

## Editorial

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Contributor details

Julia Round's research examines the intersections of Gothic, comics and children's literature. Her books include *Gothic in Comics and Graphic Novels* (McFarland, 2014), *Comics and Graphic Novels* (Bloomsbury, 2022), and the award-winning *Gothic for Girls* (University Press of Mississippi, 2019). She is an associate professor of English and comics studies at Bournemouth University, United Kingdom, and one of the founders and editors of *Studies in Comics* journal and the *Encapsulations* book series. She shares her work at <https://www.juliaround.com>.

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Abstract:

This introduction summarises the contents of the issue, listing the articles and their main themes, the reviews we have included, and the details of the comics. It points towards the range and breadth of the articles, interviews, reviews and comics gathered here, which

take in the intersections of comics and music, poetry, trauma, tradition and humour. It concludes that, taken together, this issue's content pushes at the boundaries of what might be considered comics: by considering the medium's relationships with other media, deconstructing its history, iconography and traditions, and exploring the processes, places and influences that underpin its creation.

Keywords: comics, music, poetry, trauma, tradition, humour

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Welcome to Volume 13 of *Studies in Comics*! Firstly, and most importantly, thank you for your patience. In many ways this volume is living proof that (despite all hopes to the contrary) the COVID-19 pandemic is not over and its impact lives on. Pressures on academics have never been higher, resulting in delays to writing and reviewing. So, to keep production delays out of the mix we are releasing Volume 13 as one bumper-sized issue, rather than our usual two instalments. We hope you enjoy the range and breadth of the articles, interviews, reviews and comics gathered here, which take in the intersections of comics and music, poetry, trauma, tradition and humour.

Our collection of articles opens with two pieces that challenge and deconstruct traditions and archetypes, through the lenses of heroism and trauma, respectively. In ["Tu te trompes, Fantasio"](#): Yves Chaland's Decoding and Recoding of Spirou', Denis Dépinoy engages with comics history: exploring the ways in which this *bande dessinée* uses established golden-age tropes of the European hero in colonial Africa to deconstruct codes of heroism that have underpinned comics past and present. We then turn to a

discussion of trauma, through the lens of feminist discourse. Shromona Das' award-winning essay, 'The perfect victim: Reading trauma and victimhood in rape narratives in Indian comics', is a critical and practice-based exploration of the presentation of victimhood in Indian comics. Das draws attention to the contradictions and problems that underpin graphic depictions of such trauma, with a particular focus on the use of Hindu iconography and rhetorics of empowerment.

Our next pieces explore the intersections of comics and other media that are often understudied. Nora Hickey and Amaris Feland Ketcham's article, 'Troubling the sequential image: The poetry comics of Bianca Stone', considers issues such as adaptation, collaboration and abstraction, and reflecting on the role of comics hybridity in such work. Hickey and Ketcham argue that many aspects of poetry comics oppose more traditional views of comics, opening the door for future work on this theme. The following two pieces then explore the presence of music and musicians in comics. In 'The shape of European jazz: On mute, mutable and pedagogical musical representations', Benjamin Fraser examines the use of musical notation on the comics page, creating a typology of three strategies of representation and analysing the connections they make among the comics medium, reader response and social context. Music and its icons are also the means through which Francesco-Alessio Ursini and Giuseppe Samo consider the ways in which graphic narratives can incorporate transmedial figures such as celebrities. Their article, 'The Purple Thread: The reception of Prince as a fictional character in graphic narratives', analyses how the complexities of this musician's celebrity identity are expressed and received across multiple texts.

Finally, Greice Schneider and João Senna Teixeira explore ‘Cuteness and everyday humour in Nathan W. Pyle’s *Strange Planet*’, examining how this comic uses the tensions between ordinary and extraordinary to create the comic effect and arguing that Pyle’s work is at odds with most theoretical approaches to humour.

We turn then to our interview section. Firstly, James Rose speaks with the writer T. C. Eglington and artist Simon Davis about their horror comic *Thistlebone* (2000 AD). The creators of this folk horror talk about their use of imagery, landscape, psychogeography and myth. Award-winning creator Harmony Becker (*Himawari House*) talks to Jason D. DeHart about her creative process, comics’ narrative flexibility, and issues of language and translation. Finally, Ritam Sarkar and Somdatta Bhattacharya talk to the French comics artist Simon Lamouret, discussing his award-winning comic *The Alcazar* (Comix India, 2022) with a focus on his research and creative process and the role of the city.

Our Reviews section brings together a diverse selection of critical books that range from overarching reference texts to themed work on superheroes, immigrants and comics’ connections with other media such as theatre and film. Gareth Brookes investigates the scope of *Key Terms in Comics Studies* (edited by Erin La Cour, Simon Grennan and Rik Spanjers). Tiffany Hong reviews Daniel Stein’s *Authorising Superhero Comics: On the Evolution of a Popular Superhero Genre*, and Vincent Haddad considers *Unstable Masks: Whiteness and American Superhero Comics* (edited by Martin Lund and Sean Guynes). Finally, Silvia Vari reviews the anthology *Immigrants and Comics* (edited by Nhora Lucía Serrano) and Jennifer Nagtegaal reviews Geraint D’Arcy’s monograph *Mise en scène, Acting, and Space in Comics*.

Our comics section brings together creative work that engages with questions around 'what makes comics, comics?'. Introduced by our creative editor Damon Herd, and taken from the anthology *Un/comics* (Allan Haverholm), these titles eschew traditional narratives and investigate different aspects of the medium such as fragmentation (Kimball Anderson, 'spilling'), page layout (Lauren Lynn Leake, 'Pull Quote'), repetition (Miika Myysoenen, 'Undkomic 2') and rhythm (Shaun Gardiner, 'Soma').

Taken together, this issue's content pushes at the boundaries of what might be considered comics: by considering the medium's relationships with other media, deconstructing its history, iconography and traditions, and exploring the processes, places and influences that underpin its creation. We hope you enjoy the show.

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