

3rd New Narrative Conference: Narrative Arts and Visual Media

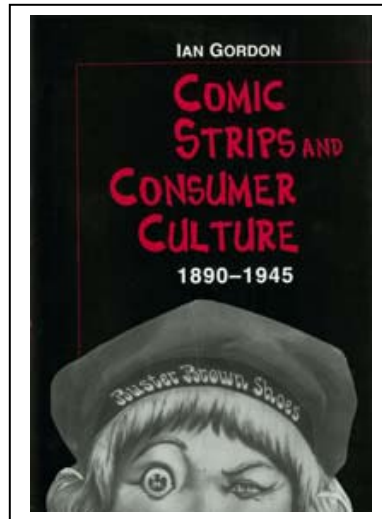
An interdisciplinary conference University of Toronto 6 - 7 May 2010

List of presenters and abstracts

This is an alphabetical list of conference participants, save for the keynote speaker and the roundtable panelists (who appear first) and the conference organizers (who appear last).

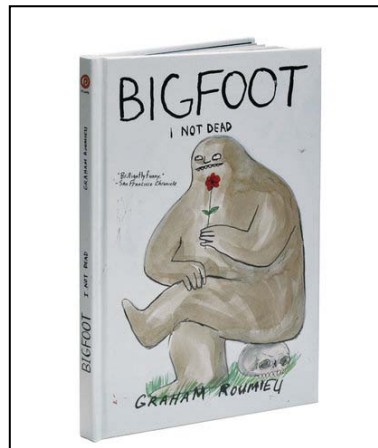
Keynote address

Ian Gordon (*Comics Strips and Consumer Culture 1890 -1945*) is a professor in the Department of History at the University of Singapore. He is also co-editor of *Comics and Ideology*, and *Film and Comic Books*. You can find out more about him at <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/hisilg/gordon.html>

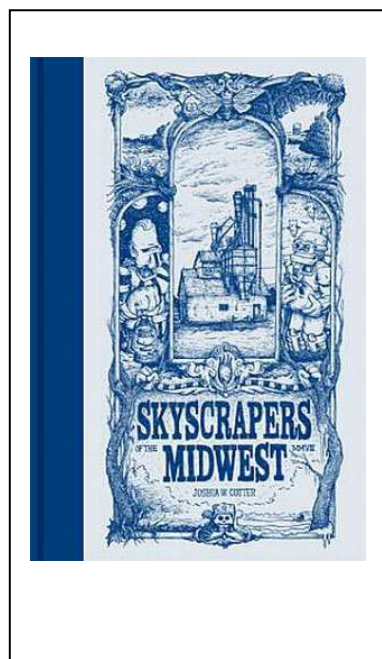


Roundtable panelists

Graham Roumieu is the creator of the *Bigfoot* series, and has published his work in *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Harper's*, in addition to winning numerous awards. Check him out at <http://www.roumieu.com/index.php>



Joshua Cotter's *Skyscrapers of the Midwest* has been described as “a hidden gem of modern comics. . . . Cotter has the strength and subtlety of an artist with twice his experience” (Andrew Wheeler, *ComicMix*). It won the inaugural Isotope Mini-Comics Award, in 2004. His most recent work is *Driven By Lemons*. His work is at http://panophobe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=1



Adams, Meghan (Fri, 2A)

“The Elephant’s Child: Simultaneity, Lineage and Change in Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*”

This paper will discuss how Alison Bechdel uses spatial and temporal repetition and her father’s occupation multiple, even opposing mythological tropes in her graphic memoir *Fun Home* in order to explore overpowering genealogies of both the literary and literal variety. Bechdel outlines several responses to these stagnant genealogical cycles, ranging from fruitless rebellion to the reconciliatory, critically and empathically engaged memorial of her text. I will argue that Bechdel presents her memoir particularly as a productive, neomodernist response that redefines her family business of revivifying and dealing with the dead.

Meghan Adams is a M.A. in English in the field of Creative Writing candidate at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include comic books, space and place in video games, cartoon physics and Ted Hughes.

Bader, Edward (Thu, 2A)

“Ramayan Repackaged”

Virgin Comics, founded in 2006 by record mogul Richard Branson and Deepra Chopra, was created to use Indian mythology, art and history as a basis for cutting edge graphic novels and comics. *Ramayan 3392 A.D.* re-imagined the traditional hero of India mythology in a post-apocalyptic future. The traditional themes of spirituality were placed by technological fears and anxieties. My paper involves a comparative study of the visual imagery and representations used in traditional India comics of the 1960s versus the Virgin Comics product.

