied by stories imagining a digital future and yet commercial comics publishers, awards bodies and readers within the United States and Europe continue to prioritise and value the high-end printed book. This paper explores the continued importance of materiality, being both the visible presence of the human hand on the page as well as the physical object itself, to comics readership and its continued importance within mainstream comics publishing. As a case study for this paper, I analyse the production and reception of Anna Mill and Luke Jones’ 2018 graphic novel, *Square Eyes*. In its depiction of a near-future where humans live in an augmented reality superimposed upon a crumbling city, *Square Eyes* engages directly with the question of the continued importance of materiality and the “human touch” within a world dominated by the digital sphere. In an interview with the Association of Illustrators, Mill is on record explaining how the use of hand-drawn images alongside digitally rendered overlays is a deliberate narrative device and that these “old perspective drawing techniques… bring the comfort of Golden Age illustration style to the alienating sci-fi setting”. This paper builds on Mill’s assertion, to argue that this sentiment runs through mainstream/high-end comics publishing and that in our increasingly digitised world, evidence of the physical act of comics making and the material object of the book itself remain fundamental to the creation, promotion and enjoyment of comics culture.

**Biography:** Logan Scott is a screenwriter, comics maker and doctoral candidate with the University of East Anglia, School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing. He is a Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Researcher, a member of the Water Security Research Centre at UEA and holds a Master’s in Creative Writing from the University of Oxford. His PhD project is a creative and critical exploration of the application of hybrid narrative forms and abstraction as a means to communicate the scale and complexity of climate change within fiction.

**A Systematic Mapping of Teacher-Made Comics**

**Meral Şentürk (she/her), Umut Burca Tasa Yurtsever (she/her), Semin Kazazoğlu (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The availability of software applications for comic book production has experienced substantial growth in tandem with technological advancements. Certain applications that streamline the intricate procedure of designing and producing comic books also offer pre-designed templates that educators can readily utilize within their instructional settings. The assessment of the influence of these advancements on the field of comics research holds significant importance. Within this particular context, the present study aims to examine the implementation of comics developed through applications within the discipline of educational research. The researcher utilized a systematic mapping methodology to examine conference papers and articles published on academic research platforms, with the objective of acquiring information pertaining to the research questions. The scope of the research includes the following investigations: (1) Which academic disciplines incorporate research on teacher-made comics?; (2) What is the collaboration rate and pattern in educational comics studies?; (3)Which learning group was the focus of investigation in comics studies?; (4) Which applications or programs are favored by researchers?; (5) Are there any field-specific differences in terms of modes of production?; (6) Which modes of distribution were used in educational research papers? How were comics introduced to the research group?; (7)If any, what are the prevalent terminologies associated with the medium of comics that are frequently incorporated in educational research papers?; (8) Are there any terminological and linguistic confusion related to comics stated in the selected studies?

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**Biographies:**

Meral Şentürk holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature. She has a master's degree in information technologies and is currently pursuing a graduate degree in interactive media design. She currently has the position of a visiting instructor at Yıldız Technical University, where she teaches “English for Design” in the department of Communication Design. She has been studying comics since 2014.

Umut Burcu Tasa Yurtsever is a faculty member at the Department of Interactive Media Design in Yildiz Technical University of Istanbul. She holds a BSc in computer engineering, and an MA and PhD in art and design. She teaches interaction design, design research and theory, and conducts interdisciplinary research in the fields of ecology, media, art and design.

Semin Kazazoğlu is an assistant professor of English Language Teaching at Yıldız Technical University in İstanbul, Türkiye. She holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Foreign Language Teaching, and a BA in English Language and Literature from Ankara University. She has more than 20 years of experience in the field of English language education. Her research and publications focus on EFL learners; digital reading and writing skills, EFL teacher development, intercultural communication, and applied linguistics.

**Women, Art and Protest: Multiple Axes of Marginalization in Kashmir**

**Gulbahar Shah (she/her)**

**Abstract:** In Indian-administered Kashmir, editorial cartoons, street art, graphic novels and other forms of visual art emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century, and have since established themselves as a means of critiquing the socio-political upheavals within the region, which has been marred by insurgency since decades. Inspired by experimental and avant-garde stylistic features, the genre traditionally emerged as a means of visual resistance that often undercut the seriousness of politically charged situations within Kashmir. However, very few women have worked as professional artists within Kashmir and their unique perceptions of conflict have mostly been sidelined within the repertoire of resistance. Since the advent of social media, most artists choose to publish their works online, to bypass editors’ demands and state censorship, which presents an increased potential for narrativising marginalised discourses.

Recently, many young female graphic artists have entered the digital space to incorporate the female perspective in the discourse of resistance and represent the intersecting patterns of violence that women have to navigate in their daily lives, both from the state and the society. The cultural remnants of a society steeped in violence are frequently depicted by paratextual elements replete with Kashmiri folklore and historical metaphors, which are juxtaposed with images of guns and concertina wires. This paper tries to analyse how different social forces coalesce to form structures of thought, art and protest, which is contingent on various systems of oppression operating simultaneously, on multiple axes. Using intersectionality as a means of critical inquiry, I will try to understand how identity formation influences artistic exploration by women artists in Kashmir, to show the confluence of ethnicity, religion and gender identity and the complexities of identification attached therewith. The changing roles of women within Kashmiri society are exemplified through these representations, where they don’t shy away from controversy, gender-based violence and conflict, experimenting with different mediums and stylistic techniques. This paper seeks to study how their work uniquely showcases conflict while remapping the narrative spaces to explore violence and trauma from multiple perspectives, mostly owing to increased access to digital spaces. In forging their visual techniques, these artists move away from the regulated tropes of artistic expression, providing detailed depictions of feminine responses to conflict which have long been absent within mainstream culture in Kashmir.

**Biography:** Gulbahar Shah is currently working as a research scholar in the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her research interests include graphic narratives, children’s literature and trauma studies.

**Considering 21st Century Muslim Superheroines and Issues of Representation: Comics, Creators and Readers in Context**

**Meher Shiblee (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This paper will discuss how I am using social media as a research tool, employing primary research methods such as surveys and interviews to learn from both the creators and the readers of *Ms. Marvel* and *Qahera* about why the issues of representation in the superhero genre are important to them.

In *Comics: Ideology, Power and The Critics*, Martin Barker (1989) highlighted an issue with some academics understanding of comic readers and ‘their assumption that the elements, they as critics, find relevant are also relevant to readers typical experience of them’. Barker highlighted the issue that an academic cannot accurately make an assumption of how the comic book readers may think about and interact with the comic, because their experience with the work could be different to that of the critic. Therefore, by interviewing and interacting with the readers, and the comic book fans, I can better illustrate the audience interpretations, and offer a new perspective on why it is important for superhero comics to have diverse representation.

Using social media as a technological tool to conduct my research proved to be extremely valuable, as it has allowed me to reach a wide and diverse range of participants, and gain a deeper understanding of the different ways in which representation can matter to different people.

**Biography:** My name is Meher Shiblee and I am a third-year PhD candidate at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London.

**Nanak’s icon in the making: Iconographic account of Guru Nanak’s life in Amar Chitra Katha and Sikh Comics**

**Ranjeet Singh (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Since Sikhism is an aniconic theological system, the image -worship of the Gurus is prohibited in Sikh religion. However, it is through popular visual practices, the icon of the first Sikh guru Nanak Dev is constructed and disseminated. Sikh art traces its genealogy in the hagiographic account of Guru Nanak in the form of visual-verbal narratives of Janamsakhi, a form of life stories. The popular visual art forms such as portraits, woodcut posters and mechanically reproduced bazaar art have been central to the production and consumption of the Nanak’ icon. Since, impersonating the Sikh Gurus as a character is forbidden, visualization of Guru Nanak in the mediums of film and photography is nonexistent. In the wake of this theological rejection of the cinematic and photographic images of the Sikh gurus, the Sikh creative artists have deployed the medium of comics to (re)-imagine Nanak and his life journey. The paper is an attempt to trace the trajectory of Nanak’s icon, its inception and subsequent reinvention across visual mediums such as portraits and calendar art, and critically analyze the contemporary imagery of the guru Nanak in Amar Chitra Katha and Sikh Comics. The paper will help us understand the way Nanak’s iconography has constantly been reinvented in the format of comics over the period of time.

