

Call for Papers
Comics & Graphic Narrative Circle
American Literature Association
28th Annual Conference: May 25-28, 2017
The Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA

The Comics & Graphic Narrative Circle welcomes abstracts for presentation at two sessions on comics at the 2017 ALA conference in Boston.

Session One: Queering Comics History

Several recent high profile developments in comics and graphic narratives have revolved around various iterations of queerness. Alison Bechdel's autobiography *Fun Home* has scooped up numerous awards on its way to becoming a canonical text of LGBTQ literature while mainstream superhero comics have queered their own canon with queer re-imaginings of characters such as Catwoman and Iceman. But queerness is nothing new for the genre, whether it be the explicit activism of Underground Comics in the 1970s or metaphorical explorations of non-conforming identity and desire that appear in mass produced works ranging from *Terry and the Pirates* to *Archie* to *The Fantastic Four*.

This panel looks to compare approaches to queering the history of comics and graphic narratives. We thus invite papers that engage with a broad spectrum of queer moments in comics history and styles of reading queerness in comics and graphic narratives. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Comics and graphic novels that enact queer possibilities in terms of gender and sexuality, as well as a wider array of designations such as body image, friendship, marginalization, oddity, and so forth.
- The role of LGBTQ artists and writers in the history of comics and graphic narratives.
- How the activity of queering comics history might change our view of the periodicals and other sources in which comics and graphic narratives appear.

Session Two: Transnationalism and American Comics
Co-Sponsored by the Research Society for American Periodicals

North American comics have always drawn heavily on the comics traditions of other countries, and have in turn circulated around the globe. To give just a few examples: in the 1890s *The Katzenjammer Kids* reimagined the German *Max und Moritz* picture stories for American newspapers, in the late 1920s the style of George McManus's *Bringing Up Father* became a crucial influence on the "clear line" look of Herge's *Tintin*, in the 1980s British writers such as Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman redefined the

parameters of American comic books, and in the 2000s Bryan Lee O'Malley drew his Toronto epic *Scott Pilgrim* in the idiom of manga. Recent initiatives such as the edited collection *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives* (2013) and the University of Florida's 2016 Comics and Graphic Narrative Conference on "Transnational Comics" illuminated many of the ways that comics cross national borders. This panel seeks to extend that work, asking what new insights are to be gained by thinking about American comics from a transnational perspective. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- The direct influence of work from non-North-American comics on the work of North American comics creators, and vice versa, and how these might reshape our understanding of comics history.
- International comics projects involving North American artists.
- North American comics that take transnational exchanges as their subject matter, and non-North-American comics about North America.
- The tensions around comics as a means of projecting the cultural power of the United States—in Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Italy, Japan, the UK, or elsewhere.
- The particular challenges of a transnational approach as a way to study comics, and the place of graphic narrative in debates over transnationalism as a methodology.
- Consideration of the influence of manga and anime on the current generation of American comics creators, and how this might change our understanding of contemporary comics publishing.

Please email an abstract (of no more than 350 words) and a brief biographical note to Ben Novotny Owen (owen.179@osu.edu) no later than Jan 27th.