Edward Bader, MFA Art, MA Popular Culture, is an instructor at Grande Prairie Regional College where he teaches drawing, art history and new media. His drawings are represented in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection, the Canada Council Art Bank, The University of Lethbridge, The City of Calgary and numerous private collections. He is currently working on a graphic novel based on the history of the Peace Country.

Beaty, Bart (2A)

“*C’est pas du tout ce que tu penses*’: Improvisational Narrative Strategies in Ruppert and Mulot’s *La Maison Close*”

This essay analyses one example of improvisation in comics, Florent Ruppert and Jérôme Mulot’s *La Maison Close* (2009). The work was created by Ruppert, Mulot and more than two-dozen other artists for the 2009 Festival International de la Bande Dessinée (FIBD), in Angoulême, France. It was produced by cartoonists who improvised a series of inter-locking narratives within a general framework provided by Ruppert and Mulot: a series of drawn settings representing a bordello. The resulting story played with conventions of autobiography, as worked out in alternative comics over the recent history of comics, by requiring the insertion of autobiographical personae into the sexually-charged atmosphere of the diegetic space established by Ruppert and Mulot. Drawing on theories of improvisation developed in the study of jazz and live theatrical performance, this paper will examine how improv techniques can work to greatly complicate the narrative and thematic coherence of comics works.

Bart Beaty is Professor of English at the University of Calgary. His most recent publications include *How Canadians Communicate: The Contexts of Canadian Popular Culture* (Athabasca, 2010) and *Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of American Comic Books* (Mississippi, 2010). His next book, *Me Am No Art: Comics Enter the Art World*, will be published by the University of Toronto Press in 2011.

Berenstein, Ofer (Thu, 4A)

“When Senator Kefauver Met Congresswoman Gordon – The Code of Comics’ Impact on the Representation Of Politicians and Elected Civil Servants in American Mainstream Comics”

Using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, this paper demonstrates changes in the representation of politicians and other elected civil servants in American Mainstream comic book stories published since 1937 to 1979. The analysis is based upon the distinction of three time periods: the pre-code era (1937 to circ. 1955), the code’s first draft (circ. 1955 to circ. 1972) and the code’s second draft (circ. 1972 to 1979). This paper argues that contrary to common belief, the depiction of these said characters changed only in a minor way after the code was enacted, and that the depictions of these types of characters in stories published after the code’s revision in 1971 remarkably resemble their depiction in stories published prior to the implementation of the code.

Ofer Berenstein recently graduated his M.A. in political communication studies at Bar-Ilan University, Israel. He is a guest lecturer about comics’ scholarship at various Israeli outlets and is a founding member of the Israeli comic books readers and collectors’ society.

Beronä, A. David (Thu, 1A)

“Woodcut Novels: An Old Way of Telling New Stories.”

Early in the twentieth century, a distinct form of pictorial storytelling evolved using the woodcut. The themes from these early woodcut novels have a powerful relevance today and re-emphasize the importance of visual narratives. In the last two decades, a growing appreciation of the graphic novel and a renewed interest in relief printing has increased interest in the woodcut novel. I examine today's graphic novels and artists' book and compare social, personal, and literary themes with the early pioneering works by Frans Masereel and Lynd Ward. In my analysis I apply various tools of pictorial examination and evaluate the effectiveness of wordless storytelling from traditional and experimental examples and demonstrate “reading” a wordless book.

David A. Beronä is a woodcut-novel historian, author of *Wordless Books: The Original Graphic Novels* and a 2009 Harvey Awards nominee. He is the Dean of the Library at Plymouth State University and on the visiting faculty of the Center for Cartoon Studies.

Bowles, Brendan (Thu, 2B)

“Wolfgang Iser in the Gutter”

My paper will explore Wolfgang Iser's bi-active model of reading, a phenomenological approach that has apt and unexplored resonances with the Graphic Novel. Iser propounds the idea of a text as existent through the coming together of two poles: the “artistic” and the “aesthetic”. The “artistic” pole is supplied by the author, and exists as a “network of response inviting structures.” The “aesthetic” pole is the active realization accomplished by the reader. This paper will focus on the role of the reader and how he/she reads, and to some extent writes, the negotiations of the spatiotemporal, semiotic, and semantic possibilities of the Graphic Novel between these two poles.

Brendan Bowles is currently working toward the completion of an M.A. in English in the field of Creative Writing at the University of Toronto.