**Biography:** Dr. Ranjeet is working with Post Graduate Government College -46, Chandigarh as assistant professor. His doctoral research is on Indian comics with emphasis on representation of Indian middle class in Chacha Chaudhary Comics. His research interests include Indian comics, visual culture, literary theory and Sikh art. Currently, he is working on a translation project.

**Syona Books Inc: The Trials and Tribulations of Creating a Publishing Press in the 21st Century**

**Sidney Singh (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Last year Syona Books Inc was created by Sidney Singh. It is a publishing press based in Vancouver, Canada. The press publishes comics, prose and poetry. In 2023 publishing and advertising books has become more accessible and affordable than ever before. Platforms such as Lulu.com, Rakuten Kobo, Google Books and Barnes and Noble Press allow self-publishers and small presses to easily publish and make their work available to a global audience. Social media sites such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube allow users to make inexpensive advertisements for their products. However, these accessible platforms have come with challenges

How do you make a name for yourself in the cutthroat attention economy? To add fuel to fire the establishment in Canadian literature appears to shun innovative technologies and small presses run by people who don’t lunch with them. For example, Singh has faced alleged human rights violations from global publishers’ representatives who had no authority to speak on behalf of another organization. Local festivals like the Sunshine Coast literary festival does not allow presentations for self-published authors even if they are more popular than a traditionally published author. This workshop will showcase how Syona Books Inc uses a variety of technologies to produce, publish and market their books to the world. It will also discuss how the company navigated its early controversies in the Canadian literary community. This workshop will give both technical and anecdotal insight.

**Biography:** Sidney Singh is a Canadian writer from Vancouver, BC. She is the current CEO of Syona Books Inc, a book publishing company, focusing on a variety of genres and topics. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree majoring in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia.

**Body Matters: Aesth(ethics) of Hyper-modern ‘Sci-Graphiction’**

**Varsha Singh (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The science fiction graphic novel is not a much discussed category of the more known genres within the medium. The simple reason for this appears to be, not a lack of ideas for discussion, but an abundance, instead, of the existing body of graphic fiction centering around the genres of super-hero comics. Much of the published scholarship on sci-fi graphic literature is limited to western classics such as *Watchmen, Batman*, and a whole range of comics built on the core philosophies of superheroic vigilantism; understandably so, as these comics necessitate the use of technophilic tropes to establish superpowers. In these worlds the powers are derived not from myth and magic but from science and technique. By contrast, works such as *On a Sunbeam* by Tillie Walden (2018), and *In* by Will McPhail (2021) are representative of a brand new form of sci-fi graphic narrative fiction which not only does away with the conventional super-hero prototype, but moves on to represent a dystopian and post-apocalyptic world of future, deeply problematizing ideas around gender, human/post-human, individual/society, as are known to us.

This paper will assess the criticality of the medium (‘sci-graphiction’), in contributing towards definitions of neo-ethics in our given post-human condition. It will argue that the form these works take, is still largely rooted in a worldview that the embodied experience is an outcome of an inherent inseparability of human cognition and consciousness.

**Biography:** A former Faculty of HSS, IIT Jammu, India, Varsha Singh has taught Literary Studies. She has co-edited a Special Issue of *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* with Emma D Varughese. Based in the UK, she is researching independently on graphic narratives and global literature, and on race, class and identity.

**Mythology, Technology and the Contemporary Superhero(ine)**

**Amrita Singh (she/her)**

**Abstract:** *Priya’s Shakti* was a digital comic that was released in 2014 in India, one that sought to break ground in the Indian comics space. It was created in response to the public outcry that arose after a young woman was brutally raped and murdered in New Delhi in December 2013. The creators - filmmaker Ram Devineni, illustrator Dan Goldman and writer Vikas Menon - designed a female superhero character who survived sexual assault and fought against gender-based violence, and championed women’s dignity, safety and activism. Apart from a pdf that could be downloaded, Devineni took the superhero to the streets via augmented reality. Through image markers the comic book could be transformed into animation, relay real-life stories, and pop-out other interactive elements of the pages. The AR could be accessed from an image mounted on walls, printed in a comic book, opened on digital devices, or even on a large mural on the side of a building. As Devineni himself explains, it was “one of the first publications to use augmented reality in India, and helped define the new frontiers of integrating books, exhibitions, and public art with augmented reality.”

This paper argues that *Priya’s Shakti*, and the subsequent seven comics in the series, redefine the comic book and the superhero(ine) figure by linking technology, mythology and contemporary socio-cultural discourse. The format and techniques employed reinvigorate traditionally drawn images in order to forge a deeper connect as well as engage critical literacy with the intended young audiences. They build on the mythoscape of the *Amar Chitra Katha* comics, and refashion its agenda of nation building into world-making. Moreover, as a tool in pedagogy, the Power of Priya comics enable a transnational cultural and linguistic literacy via language learning curricula and translations.

**Biography:** Amrita Singh (she/her) received her PhD at the Department of English, University of Delhi. Her areas of research include graphic narratives, life writing, rethinking culture and power, and English language teaching. She has presented in international conferences and published articles and book chapters in these areas. She has been teaching literature for more than a decade and is currently an Assistant Professor in the English department at Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi. She also writes and edits short stories.

**Redrawing Old Iron Arm: The Adaptation and Reception of Osamu Tezuka’s *Astro Boy* in China the Early 1980s**

**Nick Stember (he/him)**

This paper looks at a 1981 *lianhuanhua* (comic book) adaptation of Osamu Tezuka’s classic manga, Astro Boy, published by the Science Popularization Press (Kexue Puji Chubanshe) in Beijing, People’s Republic of China (PRC). Preceding the screening of the *Astro Boy* animated series on state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) by nearly two years, this comic represents one of the first Japanese manga to be released in the PRC. With the death of Chairman Mao in September 1976, the draconian policies of the Cultural Revolution had quickly been repealed, eventually being replaced with the scientific developmentalism of Mao’s ultimate successor, Deng Xiaoping. As such, the publication of a Chinese edition of Astro Boy was part of a larger project to promote science and technology in the wake of the ruinous political campaigns of the preceding two decades. In my reading of this comic, I consider the production and reception of this uniquely significant text, both within the context of the early 1980s, and also with an eye to the enormous popularity of Japanese manga and anime within China which was ignited shortly thereafter. Reviews of the comic highlighted the future of robotic automation on the one hand, and the dangers of inspiring copycat acts of derring-do among young people on the other. Of particular on the production side, meanwhile, is the singular way in which Astro Boy was first presented to Chinese audiences, with panels redrawn to fit the picture-above text-below (*shangtu xiawen*) format of *lianhuanhua*. Ultimately, I find what is most important is not physical (“panel”) frame in which Astro Boy is drawn, but rather the shifting cultural frames through which this text continues to read and re-read.

**Biography:** Nick Stember is a historian and translator of Chinese literature and popular culture who recently defended his PhD dissertation on “pulp science” in early Reform-era (1976-1986) comic books at the University of Cambridge. He is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the National Museum of Denmark, studying visual depictions of Daoist self-cultivation in comics, animations, video games, and other transmedia adaptations of *xianxia* or “immortal fantasy.”