Cedeira Serantes, Lucia (Thu, 2B)

“From Virus to Bait: Comic Books, Graphic Novels, and Their Readers in Library Science Professional Literature (2000-2008)”

Librarians’ attitudes towards comics and their readers have become a topic of interest for scholars in Library Science and other disciplines. This project seeks to contribute to this body of literature through the analysis of the library professional literature from 2000 to 2008. I examined this group of articles focusing primarily on three topics: the discourse about the medium itself; the readers of comics and the attributes ascribed to them; and the role of these materials in libraries. Although some positive changes have been noted, the analysis shows that comics are still constructed as literacy tools for reluctant or poor readers and that librarians still struggle between presenting comics and their readers as sophisticated and the need to justify their use in front of educational or library boards, and parents.

Lucia Cedeira Serantes is a Ph.D. candidate in Library and Information Science at The University of Western Ontario. She studies the experience of comic book readers from a phenomenological perspective, emphasizing the voice of the readers and their experience with the medium.

Coppin, Peter and Jeff Parker (Thu, 3A)

“An Empirical Comparison of the Graphic and Textual Versions of *City Of Glass*: A Research Design and Preliminary Results”

What are the cognitive affordances—relationships between an object and an individual that enables an individual to perform an action—of illustrations relative to text? To explore this question empirically, we isolated sections of Paul Auster’s *City of Glass* with their counterparts in David Mazzucchelli’s and Paul Karasik’s graphic adaptation of the novel. We asked readers to consider the analogous sections and discuss any differences in the experience and reading of the graphic version versus the traditional text. Here we present our exploratory research design with preliminary results.

Peter Coppin is exploring the cognitive affordances of illustrations relative to text at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, by blending illustration and comics theory with findings and methods from perceptual psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

Jeff Parker is the author of the novel *Ovenman* and the story collection *The Taste of Penny*. He is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Toronto, where he sometimes teaches an undergraduate course in the graphic novel.

Day, Andrea L. (Thu, 4B)

“Who Watches This Watch(wo)man? Zack Snyder’s Re-Presentation of Alan Moore’s Silhouette”

I am interested not just in who watches the Watchmen, but in how we watch them as well. This paper is concerned with re-presentations of gender and queerness in Zack Snyder’s film adaptation (2009) of Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* (1986-87, 1988) and in how these might be read from a feminist perspective. The primary object of this analysis will be Snyder’s depiction of the Silhouette (née Ursula Zandt), an extradiegetic, minor character in both comic and film.

Andrea L. Day is a PhD student in the University of Toronto’s Department of English. Her areas of academic interest include theories of intertextuality and adaptation, illustration, children’s literature, cultural theory, gender and sexuality, and the long nineteenth century.

DeWolfe, Stacey (Thu, 2B)

“Rethinking the Gutter: Affective Spaces and the Graphic Novel”

In his seminal text, *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud defines the gutter as a space of transition and imagination, for it is here, in the reader’s capacity to make links between panels, that narrative movement is created and closure attained. To further his project, McCloud offers an effective typology of transitions that illustrates how one is to read the graphic novel. But is narrative closure really the gutter’s only function? Building on concepts elucidated in French philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s *Cinema* books and Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual*, I argue for a new articulation of the gutter that transcends narrative, rethinking this transitional space as the primary site of affect. In doing so, I suggest that the graphic novel, regardless of genre or form, may be understood as a text that moves beyond the subjectivity of emotion to something more collective: the pure feeling and sensorial responses that are enabled by affect.

Stacey DeWolfe is a writer and filmmaker who teaches English at Vanier College in Montreal. To date, her work has focused primarily on the films of Danish director Lars von Trier, but her ongoing project is an investigation into the affective qualities of textual bodies.

Deman, J. Andrew (Thu, 3A)

“Sexual Revenge of the Nerds: Superman, Lois, and the Geek Subject Position”

My paper explores the elements of sexual revenge fantasy that emerge from Superman’s first encounter with Lois Lane. In *Action Comics #1*, Lois and Clark go out on their first date, only to encounter a violent goon named Butch Matson who abducts Lois and seemingly intends to rape her. What unfolds is a highly symbolic staging of sex, disempowerment, geek fantasy, and revenge. In order to establish this, I align my close-reading of *Action Comics #1* with McCloudian comics analysis and recent theories on the geek subject position. I then establish the potential connections between sexual revenge fantasy in comics and the historic oversexualization of women in the comics form. As I demonstrate, the sexist nature of comics (in a very broad sense) can be related to an assertion of hegemonic masculinity or, more crudely put, overcompensation for the perceived effeminate qualities of the geek subject position.

J. Andrew Deman just defended his PhD dissertation on the subject of Othering practices in comics. He has published in *American Visual Memoir*, and teaches a comics course at Wilfrid Laurier University. jademan@artsmail.uwaterloo.ca

Drebit, Erik (Thu, 3B)

“Staging in Panels: Neil Gaiman’s *Sandman* as Shakespearian Adaptation”

Neil Gaiman’s groundbreaking series *The Sandman* is notable for its playful combination of styles, genres and mythologies. I will read the appearances of William Shakespeare, and his works, in *The Sandman* as a collision of three mythologies: the comics mythology of Gaiman’s *Sandman*, the literary mythology of Shakespeare’s plays, and the profound cultural myth of “Shakespeare.” My reading will position *The Sandman* within a history of cross-media Shakespeares, demonstrating how Gaiman is a part of (yet also breaks from) an existing tradition of Shakespearian adaptation. By doing this, I will suggest that (because comics are a performative medium) the Shakespearian *Sandman* issues can be read as both a literary adaptation and a visual “staging” of Shakespeare and his plays.

Erik Drebit is an MA Candidate in English at the University of Guelph. His summer major research project will be a historicized study of the Marvel Comics anti-hero The Punisher as a reflection of American popular cultural memory of the Vietnam War.

Duchesne, Scott (Fri, 2A)

“Textual Memory: Reminiscence and Reading in Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*”

In cognitive psychology, “autobiographical memory” refers to the recollection of “events and issues ... that defines us as people.” The years between late childhood and early adulthood (10-25 years) are an important period in human development, and the tendency to over-represent the events of this period is known as the “reminiscence bump”. While the structure of autobiographical memory in commix has been examined elsewhere, it is my intention to specifically explore the lesser known but equally significant effect of the “reminiscence bump” as expressed in the visual and narrative structure of Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* (2006), in which both the strength and the inherent instability of memory are central characteristics of the composition of the text.

Scott Duchesne is currently an Assistant Professor at the School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. He has lectured extensively on various issues concerning the Graphic Novel in lecture and seminar courses.

Frank, Joseph (Thu, 3A)

“Of Superheroes and Buffalo Soldiers: On Superhero Race-Making and the Antiracist Counter-Narrative in *Truth: Red, White & Black*”

The mythos and historical continuity of American comic book fiction, like most Western media, is dominated by good-looking and heroic white men. Where black superheroes exist, their authors have tended to reproduced racial stereotypes. Robert Morales’ and Kyle Baker’s limited series *Truth: Red, White & Black* (2003) opens an original discourse through which factual history as fictionalized in the mythology of comic books may be re-fictionalized in an effort to conceive antiracist superhero narratives. Morales’ and Baker’s provocative re-imagining of a history already manipulated by imagination offers readers an important counter-narrative, inspiring critical readings of the histories incorporated or segregated from the American superhero comic book canon.

Joseph William Frank (frankj2@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca) is a Pushcart Prize nominated author and PhD student in McMaster University’s English and Cultural Studies program. He researches Critical Race Theory, biopolitics, ghettoization, and American Literature.

Friedlander, Keith (Thu, 3A)

“Reconstructing Identity in *Doom Patrol* and *Omega The Unknown*”

The concept of the superhero has a long history as a coping device for the anxieties of modern life. One way superheroes help us cope is by offering a reassuring fantasy of a strong, distinct identity that stands out amongst a homogenizing crowd. While deconstructive works, such as Moore's *Watchmen*, expose this notion as indulgent escapism, recent authors have been more willing to examine the impetus for superhero identity and its relevance to mature readers. I will discuss how Grant Morrison's *Doom Patrol* and Jonathan Lethem's *Omega The Unknown* appropriate the superhero as a means of exploring modern issues that problematize quests for stable identity.

Keith Friedlander is a doctoral candidate in the English department of the University of Ottawa. His dissertation explores how the shifting, indeterminate boundaries of public and private spheres reinforced individualism in early nineteenth century British literature.

Hains, David (Thu, 4B)

“The Arrow of Time: Using Physics to Analyze Space and Time in *Watchmen*”

Both physics and comics theory focus on the perception of space and time as a fundamental property of each field. This paper will focus on the theoretical similarities between the two fields using Alan Moore's and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen*. With a focus on Dr. Manhattan, the concepts of the arrow of time, entropy and uncertainty principle will be explained and analyzed in relation to comics structure and content to demonstrate a foundation of ambiguity in both fields.