**Technology and Formal Changes in Early Manga: focus on Kitazawa Rakuten**

**Ron Stewart (he/him)**

**Abstract:** This paper will examine how changing technology, particularly print technology, in Japan affected the formal qualities and expressive possibilities of early twentieth century manga. This will be done by exploring changes in the work of Kitazawa Rakuten (1876-1955), considered to be Japan’s first career mangaka (cartoonist), and others working under him between the mid-1890s and early-1930s. After a brief introduction to this cartoonist’s career, his influences from overseas comic art, the wide range of his work, and his impact on manga development, focus then will turn to his publications. A particular focus will be the comics section “Jiji Manga” of the newspaper Jiji Shinpō which over three arcs between 1901 and 1932 changed from a mostly woodcut letterpress-printed comics page to an offset-printed multi-page colour supplement. Some consideration will also be given to other technologies of this period, such as the most popular entertainment of the time, film. Recent research (Exner 2021) has placed emphasis on the introduction of US comic strips from 1923 and other sound and image technologies and their influence on Japanese comics entering an “audiovisual stage” with the formal “intradiegetic” hallmarks, speech balloons and emanate, associated with modern manga. However, this paper will argue that there were other technological and related pragmatic reasons implicated in the timing of these formal changes.

**Biography:** Ronald is a Professor at Daito Bunka University, Japan. A member of the Japan Society for the Study of Cartoons and Comics since 2003, he has published widely on political cartoons and manga history in both English and Japanese. Ronald’s most recent publication is *Manga: a critical guide* (Bloomsbury, 2023) co-authored with CJ Suzuki.

**Webtoons: Transnational Audiences, Adaptations, and Appropriations**

**Fi Stewart-Taylor (they/them), Ayanni C. H. Cooper (she/her), Corinne Matthews (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Webtoon is not only one of the most popular platforms on which to read comics, Webtoons are also one of the most important in terms of understanding new, transnational, online comics audiences. Webtoons, and the K-Drama adaptations which follow, are tremendously popular internationally, disseminating new genres and styles. Platformized reading applications are now important sites for transnational production and reception and merit more scholarly notice. Our roundtable, composed of three mini-papers and discussion, places close, critical attention on specific aspects of the Webtoon landscape, providing an entryway to larger discussions of audience, adaptation, and appropriation.

Queer and fan appropriation are examined in our first mini-paper, on amateur production of comics on Webtoons Canvas. These comics help show how Webtoons participates in the transnational evolution of “BL” comics and readership, and the attendant codification of new practices within an existing participatory prosumer culture.

A second paper provides an overview of the complex Webtoon and Korean drama adaptation transmedial landscape, which often differ from drama to drama. For example, adaptations can create their own ending, make significant changes, and even exist as simultaneously transmedial publications. Taken together, these Webtoons and their adaptations speak to one fascinating element of the larger international Korean wave.

Turning to comparative close-reading, our final mini-paper considers the adaptation decisions of the popular Korean Drama Yumi’s Cells (2021-2022). Showrunners deliberately evoke familiar sequences from the Webtoon of the same name (2015-2020) in cinematography and show design, connecting the narratives visually across media, much to the delight of fans.

**Biographies:**

Ayanni C. H. Cooper (she/her) is a program associate at the Modern Language Association in the Academic Program Services & Professional Development department. She produces and co-hosts the podcast “Sex. Love. Literature.” with Corinne Matthews. Her research interests include comics and animation, monster theory, gender & sexuality studies, and pornography studies.

Corinne Matthews (she/her) is a postdoctoral associate in the University Writing Program at the University of Florida. Her research interests include children’s and young adult literature, gender and sexuality studies, and genre studies. She also co-hosts the pop culture podcast Sex. Love. Literature. with Ayanni Cooper.

Fi Stewart-Taylor (they/them) is a PhD candidate at the University of Florida. Their research interests include community rhetorics, Do-It-Yourself media, visual studies, and queer studies. They also serve as a zine specialist at the Civic Media Center in Gainesville, Florida.

**“I’d rather be a cyborg than a goddess”: LDCOMICS, Technology and Comics Culture**

**Nicola Streeten (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The LDComics CIC (LDC) festival 2020, funded by Arts Council England was scheduled to take place in London, UK, in March 2020, the week the UK was placed into lockdown in response to COVID-19. Positioning ourselves as early adopters of virtual delivery, we hosted our festival online via Facebook. This technology enabled activity, that, three years later, I suggest, has become “natural”.

Donna Haraway, in her seminal essay *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), traced the historical provenance of “natural” to show how it supported a patriarchal system. She pointed out how, for example, the idea of the reproductive capacity of women as “natural” has been used to reinforce an essentialist notion of women’s role in society. Haraway’s idea of cyborg as hybrid of machine and body, called for a feminism that embraces technology. In arguing that we are all cyborgs, Haraway proposed this challenges dualist and essentialist classifications, in turn assumptions around identities, including gender.

I demonstrate in my paper that rather than fearing unavoidable technological progress, LDC has embraced it. I show examples of LDC activity as evidence of how technology, incorporated with human-to-human activity offers potential for positive social benefit.

Since establishment in 2009, LDC’s regular activity has been hosting monthly events, platforming invited guests to give visual presentations to a public audience with no cost to attend. As technology responded to the pandemic, we saw possibilities in platforming monthly events on Zoom and incorporating technology into all our activity. My reflections on this development will draw on Haraway to offer evidence of constructive outcomes for comics community and comics culture.

**Biography:** Dr Nicola Streeten is a UK-based multi-award-winning graphic novelist and comics scholar. Her graphic memoir *Billy, Me & You* (Myriad Editions, 2011) was followed by *The Inking Woman* (Myriad Editions, 2018) a 250-year illustrated history of British women’s cartoonists. This was complemented by theoretical publication UK Feminist Cartoons and Comics: A Critical Survey (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Nicola is founding director of LDComics CIC – a women creator-led forum championing graphic novel works, particularly by women.

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**Through the Looking Glass: Re-imagining Domestic and Military Technologies in Ukrainian War Comics**

**Svitlana Stupak (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This paper examines how Ukrainian comics represent technologies (means of communication, as well as military equipment) in depicting the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. The current need to secure swift, direct and wide coverage of events and the distribution of vital information drove Ukrainians to seize upon the affordances of news technologies as consumers and as re-translators of their own narratives. Ubiquity and utility of social media and smartphones in this war have shaped the new wave of Ukrainian confessional and documentary comics, now predominately distributed over social media (by such creators as Yulia Vus and Iryna Vale), digital newspapers, and websites, (i.e. the Inker project). Alongside the local specifics of digital formats (cross-platform layout, medium-specific stylizations, etc.) and distribution (open-access, parallel translation, etc.), the technologies, civil and military, are integrated in these narratives on the level of diegesis as commodities, embodied metaphors and personifications, as well as narratorial instances (monstrators). In these comics, an ironic reversal of ‘safe’ domesticity of the means of communications that now signal potential and actual destruction is accompanied by a reframing of lethal weaponry as soothing in its capacity to shield from the latter. Thus, in the works of Danyl Shtangeev, Borys Filonenko and Zhenya Oliinyk, smartphones destabilize the space by morphing and ‘framing’ it through double perspective and ironic distance, whereas other comics, for instance “I Will Fight for You” by Volodymyr Kuznietsov and Lyudmyla Samus, appropriate and domesticize military artifacts. This paper examines how technologies, such as domestic gadgets and military equipment, become ‘rediscovered’ and reintegrated into the new contexts of a hybrid war, overturning the usual sentiments about safety, engagement, exposure and entrapment.

**Biography:**

Svitlana Stupak a PhD student (2022 – ongoing) in American Studies at the University of Siegen, Germany. Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Daniel Stein.

Research interests: US-American and Ukrainian graphic narratives, war comics, autobiography/autofiction, postcolonial comics, graphic humor.

Last publication: Stupak, S. (forthcoming) Shaping Post-Colonial Identity: Cossacks and Ukrainian Comics. *ImageTexT: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*.