David Hains graduated from U of T with a double major in English and US Studies. With Justina Zatzman, he just launched a webcomics site at novastealth.com. He works in finance in order to spite commerce grads who spent twice as much on tuition.

Hornick, Edward (Fri, 1A)

“*Achewood’s* Women”

Since 2001, Chris Onstad's *Achewood* has grown from its more obscure cult roots to being among the most popular online comics. This essay analyzes Onstad's female characters and the multiple roles they inhabit to elaborate on their purpose in the series. Specific attention is placed on Molly, a Welsh backpacker who struggles to understand her depressed lover while creating new relationships with his friends. The piece also discusses the similarities between characters' mothers and considers the failures of father figures in Onstad's world. *Achewood's* male leads struggle to mature to please women (whether they are lovers or mothers), but are held back by their own anxieties. This paper elaborates on themes from an earlier *Achewood* essay, “Little Otter Lost.”

Edward Hornick is a graduate of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, Maine. A lifelong comics reader, he presented on *Achewood* and Evan Dorkin at past New Narrative conferences. TedFFZ@gmail.com

MacRae, Ian (Wilfrid Laurier) (Thu, 1B)

“Let There be Crumb! Genealogy, Genesis, and the Comic as Visual Testament”

Robert Crum published a long-anticipated, not uncontroversial *Illustrated Book of Genesis* in 2009. In Crumb's version, a collusion of the archaic text and the contemporary comic, illustrations have been deployed in graphic novel format as a means to convey the story. In Genesis, genealogy is adopted as a means of schematizing a complex historical evolution. This history of prestigious founders is told through the narrative of a patriline, and the concern remains with the people who were there at the beginning, the line they engender, the fate of their 'seed', the questions of primogeniture and continuation which surround it. What is at stake is not insignificant, for to be next in line is to receive God's blessing. But incest, onanism, impotence, sterility, alcohol, exile, banishment, political tensions, drought, and scheming of all description interfere with straightforward, lineal descent. This is extremely productive source material for Robert Crumb, of course, who has long taken the concerns of sexual desire rather seriously, if not violently and outrageously, in his work. In order to approach Crumb's new work, this paper proposes to examine the text of Genesis itself, and the ways in which the deeper themes of the Book are taken up and transformed by Robert Crumb's illustrations.

Ian MacRae is an Assistant Professor at Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, where he teaches in Canadian Literature, documentary film, and environmental studies. He completed his doctoral work in Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto, and won the most Distinguished Dissertation Award from the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies in 2007. His work as a documentary filmmaker for Canadian Geographic Presents has spurred his interest in sequential art and the visual text.

Mann, Doug (Thu, 4A)

“*Civil War* and the Right to Revolt”

The much-hyped short series *Civil War*, published by Marvel Comics in 2006-2007, was written by Mark Millar and pencilled by Steve McNiven. On the most obvious level, *Civil War* is part of a lengthy deconstructive meditation on the morality of superhero vigilantism that dates back to Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen* along with Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* in the mid-1980s. Yet more importantly, it is also a political allegory on two levels: for Bush's America after a half decade of the War on Terror, including the restrictions on civil rights embodied in the Patriot Act that came in its wake; and more generally for debates over the right to revolt against the state within the history of political theory. This paper argues that the debate between Iron Man's pro-government forces and the rebel alliance lead by Captain America is in effect a dialogue over the Lockian right to revolt, with neither side being entirely in the right.

Doug Mann teaches at the University of Western Ontario and at King's University College in London, Ontario. He is the author of three books and numerous articles.

Morris, Pauline (Thu, 1B)

“Apocalypse in Anime: Shifting Boundaries of Human Technology Interface”

My Master's thesis *Apocalypse in Anime: Shifting Boundaries of Human Technology Interface* completed my Master of Education. It examines how science fiction and fantasy narratives in anime reflect and comment on the overwhelming changes technology is making in the world and to our experience of that world. I explored a selection of apocalyptic anime to illustrate how the central characters in each anime experience various types of apocalypse that are related to technology. One could say that on one level these anime and my discussion of them focuses on human errors, but on another level and in some circumstances the possibility for constructive change as well. Anime is the definitive postmodern genre through which to portray apocalyptic narratives as it provides an imaginative liminal site that transcends any specific culture and ethnicity and through which global concerns can be investigated.

Pauline Morris is a Ph.D. candidate in Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. In her M.Ed. thesis, she examined the representation of apocalypse in anime. Her interests include posthuman and cyborg studies, as well as contemporary horror and science fiction cinema and television.

Mullins, Katie (Fri, 1A)

“Questioning Comics: Women and Autocritique in Seth’s *It’s A Good Life, If You Don’t Weaken*”

This paper explores modes of autocritique in Seth’s picture novella *It’s a Good Life, If You Don’t Weaken*. As part of Seth’s endeavour to pay homage to the comics tradition, his female characters challenge ethical problems in the history of comics by evoking the counter traditions that emerged in response to these issues. The result is a critical depiction of comics history, which is fraught with rebellious attempts to oppose its sometimes misogynistic and myopic tendencies. This autocritique not only highlights the central character’s limitations and his potential to move beyond them, but also motions towards the need for modern comics to address important ideological concerns, and for readers to think critically about comics and their broader implications. In this way, *It’s a Good Life* inspires a progression away from negative ideologies and encourages a critical awareness when both reading and creating graphic narratives.

Katie Mullins is a first year PhD student at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include feminist and gender theory, theories of the body, and interactions between text and image. She has published in the area of children’s literature, and this presentation paper is adapted from an article recently published in *Canadian Literature*.

Muredda, Angelo (Fri, 1B)

“‘Sit Still and Let Them Examine You’: Sketching the Embodied Poet in Leonard Cohen’s *Book of Longing*”

Leonard Cohen’s *Book of Longing* was treated upon its release in 2006 as both a resumption of poetic form after a twenty year hiatus and a homecoming to earthly realms following a lengthy sojourn in the Mt. Baldy Zen Center, where Cohen was ordained as a monk in 1996. In this paper, I consider how this discourse of the poet’s embodied return plays out within the text’s own thematic negotiation between transcendence and corporeality. Moreover, I consider how that tension between matters fleshly and eternal is illuminated and arguably resolved in favour of the body through Cohen’s persistent juxtaposition of introspective poems depicting his experience as a monk with self-portraits of his aging, lined face. I read Cohen’s self-portraiture, to that end, as both a record of his return to a poetics of embodied life and the site at which his career-long fascination with the body’s frustrated pursuit of the transcendent plays out.

Angelo Muredda is a PhD student in English at the University of Toronto. His research deals with representations of disability in both nationalist and transnational Canadian historical fiction of the twentieth century, and the problem of corporeality in modernist Canadian fiction.

Pannafino, James (Thu, 1A)

"Typographic Narrative Forms"

The presentation Typographic Narrative Forms will examine how Type design principles can be used to create a new kind of narrative experience in the sequential art (comics and graphic novels) genre. Typographic (or Type) comics are comic books that use (only) typography in place of imagery as the primary method of storytelling. Typographic designers and comic creators use similar principles such as scale, figure ground, proximity, and composition placement to tell the best possible narrative. During the presentation I will show examples of a completed Type based comic to connect theoretical theories to a pragmatic solution.

James Pannafino is a professor at Millersville University, Pennsylvania, USA in the Art and Design department where he teaches graphic and interactive design. His research interests include information design, visualization, sequential art, digital narrative forms, and visual storytelling.

Parker, Felan (Thu, 4B)

"Official Apocrypha: *Elseworlds*, *What If?* and the Transmedia Franchise"

In this paper I will consider the phenomenon of what I call "official apocrypha." Marvel's *What If?* and DC's *Elseworlds* designate non-canonical superhero stories that are nevertheless officially sanctioned and produced. What is the function of "official apocrypha" in a larger franchise context, and how are they discursively positioned in these complex webs of meaning? By conceptualizing superhero franchises as complex discursive networks rather than as "storyworlds" and by taking apocryphal discourses seriously, I contend that we can more fully and productively understand the structure and meaning of transmedia franchises as popular culture.

Felan Parker is a PhD student in the Communication & Culture programme at York University. He holds a BA Hon. and MA in Film Studies from Carleton University. His research interests include transmedia franchises, genre, discourses of digital games and art, and the history and epistemology of digital game studies.

Phillips, George (Fri, 1B)

“Recognition and Its Discontents: Yinka Shonibare’s *Dorian Gray*”

Yinka Shonibare’s photographic installation, *Dorian Gray* (2001), takes as its source both Oscar Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and Albert Lewin’s 1945 film adaptation. In casting the black and disabled Shonibare in the title role, it also raises a host of difficult questions about how this Dorian Gray will be visually recognized and inscribed within social texts. Yet Shonibare’s work also calls upon its viewers to look beyond the politics of recognition by interrogating the limits recognition marks. Tracing Dorian Gray’s lineage from Wilde to Lewin to Shonibare, this presentation takes stock of the role recognition has served in marking personal identity and aestheticizing intercultural influence.