**Understanding Narratives and Medium-Specific Affordances in Webcomics through Sailesh Gopalan's “Brown Paperbag”**

**Anu Sugathon (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Webcomics can be viewed as a distinct form of comics, influenced by and adapted to web technologies. The integration of web technologies both constrains and enhances the medium, creating a new mode of storytelling. Webcomics, while rooted in the established language of comics, take advantage of the unique possibilities offered by the web for meaning-making. By looking at the web comics series called “Brown Paperbag” by the Indian comics artist Sailesh Gopalan, this paper argues that webcomics serve as not only an extension of the rich tradition of comics but also as innovative narratives which embrace and reshape storytelling possibilities in the digital age. Webcomics seems to represent an evolution within the established comics idiom, introducing new modes of meaning-making through the affordances of the web. The comparison between traditional comic books and webcomics highlights the nuanced ways in which materiality and medium specificity influence the reader’s experience. The reading experience can further vary, especially when webcomics employ guided view functionality, presenting each panel individually, offering a distinctive reading encounter. Understanding the built-in components that influence reading and aid in meaning-making requires a thorough examination of the medium. This paper will examine the distinctive affordances inherent in webcomics as a medium, investigating how the audience’s engagement with the content is shaped by the specific choices made in presenting the narrative.

**Biography:** Anu Sugathan is a PhD student in the department of English at the University of Oregon. Her areas of interest include Visual Culture, Comics and Graphic Novel, Postcolonial Writings, and South Asian Literature and Cinema.

**The Curious Case of the Unofficial *Star Wars* Comic Adaptations: A Case Study of Fandom, Collecting, and Alternate Canons**

**Bálint Szántó (he/him)**

**Abstract:** The *Star Wars*-saga, created by George Lucas, is a prominent example of what Henry Jenkins refers to as “transmedia storytelling”. A transmedia narrative is told through several different media platforms, including movies, novels, comic books, and video games. However, there is an important aspect of this subject that has not received much scholarly attention yet. Although the *Star Wars*-movies themselves were released in certain Eastern Bloc countries too during the 1980s, it was not possible to distribute other ancillary and transmedial products related to them. This led to local manufacturers in these countries producing unlicensed and bootleg merchandise.

The comic adaptations created by renowned Hungarian comic artist Attila Fazekas are some of the most well-known examples of this phenomenon. At the time of the Hungarian release of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), Fazekas was commissioned by the state-owned media corporation to draw comic adaptations of the original *Star Wars*-trilogy. The comics themselves are somewhat faithful to the movies, but still differ from them at many points, mainly due to Fazekas’ lack of visual references. Nevertheless, they became iconic in Hungarian fandom and are still highly sought-after collectibles to this day. Furthermore, they have also gained international attention on online *Star Wars* fan forums recently.

This interdisciplinary paper aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian *Star Wars*-comics created by Attila Fazekas. Examining their stylistic and narrative features gives a deeper understanding of how comic book culture on the Soviet-aligned side of the Iron Curtain differed from the Western Bloc. Discussing their status as prized cult objects allows us to analyze media and comics fandom in these countries from a critical perspective.

**Biography**: Bálint Szántó (he/him) is a third-year PhD student in the English and American literature and culture program at the University of Szeged, Hungary. He is currently writing his doctoral dissertation, which combines comics studies, fandom studies, and new media studies. He is also teaching an undergraduate course about British and American comic book culture at the university.

**Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival*: A Journey from a Discipline Society to a Control Society**

**Zahra Taheri (she/her)**

**Abstract:** Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* (2006) is considered as one of the most successful graphic novels carrying off multiple awards and attracting critics’ views. Describing the experience of immigration, Shaun provides the reader with wordless illustrations portraying such a journey and its hardship. The illustrations picture an estranged familiar world, in which elements of the past and the future have been intermingled. In Shaun’s narrative the reader like the main character comes across a-half-realistic, a-half-fantastic world. The narrative’s world has its own type of language, food, animals, and transportation systems, which differ from the current reality, and induce a space to question the oppressive systems and to harbor renewed hopes of change. These features along with the happy ending of the man’s reunion with his wife and daughter have caused many critics to dub the text as polyphonic and utopian. The latter feature is particularly overemphasized due to the haven the strange, high-tech land seems to have provided for different oppressed groups. Oddly have few critics focused on the way that the oppressive system of capitalism has been maintained in the new land. Nor has much attention been paid to the surveillance the biopolitical system practices in Shaun’s novel. This paper, thus, tries to discuss how Shaun’s novel has just represented a transition from one controlling system to another using Ajana’s theory of biosurveillance. The seeming fairy-tale ending can be a reflection of such transition, or the presence of a domineering, oppressive biopolitical system has been established in the novel.

**Biography:** Zahra Taheri is an Iranian professor teaching at the University of Kashan, Iran. She has a Ph.D. in English literature and has written more than a dozen articles on women, particularly women who are racial, ethnic, or religious minorities. She has developed an expertise in minority and ethnic literature and has also investigated the intersection of gender and politics.

**The New Avatar of Meitei Comics: How I Brought Together Subika Arts and XR (AR/VR/MR)**

**Natasa Thoudam (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This paper explores my trajectory as a Meitei comics/graphic artist from Manipur. Working at the intersection of arts (both visual and performative) and technology (as I am also affiliated to Digital Humanities), I am aware of the distinction between ‘born digital’ and ‘digital version’ in the context of E-lit in India highlighted by Souvik Mukherjee in “‘No Country for E-Lit?’—India and Electronic Literature” and Justy Joseph and Nirmala Menon in “Electronic Literature in India: Where Is It? Does It Even Exist?” My first completed graphic narrative was an e-essay—a ‘digital version’—that tries to connect the Meitei illustrative arts (retrospectively coined as ‘Subika arts’ by Somi K. Roy), the Meitei Mayek (script), and the revivalist movement of Sanamahism. In contrast, my second ongoing project explores the ‘born digital’ and uses the classic version of MS Paint. Currently, I am working on a project to create a unique technologically enhanced comic book that makes comics accessible to all.

This paper explores how ‘Subika arts’ and the advance technology of XR (AR/VR/MR) are brought together to create a Meitei comic book, thus inaugurating a new future for Meitei comics arising from new technologies while simultaneously responding to the concerns raised by Maggie Gray and Ian Horton in Seeing Comics Through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form in the context of the Global North and re-examining their arguments in a different context at the intersection of arts and the digital in the Global South.

**Biography:** Natasa Thoudam is an Assistant Professor at IIT Jodhpur. Her highly specialized interdisciplinary research interests are focussed on Manipur (India’s Northeast). An aspiring graphic artist, she is currently working on two books: one book is on comics studies, while the other examines various religious movements in India’s Northeast. She is also working on her second graphic narrative that makes use of born-digital creative and artistic practices.

**Harry Guy Bartholomew: Innovator, Inventor, Cartoonist**

**Adam Twycross (he/him)**

**Abstract:** Harry Guy Bartholomew was a cartoonist, an inventor, a journalistic innovator and perhaps the single most important figure in the history of British newspaper strips. He was present at the birth of pictorial news, working in the first decade of the twentieth century in the art department of the Daily Mirror as it became established as a significant force within popular journalism. Simultaneously, he worked as a cartoonist, producing strips, cartoons and caricatures for the *Daily Mirror*, the *Weekly Dispatch* and other titles during the earliest days of the newspaper strip. During the First World War he became a celebrated war photographer, and in 1920 was the inventor, alongside Maynard McFarlane, of the Bartlane cable picture transmission system, which allowed digital images to be transmitted from New York and London via undersea cable. In 1933 he became the editorial director of the *Daily Mirror* and set about rebuilding the paper as a brash, irreverent and working-class tabloid, in the process ushering in the golden age of the British newspaper strip; it was under Bartholomew’s direction that the paper introduced such notable series as Jane and Buck Ryan. Bartholomew was ousted from the *Daily Mirror* in a boardroom coup in 1951, with his remarkable contribution to British newspapers and comic strips now largely forgotten. This paper will use recently discovered archival material to shed new light on the varied career of a remarkable artist, inventor and maverick, and give an overview of ongoing research into the life of one of Fleet Street’s most exceptional figures.

**Biography:** Dr Adam Twycross is a British comics scholar and a Senior Lecturer in Games Art at Anglia Ruskin University. His research centres on British newspaper strips and adult comics of the 20th century, and he is the author of Palgrave Macmillan’s upcoming history of British newspaper strips, British Newspaper Strips: A Contextual History (2024).

**‘Playful’ Journeys: Analysing the Gamification of Migrant Experiences in Comics**

**Silvia Vari (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The phrasing ‘to go game’ has become a common expression resonating among (and beyond) migrants attempting to informally cross EU borders via the western Balkan route (Zocchi 2023). The comparison between undocumented migrations and the act of playing a game sheds light on the risks taken and the tension endured in such perilous journeys (Minca & Collins, 2021). More recently, board games and videogames have been used to recreate the journeys of migrants and refugees, in the attempt of conveying the personal experiences of individuals and inviting players to share that experience (Therkildsen, Bunkenborg & Larsen 2017; Navarro-Remesal & Pérez Zapata 2019). The analogy between board game and migrant experience has made its way also in graphic narratives, an increasingly used medium to narrate migration stories (Marie & Ollivier 2013, Serrano 2021). Considering this intertwinement, I explore the affective implications of the ‘gamification’ of migrant experiences in comics. Specifically, I investigate the visual association of the aleatory nature of migrants’ journeys to that of playing the iconic board game ‘The Game of the Goose’ in two seemingly unrelated comics: the autobiography L'invasione degli extraterroni (2023) and the graphic reportage Libia (2019). By positing comics as a particularly creative and ‘playful’ medium (Brown 2021; Eckhoff-Heindl 2021), the paper analyses the analogy between undocumented migration and game-playing drawing from the research on the ‘dangerous game’ of migration and its literal transposition into board games and videogames.

**Biography:** Silvia Vari (she/her) is a PhD student in Italian at the University of Warwick. Her research focuses on experiences of migration in the Mediterranean area narrated in Italian comics from the past two decades, where she investigates how the medium’s formal hybridity and fragmentary aesthetics may embody and convey the transitional experience of migrant subjects.

**From Sketches to Graphics: A Study on the History of Indian Graphic Novels**

**Akhila Sara Varughese (she/her)**

**Abstract:** The present paper titled “From Sketches to Graphics: A Study on the History of Indian Graphic Novels” analyses the history of Indian graphic novels from the early period to the 21st century. The historical aspects of the technologies used in the production of comics and graphic novels are also discussed in the paper. The graphic novel, a form of sequential storytelling that combines words and images, has taken the world by storm in recent decades. But its journey in India is a fascinating one, with a rich history dating back to the early 20th century. This paper will explore the evolution of Indian graphic novels, from their humble beginnings as comic strips and mythological illustrations to their current status as powerful tools for social commentary and artistic expression by using the AI technologies. As the industry continues to evolve, one can only imagine the exciting stories and groundbreaking visuals that await us in the years to come. Embracing AI responsibly can enhance the Indian graphic novel scene by boosting efficiency, accessibility, and storytelling potential. However, it’s essential to use AI as a tool to empower creators, not replace them. Striking a balance between leveraging AI’s capabilities and preserving the human touch will be key to ensuring that AI enhances, rather than diminishes, the unique identity and artistic expression of Indian graphic novels. The paper analyses works like Graphic India’s “Astra Force” utilized AI-powered coloring tools to accelerate the production process, allowing artists to focus on more intricate details and Vishwajyoti Ghosh’s “Garuda” employed AI tools to generate initial background layouts, saving time and allowing for iterative refinement.

Technological advancements will continue to shape the evolution of Indian graphic novels. Embracing new tools and platforms can provide creators with the power to tell even more powerful and engaging stories, reaching a wider audience than ever before. By navigating the challenges and harnessing the opportunities, Indian graphic novels can truly claim their place on the global stage.

**Biography:** Dr Akhila Sara Varughese, Assistant Professor of English, Marian Academy of Management Studies, Kothamangalam, Ernakulam, Kerala, India. She completed her PhD in the area of graphic literature from Mahatma Gandhi University.

**“But we were Wakanda… we were supposed to be exceptional”: Nostalgia and Afrofuturism in *Black Panther*’s Speculative Fiction**

**Aanchal Vij (she/her)**

**Abstract:** What would an individual or a nation feel nostalgic for when their past has been violently blotted with oppression and indignity? In thinking about nostalgia as a privilege that is permitted to only a few, and not all, I question American exceptionalism, and exceptionalism of any kind, as something that is often inextricable from narratives of nostalgia. Through a study of Afrofuturism and American exceptionalism in Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Black Panther* comics (2019) and Stan Lee and Jack Kirby’s *Black Panther* (1966), this paper draws out the politics of nostalgia that fuel the desire(s) to create narratives of heroism. An exploration of the desire to ‘repair’ histories or futures questions whether it is possible to create *any* narrative of exceptionalism without simultaneously experiencing nostalgia for a real or phantom past.

More specifically, this paper thinks through Mark Dery’s understanding of ‘Afrofuturism’ as Black speculative fiction that ‘appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically-enhanced future…’ in context of the Coates’ *Black Panther* that actively rejects technology *as part of* its Afrofuturist project. Nostalgia’s backward glance and Afrofuturism’s ‘prosthetically-enhanced future’ comes together in these two comic books in unexpected ways.

Kodwo Eshun explores ‘how much Afrodiasporic subjectivity in the twentieth century constituted itself through the cultural project of recovery’ through a thought experiment (287). Eshun’s compelling understanding of Afrofuturism and Afro-centric worldmaking, when put in dialogue with the *Black Panther* comics, gives birth to questions about what it means to create Afrodiasporic narratives set in the future. This examination of Afrofuturism and *Black Panther* leads to an enquiry into the representation of blackness in ‘American’ comics as well as the extent to which these comics exacerbate the ever-nostalgic American dream sometimes despite their reliance on futurity.

**Biography:** Aanchal Vij completed her PhD from the School of Media, Arts, and Humanities at the University of Sussex in 2022. She works on19th and 20th century comic books and novels to explore the relationship between American history, nostalgia, and disability studies. She currently works as an Assistant Editor at Bloomsbury Academic on their Literary and Comics Studies list. Her monograph *Nostalgia and Repair in American Comics and Literature* is due to publish later this year with Palgrave.

***C3: COVID Comics, Cubed***

**Emmy Waldman, Rachael Paine, Doug Bowman, Levi Shoates and Kay Sohini**

**Abstract:**This presentation will introduce *C3: COVID Comics, Cubed*, an immersive multimedia project in development for exhibition at Virginia Tech, funded by a $25,000 SEED grant through the Institute for Creativity, Technology, and the Arts (ICAT).Utilizing the Cube, a five-story, state-of-the-art theatre and high-tech laboratory at Virginia Tech, *C3*explores the role of webcomics during the pandemic through an immersive experience that combines graphic narrative with AR/VR technology. In this online presentation, our interdisciplinary team will discuss the conceptual aims, strategies, and challenges of the project, with emphasis on the possibilities that open up by taking comics off the page and into augmented or virtual reality spaces. Theorists of the comics form have long studied how comics open portals into other spaces and places, building affectual worlds onto which it is easy for readers to project. But what if the public could literally enter the world of a comic? Or what if comics characters could enter *our*space as holographic images? What would that experience be like? What could it teach us? The power of comics to improve health literacy and amplify empathy is now well-evidenced. Harnessing the resources of an expanded digital field, this project exploits cutting-edge technology to reveal comics storytelling as a force for health literacy and community engagement at a time of maximum isolation and disconnection. Our goal is to open new avenues both for experiencing comic art—and comics *as*art—and for working with public health data.

**Biographies:**

Dr Emmy Waldman is Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Virginia Tech, where she researches and teaches in the areas of graphic narrative and comics (including graphic medicine), poetry, and critical theory.