George Phillips is completing “Modernity’s Witnesses,” a dissertation on modernism and visual culture, at the University of Kentucky.

Rogers, Sean (Fri, 2B)

“‘I Hope Our Boss Doesn’t Start Making Abstract Drawings’: *Nancy* and the Avant-Gardes”

Among the devalued iconography that works of Pop Art ask us to consider in an art world context, one object of constant attention is cartoonist Ernie Bushmiller’s spiky-haired cipher, Nancy. But what characteristics lead to *Nancy*’s compatibility with experimental art? After emphasizing that Bushmiller is an artist concerned primarily with permutations, I make the case for *Nancy* as a rallying point for what film scholar David Bordwell calls a “parametric” method of art, in which artists establish and run through a series of formal parameters in order to generate their final works. As exemplars of the avant-garde’s parametric approach to the strip, I examine the 1972 series of collages and drawings, *If Nancy Was...*, by artist and writer Joe Brainard, as well as “Love’s Savage Fury,” the 1986 comic strip by Mark Newgarden, one of our foremost commentators on *Nancy*.

Sean Rogers holds an MA in English from the University of Toronto and is pursuing his PhD at York University, focusing on Canadian comics. He also writes about comics for *The Walrus*.

Rosenbaum, Richard (Thu, 1A)

"Authorial Self-representation and Readerly Relations in the Graphic Novel: A Semiotic Approach"

An examination of the ways in which the author is represented in comics and graphic novels where he appears as a character can give us an understanding of the author's intention in using metafiction as a narrative technique, what perspective the audience is meant to take in confronting this in the fuller context of the work as a whole, and what criteria the author uses to determine how he will present himself. This paper will discuss several works in which the author appears as a character, analyzing the visual symbolism to determine how each author uses self-insertion to communicate his relationship to the text in terms of identity and power. Up for discussion will be: Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*; Grant Morrison's *Animal Man*; Dave Sim's *Cerebus the Aardvark*; Jhonen Vasquez's *Johnny the Homicidal Maniac*; and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

Richard Rosenbaum is a writer and editor from Toronto, currently completing his Master's degree in Communication & Culture at Ryerson University. He received his B.A. in English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He is the editor of the anthology *Can'tLit: Fearless Fiction from Broken Pencil Magazine* (ECW Press 2009).

Saleh, Zainab (Fri, 2B)

"(Re)Presenting the Mental Image: Adaptation and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*"

André Bazin, in an essay on Robert Bresson's adaptation of Georges Bernanos' novel *Journal d'un curé de campagne*, suggests the film and novel be thought of as "twin stars" (*What is Cinema?* 141). Bazin likens adaptation to translation, and displays how Bresson manages to evoke Bernanos' literary style through his film, thus staying true to the nature of the original text. I take this as a starting point to look at the animated adaptation of Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* alongside its comics counterparts, in an attempt to understand what adaptation means when the creator of both versions remains the same. In particular, I argue that the film works as a particularized version of the process of remembering that Satrapi sets up in the books, one that finds itself struggling with issues of fixity and linearity.

Zainab Saleh is a PhD student in the Program in Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester.

Schwenke Wyile, Andrea (Thu, 2A)

“‘Astonishment is Thinking’: Graphic Metaphor and Narrative Con-Sequence in Mahler’s *Poèmes* and Lemieux’s *Stormy Night*”

As Jan Zwicky argues, metaphors initiate “the phenomenon of ‘seeing-as’ because [they] encapsulat[e] the mystery of meaning... yet ...[this] is impossible without prior experience” (1). That prior experience can be the result of items in a sequence; such is the case in two books in which sequence replaces story. Nicolas Mahler’s *Poèmes* (2007) is a series of twenty-one “graphic poem” pairs framed to suggest the course of a lifetime, and in Michèle Lemieux’s *Stormy Night* (1999), each visual metaphor is accompanied by or related to an existential question posed by the child protagonist kept awake by a storm. Lemieux’s and Mahler’s narrative sequences push readers beyond the comfort of what they “want to see” to “experience the coalescence of a *gestalt*” (LEFT 114), or what Wittgenstein calls “astonishment.”

Andrea Schwenke Wyile, Associate Professor at Acadia University, teaches children’s literature. “Perceiving *the Red Tree...*” is forthcoming in Nebraska UP’s *Telling Children’s Stories: Children’s Literature and Narrative Theory* (fall 2010).