Dr Rachael Paineis a user experience designer and researcher who focuses on human-centered design perspectives with an emphasis on health communication and informational agency.

Dr Doug Bowman, professor of Computer Science and Director of the Center for Human-Computer Interaction, studies user experience and interaction design in immersive environments using VR/AR technology, and will advise the team on navigation and other interactive elements of the experience.

Levi Shoatesis an undergraduate research assistant and artist studying creative technologies.

Kay Sohiniis a scholar, cartoonist, and author. Her work is forthcoming from Graphic Mundi.

**Pirated PDFs and Phone Perusals: Notes on Teaching Comics in an Indian College Classroom**

**Neha Yadav (she/her)**

**Abstract:** While there is an abundance of literature on comics as pedagogical tools within global contexts (Aman & Wallner 2022; Dong 2012; Hill 2017; Kirtley, Garcia, & Carlson 2020) as well as Indian ones (Afrilyasanti & Basthomi 2011; Føreland 2023; Friedlander 2018; Ravichandran 2016), little has been written on the experiential reality of teaching a visual literature course as part of college curriculum in India. This is partly because comics and graphic novels do not form any of the core courses taught at the undergraduate level to students of English Literature; a few texts are occasionally studied in specialist institutions like National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Srishti Institute of Art, Design, and Technology in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Following syllabus amendments under New Education Policy (2020), a course comprising sequential art narratives is now available as an elective to students of English Literature at a few Indian colleges and universities. As the course instructor at one such institute in Goa, I have had the opportunity to observe the unique challenges to widespread adoption of this curriculum – under-resourced institutions, poorly stocked libraries, prohibitively expensive texts – as well as the ways in which technology – internet piracy, android smartphones, cheap data plans – can be marshalled to address some of these concerns. Through the twin modes of autoethnographic narrative and semi-structured interviews with students, my paper demonstrates the productive potential of technological intervention into the comics studies classroom in India.

**Biography:** Neha Yadav is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at Azim Premji University,Bhopal. She received her PhD in contemporary Indian graphic narratives from BITS, Goa and holds a BA and an MA from the University of Delhi. Her work has appeared in *Scroll, Strange Horizons, The Wire* etc.

**Verticality and/or Horizontality? A Cross-cultural Envisioning of the Digital Comics Form**

**Yiqi Zhang (she/her)**

**Abstract:** This study envisages the formal possibility of digital comics in two directions: verticality and horizontality. This is allowed through a comparison between two sets of digital comics techniques, i.e., the design of vertical scrolling on smartphones, which is initiated by South Korean web cartoonist Kang Full in *Pure Love Comics* (2003-2004), and ‘turbomedia’, which makes uses of horizontal computer screen with animation sensibility and is proposed by French web cartoonist Balak in 2009. While the former paves the way for Korean Webtoon, a digital comics platform with growing worldwide popularity, the latter is widely employed in American Marvel Infinite Comics for its potential as the future of digital comics perceived by the company. The study examines as cases studies Full and Balak’s own works and, where necessary, other comics adopting similar techniques on Webtoon and Marvel. It compares from three aspects: the dissolution of gutter, spatial-temporal relationships, and the haptic engagement of readers. It argues that digital comics not only differ from printed comics in these aspects, but the ways in which they differ can vary across cultural contexts. The study, therefore, contextualises Scott McCloud’s notion of digital comics as infinite canvas in the contemporary comics landscape of the world. It points to the role of cultural factor that plays in the ongoing development of digital comics form. Mobilising verticality and horizontality as instances of manifestations of the medium’s affordances, it conceptualises the future directions of digital comics within a transcultural framework.

**Biography:** Yiqi Zhang is a PhD research student at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, and a member of the Comics Research Hub (CoRH). Her research explores the creative potential of comics artists from transcultural perspectives and the hybridisation of comics conventions across the globe.

**IN-PERSON SCHEDULE**

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| **IGNCC 2024 In-Person Schedule****Wednesday 10 July** |
| **Time** | **Room** | **Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
| 9.00-9.30 | FOYER | REGISTRATION AND WELCOME |  |
| 9.30-9.45 | LECTURE THEATRE | WELCOME | Geraint D’Arcy |
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|  |  | PANEL 1 |  |
| 10.00-11.30 | 0.01 | 1a RACE AND TECHNOLOGY**James Bacon** The changing face of *Banshee***Aanchal Vij** “But we were Wakanda… we were supposed to be exceptional”: Nostalgia and Afrofuturism in Black Panther’s Speculative Fiction**Kavyta Kay** Comics in Colour: Graphic Novels and Racial Literacy in British Educational Settings | Ernesto Priego |
| 10.00-11.30 | 0.07 | 1b NEGOTIATING SPACES AND TECHNOLOGY **Alex Fitch** Mapping hypercomics onto architectural spaces**Silvia Vari** ‘Playful’ Journeys: Analysing the Gamification of Migrant Experiences in Comics**Varsha Singh** Body Matters: Aesth(ethics) of Hyper-modern ‘Sci-Graphiction’  | Geraint D’Arcy |
| 10.00-11.30 | 0.02 | 1c TIME, TECHNOLOGY AND COMICS **Neal Curtis** Telling Time: Temporality in Comics by Brain Tumour Patients**Jonathan Macho** Time and Relative Dimensions on the Page – The Power of Doctor Who Comics | Juliacurtis Round |
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| 11.30-12.00 | FOYER | COFFEE/COMFORT BREAK |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  | PANEL 2 |  |
| 12.00-13.00 | 0.01 | 2a MANGA, MANHWA, ANIME**Wilhelm Haydt Richter** The Postmodern Cowboy: *Cowboy Bebop*, Anime as Art**Ron Stewart** Technology and Formal Changes in Early Manga: focus on Kitazawa Rakuten | Yiqi Zhang  |
| 12.00-13.00 | 0.02 | 2c COMICS CREATION**Irène Le Roy Ladurie** Bande dessinée colourists and the quest for artistic authorship**Richard Conyngham** From dust to data to drawing – Archival research and emerging technologies in the creation of graphic history | Ian Hague |
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| 13.00-14.00 | FOYER | LUNCH |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 3 |  |
| 14.00-15.30 | 0.01 | 3a DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS**Ian Hague** Closing ComiXology: Fragility in the Digital Comics Ecosystem**Thomas Gebhart** Putting the X in Comix: social media platforms, creation, and remediation in Quarantine Comix and Nap Comix**Linda Berube** The Future Is Post Digital? UK Digital Comics Creators, Publishers, and Readers Creating the Comics Ecosystem | Giorgio Busi Rizzi |
| 14.00-15.30 | 0.07 | 3b RESISTING LOGOCENTRISM: EXPLORING THE TECHNOLOGIES OF COMICS BEYOND READING – Roundtable **Ernesto Priego, Hailey Austin, Peter Wilkins** | Ian Horton |
| 14.00-15.30 | 0.02 | 3c *Beep-ksssshhhhhhk-vrooop*: SOUNDS OF THE FUTURE**Elizabeth Allyn Woock** Soundscapes that flash forward, flash back.**Brian Fagence** Sounds of Entropy: Science Fiction, Technology and Authentic Worlds **Geraint D’Arcy** (Mise en scéne, acting, and space) … AND WORDS (and voice) in comics | Jonathan Macho |
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| 15.30-16.00 | FOYER | COFFEE/COMFORT BREAK |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 4 |  |
| 16.00-17.30 | 0.01 | 4a VIRTUAL/MATERIAL CREATION AND CONSUMPTION**Yiqi Zhang** Verticality and/or Horizontality? A Cross-cultural Envisioning of the Digital Comics Form**Paul Fisher Davies** Sketchnoting, Analogue and Digital**Logan Scott** Square Eyes and Why Materiality Still Matters | Alex Fitch |
| 16.00-17.30 | 0.07 | 4b GENDER, ADAPTATION, TRANSFORMATION**Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru** Ecologies of a Mediatized Cityscape: Bhagwati Prasad and Amitabh Kumar’s *Tinker.Solder.Tap. A Graphic Novel***Nick Stember** Redrawing Old Iron Arm: The Adaptation and Reception of Osamu Tezuka’s *Astro Boy* in China the Early 1980s**Paul Noguerol** Pulp science fiction and superhero fiction as an allegory of transgender experience in Leo de Sousa’s *Teen Trans* | Nicola Streeten |
| 16.00-17.30 | 0.02 | 4c COMICS AND CULTURAL ROLES**Mike Nguyen** Establishing the Educational Role of Comic Books: An Opportunity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**Nishtha Dev and Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay** Abol Tabol and a hundred years of technology-speak in Image-Text: Re-situating the Graphic Fiction in India | Shuchita Mishra  |
| 16.00-17.30 | 0.03 | 4d READERSHIP**Cassia Hayward-Fitch** “Third Spaces”, Digital Reading Communities, and Reader Interaction in Alison Bechdel’s dykestowatchoutfor.com**Derek Novosad** Prisms of Fidelity and Change in Relation to the Hyper-Spectator: How Narrative is Negotiated in the Serial Adaptation *The Walking Dead* | Zu Dominiak |
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| 18.00 | VISTA | Buffet Dinner |  |
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| **IGNCC 2024 In-Person Schedule****Thursday 11 July** |
| **Time** | **Room** | **Event/Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
|  |  | PANEL 5 |  |
| 09.00-10.00 | 0.01 | 5a REPLACEMENTS, RELATIONS, REFUGEE COMICS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY **Dominic Davies** “Don’t Shoot!” Witnessing the Fabric of War in Hamid Sulaiman’s Freedom Hospital**Candida Rifkind** “Do You Want to Replace the Sky?” Matt Huynh’s Interactive Comicsand the Refugee Artist | Gareth Brookes |
| 09.00-10.00 | 0.07 | 5b TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH**Jesse Prevoo** Universal Comics-Studies Repository: A Thematic Repository for Comics-studies, enabling and streamlining co-operation and the exchange of ideas and knowledge in the Comics Scholars Community**Meher Shiblee** Using Social Media as a Research Tool | Paul Noguerol |
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| 10.00-10.30 | FOYER | COFFEE/COMFORT BREAK |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 6 |  |
| 10.30-12.00 | 0.01 | 6a AI AND AR IN CREATIVE PRACTICE**Miriam Kent** Artificial Ink: Creativity, Convergence and AI in Contemporary Comics**Gareth Brookes** The Auteur as Algorithm – Subjectivity, Trace and Automation in Comics Self-Publishing Practice**Giorgio Busi** **Rizzi** AgAInst? Comics creation, cultural capital, participatory cultures, and stakeholders | Alison Mandaville |
| 10.30-12.00 | 0.07 | 6b PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND EDITING**Nicolas Labarre** Moebius’s digital work, between curation and remediation**Julia Round** **and Jim O’Brien** Editing Practices in Twentieth-Century British Comics**Zu Dominiak** Born of Earth and Fire: making comics using ancient technology | Elizabeth Allyn Woock |
| 10.30-12.00 | 0.02 | 6c VIOLENCE AND MONSTERS **Shawna Browarsky-Quigley** “Roger that?” The Importance of the Radio in Rwandan Genocide Comics**Svitlana Stupak** Through the Looking Glass: Re-imagining Domestic and Military Technologies in Ukrainian War Comics**Dragoș Manea** “They made Grendel possible”: Monstrosity and Technological Transformation in David Hutchison’s *Beowulf* (2006) and Santiago García and David Rubin’s *Beowulf* (2017) | Wilhelm Haydt Richter |
| 10.30-12.00 | 0.03 | 6d GENDER, RESISTANCE AND CREATIVITY**Nicola Streeten** I’d rather be a cyborg than a goddess: LDCOMICS, Technology and Comics Culture**Shuchita Mishra** Technological Leverage for Comic Artists**Amira Rihab Saidi** Technology and Masculinity: Exploring Hegemonic Masculinity Dynamics in Film through Batman and the Joker | Joan Ormrod |
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| 12.00-13.00 | FOYER | LUNCH |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 7 - WORKSHOPS |  |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.01 | 7a WHISKY TECH (WORKSHOP) Shamanising the Scotch: A Comic Critique of Industrial Whisky Tech **Rachel MacNeill and Melanie Hughes** |  |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.07 | 7b SLOW TECH (WORKSHOP)A Playful and Participatory Workshop on the Whys and Hows of using paper and crayons in your comics scholarship and teaching**Alison Mandaville** |  |
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| 14.30-15.00 | FOYER | COMFORT BREAK |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 8  |  |
| 15.00-16.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE  | 8a PUBLISHING PANELQ&A with Intellect, Palgrave, Routledge, The Comics Grid, and more! | Julia Round |
| 15.00-16.00 | 0.01 | 8b Performance and Comics inaugural meet-up |  |
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| 16.00-16.30 | FOYER | MENTORING | Adam Twycross |
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| 16.30-17.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | SABIN AWARD | Roger Sabin |
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| 17.00-18.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ ONLINE | KEYNOTE **Darnel Degand** ([www.darneldegand.com](http://www.darneldegand.com)) From Golden Legacies to Afrofutures: The common themes in how Black cartoonists use communications technologies | David Huxley |
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| 19.00 | SAINSBURY CENTRE | CONFERENCE DINNER/ BUFFET |  |
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| **IGNCC 2024 In-Person Schedule****Friday 12 July**  |
| **Time** | **Room** | **Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
| 09.30-10.00 | FOYER | MORNING REGISTRATION |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 9 |  |
| 10.00-11.00 | 0.01 | 9a FANDOM AND ONLINE COMICS CULTURE **Ian Horton and Mark Hibbett** Digital Databases and Donald Duck Weekblad (or Double Data Entry is Double Dutch to Me)**Bálint Szántó** The Curious Case of the Unofficial *Star Wars* Comic Adaptations: A Case Study of Fandom, Collecting, and Alternate Canons | Alex Fitch |
| 10.00-11.00 | 0.07 | 9b MANGA, MANHWA AND ANIME**Sarah Jessica Darley** Ordering Off-Menu: Otome Game Play and the Quest for Survival in Gwon Gyeoeul and SUOL’s *Villains are Destined to Die* (2020-Present)**Meriel Dhanowa** Feelings of the Uncanny: Robot Representation in Manga through Osamu Tezuka’s and Naoki Urasawa’s *Pluto* | Hailey Austin |
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| 11.00-12.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | KEYNOTE**Karrie Fransman** ([www.karriefransman.com](http://www.karriefransman.com)) Experimenting with Comics | Joan Ormrod |
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| 12.00-13.00 | FOYER | LUNCH  |  |
| 12.00-13.00 | 0.02 | CLOSED: IGNCC COMMITTEE MEETING |  |
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|  |  | PANEL 10 |  |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.01 | 10a INVENTION, INVENTORS AND TECHNOLOGY**Adam Twycross** Harry Guy Bartholomew: Innovator, Inventor, Cartoonist**Mihaela Precup** “As practical as an icebox in an igloo and twice as funny!”: Humor, Cultural Memory and Modern Technology in Rube Goldberg’s Inventions**Jonathan Bass** Stripped Bare: Rube Goldberg, New York Dada, and the Mobilized Object | Melanie Hughes |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.07 | 10b HISTORICAL TECHNOLOGY**Simon Grennan** Visual journalism, image technology and the business of periodical print in 1870s London.**Guy Lawley** Mr Töpffer goes to America; the role of a forgotten print technology**Aaron Goodman** Comics, Oral History & The Opioid Overdose Crisis | Julia Round |
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| 14.45-15.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | PLENARY, FAREWELLS, ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT YEAR’S CONFERENCE | Geraint D’Arcy |