Sinervo, Kalervo (co-authored by Jack Prus) (Thu, 3B)

“Four-Color Faith: Comic Book Approaches to Scripture”

At many points since the inception of modern graphic literature, the medium has touched on, treated, and translated scripture. From the child-friendly *Bible Tales for Young Folk* to the Bollywood pop sci-fi *Vinamarama*, comic book adaptations and treatments of scriptural stories and characters have given old testaments new life. Our paper seeks to connect some of the oldest existing texts to one of the newest textual mediums by analyzing several comic book treatments of scripture. By looking through some historically significant works of graphic literature, we will show that the medium can make claims and ask questions that represent new avenues of approach to various religious traditions and theological issues connected with them.

Jack Prus is a Simon Fraser University graduate holding a joint B.A. in Philosophy and Humanities. His passion for theological study is matched only by his love for comics. He can be emailed at jprus@sfu.ca.

Kalervo Sinervo holds a B.A. in English from Simon Fraser University. This will be his third time presenting at the New Narrative Conference. He lives in Vancouver, can be emailed at kalervo.sinervo@gmail.com, and needs a job.

Suzuki, Shigeru (CJ) (1B)

“Monstrosity and/of Humanity: Mizuki Shigeru's *Yōkai* Manga and War”

In this essay, I will examine Mizuki's figurations of monstrous creatures and other non-human animals by exploring some of his representative works. As Donna Haraway states, monsters "have always defined the limits of community in Western imagination." If such is the case, Mizuki's creative figurations of *yōkai* and other animals also articulate and deconstruct the modern, normative notion of "human" in historically-specific Japanese contexts. In so doing, his manga calls for an urgency of re-examining and re-arranging the relationships among humans, animals, and nature.

Shige (CJ) Suzuki teaches Japanese literature, film, and culture in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Lehigh University. His current focused researches include serious comics (*gekiga*) in the fields of manga/comics studies, posthumanism, and Japanese speculative fiction. cybercoyote@gmail.com

Yao, Christine (Fri, 1A)

“Black Women, White Guilt in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*”

In one of the interviews with Neil Gaiman in *The Sandman Companion*, Hy Bender refers to the motif of “young black women burning” in Gaiman's acclaimed graphic novel series. While acknowledging that the overall narrative arc of *The Sandman* suggests a critique and eventual redemption of this racialized and gendered violence, I will interrogate the problematic essentialist underpinnings of Gaiman's portrayal of the suffering of black women. In reference to Toni Morrison and Richard Dyer, I will then reformulate my critical lens, seeing these representations not only as Gaiman's portrait of black womanhood, but also as a mirror of white guilt and the construct of whiteness within *The Sandman*.

Christine Yao is entering the doctoral program at Cornell University. She earned her MA at Dalhousie University with a thesis on Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* and *American Gods*. Her interests include American literature, graphic novels, and postcolonialism.

Zhao, Shannon (Fri, 4A)

“Revisionism x Patriotism: Teaching Minority History in *Secret Identities: The Asian American Superhero Anthology*”

Dealing with stories from the 1800s to the present day, *Secret Identities: The Asian American Superhero Anthology* revises US national narratives by re-imagining an ethnic minority as superhuman actors of history. The collection tries to resolve the conflict between a history of discrimination in the US and pride for American ideals by using the trope of superheroism to empower the Asian American community and to rectify national shortcomings with patriotic action. In addition, *Secret Identities* presents historical notes and teachers' guides, further promoting its vision through education. As recent studies have uncovered the close relationship between superheroes and national self-concept, *Secret Identities* offers a new iteration of multicultural American nationhood.

Shannon Zhao graduated from University of Toronto and is now writing her thesis on Asian American comics at McMaster University. She would draw her own as soon as she stops procrastinating.

Organizers

Andrew Lesk (Ph.D. Montreal) has involved in many conferences, from vetting papers to organizing panels. In particular, he organized the last two New Narrative conferences here at the University of Toronto. He has published widely on literature, film, and cultural studies; he has recently written a paper on Chester Brown's graphic novel *Louis Riel* (forthcoming in *The Journal of Comics and Graphic Novel*). He was the guest editor for the MLA listed, peer reviewed journal *Canadian Poetry*. He teaches Canadian literature, short stories, narrative, and the graphic novel at the University of Toronto, where he has been since 2003. A list of his publications and academic work can be found at <http://andrewlesk.com>.

Jeff Parker is the author of the novel *Ovenman* and the story collection *The Taste of Penny*. He is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Toronto, where he sometimes teaches an undergraduate course in the graphic novel.