**ONLINE SCHEDULE**

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| **IGNCC 2024 Online Schedule** **Wednesday 10 July** |
| **Time** | **Viewing Location** | **Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
|  |  | PANEL 1 |  |
| 10.00-11.30 | 0.04 | 1eSUPERHEROES AND MYTHOLOGY**Amrita Singh**Mythology, Technology and the Contemporary Superhero(ine)**Alexandra Mehnert**Technology understandings in superhero comics of the right wing**Ananya Banerjee**Assimilation and Subversion of Visual and Narrative Mythology in the Graphic Novels of Amruta Patil | Jonathan Bass |
| 10.00-11.30 | 0.03 | 1f TECH, DESIGN AND POLITICS **Tasos Anastasiades** Navigating the Artistic Journey Through 3D Tech, Digital Design, and AI**Ibrahim Mertcam** **Alcinkaya** “Us vs. What/Whoever”: Technology as (Para)Military Extremism in the post-9/11 American Comic Books**Gulbahar Shah** Women, Art and Protest: Multiple Axes of Marginalization in Kashmir | Ian Horton |
| 11.30-12.00 |  | break |  |
|  |  | PANEL 2 |  |
| 12.00-13.00 | 0.04 | 2e HEALTH AND TRAUMA**Emmy Waldman, Rachael Paine, Doug Bowman, Levi Shoates, Kay Sohini** C3: COVID Comics, Cubed**Şükran İlkay Akarçay** Exploring the emotional and cultural landscape of gender-based violence in Una’s *Becoming Unbecoming* | Mihaela Precup |
| 12.00-13.00 | 0.03 | 2f MYTHMAKING AND HUMANITY **Dominick Grace** Divine Mystery: Morpheus and God**Sohini Naiya, Smriti Singh**Navigating the Enigma: Spatial Dynamics and Self-Discovery in *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest* | Silvia Vari |
| 13.00-14.00 |  | **Lunch**  |  |
|  |  | PANEL 3 – Online Roundtable |  |
| 14.00-15.00 | 0.04 | 3e Webtoons: Transnational Audiences, Adaptations, and Appropriations – Roundtable **Fi Stewart-Taylor, Corinne Matthews, Ayanni C. H. Cooper** | Adam Twycross |
| 15.30-16.00 |  | break |  |
|  |  | PANEL 4 |  |
| 16.00-17.30 | 0.04 | 4e ECOCRITICISM**Niru Raghaven**Vicious Circle: Energy Anxieties in Hiromu Arakawa's *Fullmetal Alchemist***Sk Tousif Hasan** Technologies of the Future: A Study of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind***Gowri Nair**Between Two Worlds: Resource Extraction and the Human Cost in Joe Sacco's *Paying the Land* | Nicolas Labarre |
| 16.00-17.30 | [Lecture theatre tbc] | 4f SOCIETY AND INTERPRETATION**Ekaterina A. Santanna** Is it Future Tech? Perception of Technological Representation in the Graphic Novel *The Wandering Earth* among Russian Students**Jonathan Nash**Outside Looking In: Refugee Comics and Tsing Chak’s Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention**Robin A. Moeller**“I didn’t want them to call me a weeb”: The social transactions inherent in the childhood reading histories of emerging U.S. adults | Dragoș Manea |

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| **IGNCC 2024 Online Schedule** **Thursday 11 July** |
| **Time** | **Viewing location** | **Event/Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
|  |  | **PANEL 5** |  |
| 09.00-10.00 | 0.04 | 5e ENVIRONMENT**Mike Classon Frangos**Oil, Forest, Arctic: Technologies of Extraction in Graphic Narratives from North America and Sweden**Rituparna Mondal** Nature vs Development: An ecocritical reading of Orijit Sen’s River of Stories | Kavyta Kay  |
| 09.00-10.00 | 0.03 | 5f BIO ETHICS and MEDICINE**Zahra Taheri**Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival: A Journey* from a Discipline Society to a Control Society**Malgorzata Olsza**The reproductive body and the medical-technological gaze | Adam Twycross |
| 10.00-10.30 |  | break |  |
|  |  | PANEL 6 |  |
| 10.30-12.00 | 0.04 | 6e COMICS EXPANDED**Lisa Macklem**Creativity at the Crossroads: Brain Booster or Thought Thief?**Natasa Thoudam**The New Avatar of Meitei Comics: How I Brought Together Subika Arts and XR (AR/VR/MR)**Paul Malone**‘The Computer Can Only Reproduce What the Artist is Capable Of’: Michael Götze’s Pioneering Computer-Generated Comic *Das Robot-Imperium* | Adina Zemanek |
| 10.30-12.00 | [Lecture theatre tbc] | 6f HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY**Ranjeet Singh**Nanak’s icon in the making: Iconographic account of Guru Nanak’s life in Amar Chitra Katha and Sikh Comics**Akhila Sara Varughese**From Sketches to Graphics: A Study on the History of Indian Graphic Novels**Gupta Rounak**Unveiling the Kaleidoscopic Spectrum: Decoloniality and Indian *Femi9* Comics | Irène Le Roy Ladurie |
| 12.00-13.00 |  | LUNCH |  |
|  |  | PANEL 7 |  |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.04 | 7e DIGITAL COMICS, DECODING COMICS **Áurea Muñoz del Amo, Ana Rosa González Diánez**Comic as Interface Image**Álvaro M. Pons, Noelia Ibarra**“El bueno de Cuttlas”: representation of technology and science through extreme experimentation**Sohini Naiya, Smriti Singh**Navigating the Enigma: Spatial Dynamics and Self-Discovery in *Aranyaka: Book of the Forest* | Neal Curtis |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.03 | 7f MATERIALITY AND INDUSTRY**Gunnar Krantz** Töpffer and the (Secret) Art of Autography**Anna Dasgupta**Picturing What it is About: Materiality in the Art of Lynda Barry **Sidney Singh** Syona Books Inc: The Trials and Tribulations of Creating a Publishing Press in the 21st Century | Varsha Singh |
| 14.30-15.00 |  | break |  |
|  |  | PANEL 8 |  |
| 15.00-16.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | 8a PUBLISHING PANELQ&A with Intellect, Palgrave, Routledge and more! | Julia Round |
|  |  |  |  |
| 16.30-17.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | SABIN AWARD | Roger Sabin |
| 17.00-18.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ ONLINE | KEYNOTE **Darnel Degand** ([www.darneldegand.com](http://www.darneldegand.com)) From Golden Legacies to Afrofutures: The common themes in how Black cartoonists use communications technologies | David Huxley |

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| **IGNCC 2024 Online Schedule** **Friday 12 July** |
| **Time** | **Viewing location** | **Panel and Presenters** | **Chair** |
|  |  | PANEL 9 |  |
| 09.30-11.00 | 0.04 | 9e COMICS IN EDUCATION**Neha Yadav**Pirated PDFs and Phone Perusals: Notes on Teaching Comics in an Indian College Classroom**Genç Osman İlhan**Digital Reflections of “Comics and Education” Course**Meral Şentürk**A Systematic Mapping of Teacher-Made Comics | Nishtha Dev |
| 11.00-12.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | KEYNOTE**Karrie Fransman** ([www.karriefransman.com](http://www.karriefransman.com)) Experimenting with Comics | Joan Ormrod |
| 12.00-13.00 |  | LUNCH |  |
|  |  | PANEL 10 |  |
| 13.00-14.30 | 0.04 | 10e WEBCOMICS**Arockia Licy Monika C**The New Age Comics of India**Soonbae Kim**Evolving Webtoon Platforms in South Korea’s Digital Era**Anu Sugathan**Understanding Narratives and Medium-Specific Affordances in Webcomics through Sailesh Gopalan's *Brown Paperbag* | Paul Noguerol |
| 14.45-15.00 | LECTURE THEATRE/ONLINE | PLENARY, FAREWELLS, ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT YEAR’S CONFERENCE | Geraint D’Arcy |