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Possibilities and Perspectives: A Conference on Comics

Alea Casino, Leeds, 21/11/2009

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Abstracts

Mavericks and Zinesters: Comics Scholarship in the UK before "Comics Scholarship" ([Roger Sabin](#))

'Comics scholarship' is a term that has only really entered common parlance since the mid 1990s. Indeed, the kind of institutionally-recognised would-be discipline that we are familiar with today - and of which this conference is a manifestation - did not exist before then. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to survey some of the mavericks and zinesters who were laying the groundwork in the years before.

Examples will be drawn from the UK, and there are two reasons for this. The first is the current upsurge of interest in comics scholarship here in the last year, exemplified by the foundation of two new (peer-reviewed) journals and an academic list. The second is that other parts of the world have already been well covered in places like the *International Journal of Comic Art*.

Of course, not everybody associated with serious work on comics can be discussed in the time available. For this reason, my tone will be playful and scattershot, taking in four people or groups of people that I feel have been important: namely, Mary Pennell, a Victorian critic; Denis Gifford, a comics collector; Martin Barker, a pioneering academic; and the crew of late-1980s era fanzine *FA*.

My conclusions will include comment on the current state of comics scholarship, and in particular: the question of separating fan culture from academia; the value of pre-1995 scholarship; and the necessity for the systematised preservation of fanzines and comics collections.

The Use of Style and Storytelling Techniques in *The Tale of One Bad Rat* ([Bryan Talbot](#))

Beginning with look through earlier work and moving on to concentrate on the above-mentioned graphic novel, Bryan Talbot discusses the reasoning behind the choice of illustration styles and the visual devices inherent in comic artwork.

Teaching Comics (Dan Berry)

For many years, people wishing to pursue an education in comics have had to fall back onto either taking an illustration degree or persevering either by themselves or in collectives. The recent validation of comics courses in the UK at degree level and higher spotlights the growing acceptance of comics as a credible area of academic study.

This paper will highlight some of the benefits and advantages of studying a subject at degree level that has demonstrably been historically unnecessary to the development of the wider comics market. It will also give an insight into the ideological approaches to the ethos of a comics curriculum in terms of interdisciplinary practice.

The talk will also address some of the dialogues surrounding academic approaches to comics and their creation.

Sequential Art for Science and Souvenirs: To Oblivion and Beyond (Duncan Rowland)

A key part of the "scientific method" is the communication of ideas and observations from one practitioner to another and the further dissemination to a wider audience. The Mixed Reality Laboratory, at the University of Nottingham has been investigating ways in which sequential art (specifically hand drawn Comics and Comic-Life Photostories) can be employed within the scientific method to assist in this dialogue. This presentation describes three aspects of this work. First, photostories created by primary school students will be shown. These were created as part of a practical science session and used to document their experiment for self-appraisal and for communication with other schools. Second, photostory mementos have been created by participants in a study of the physiological indicators of "thrill" (conducted at Alton Towers). The photostories were generated by the participant selecting images from a DVD an adding speech comments. The use of such items to extend a momentary experience from the day of occurrence into the future will be discussed. Third, these sessions have been documented in an academic paper through a traditional comic drawn by a professional artist. Benefits of this collaboration in the production of this engaging medium are considered along with general lessons drawn from the practical work.

- 'Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the riverbank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book', thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversation?'' – Lewis Carroll.

Graphic Fiction as Medical Narrative: Comics as a Resource for Health Professionals? (Ian Williams)

Among the growing number of works of graphic fiction, titles dealing directly with the patient experience of illness or caring for others with an illness or disability are to be found. These comics artists who lay out the narrative of suffering become examples of what Arthur Frank (1997) calls "*the wounded storyteller*": one who has lived through a profound experience, and, by relating the story to others, has the ability to heal.

Thanks in part to the *Medical Humanities* movement many medical schools now encourage the reading of classic literature to gain insight into the human condition. I suggest that it is high time that the medium of comics was examined by healthcare professions: drawing on the principals of *narrative medicine*, my presentation will explore whether comics and graphic novels could be used as a resource for health professionals, carers and patients and what role they might play in that context.

American Mainstream – What?! (Ofer Berenstein)

Q: Are Batman, X-Men or maybe Two Fisted Tales considered to be American Mainstream Comics Book titles?

A: It depends who you are asking and how he or she define mainstream!

In the Past, numerous academic papers, including Master's theses and Dissertations, had discussed topics relating to, or based upon, the term American Mainstream comics books. However, most of which did not defined the term *mainstream* properly and were using different cultural, political, economical, aesthetical and literary perspectives.

This presentation argues that the definition of titles commonly accepted as mainstream in the scholarly works of our time is inaccurate and flawed as it is based upon subjective assumptions and preferences of scholars or commonly accepted comics fans' myths. In contrast, this paper wishes to present a more objective method to define what the term American Mainstream Comics Books really is, and which titles it should include.

Based upon the definition of mainstream as the most popular representations of a given time frame or topic *this paper draws quantitative data from various sources to assemble an exhaustive list of bestselling titles for the era of 1936-1979.* Among the data sources included: Publishers' "Statements of Ownership", Audit Bureau of Circulation's reports, and numerous other sources.

Albeit being a quantitatively based research the results of this work will be qualitatively linked to other aspects of comics' and American popular cultures' history, and a special focus will be given to restrictions and limitations to the application of the proposed list in future research.

"Funny Books" – Comics and Reader Response Theory (Keith McDonald)

This paper will consider comic books in relation to phenomenology and in particular some of the theories formulated by Wolfgang Iser. Iser contends that a 'virtual dimension' of a literary text is 'activated' when the written word meets the imaginative functions of the reader, stating:

> This virtual dimension is not the text itself, nor is it the imagination of the reader: it is the coming together of text and imagination.[1]

I wish to extend this notion to comic book narratives and in particular explore the hybrid nature of comic books as an amalgamation of image and text. This draws from the work of Will Eisner who suggests that the reader is a valuable participatory agent in comic book narratives, potentially bringing to life and 'amplifying' text and image. This theoretical underpinning will lead to a consideration of comic books alongside other media, in particular in relation to the Literature and Cinema. The argument here is that although existing academic study into Literature and Film is highly valuable, a nascent discourse is required to explore comic book dynamics. The paper will be exemplified by several comic book moments which demonstrate ways in

which comic book narratives occur and unfold as complex, changeable and at times self aware and reflexive texts.

[1] Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Modern Criticism and Theory,* ed. David Lodge (New York: Longman, 2000) 197.

'Tezuka is Dead': Itō Gō's anti-cinematic manga theory ([Chris Howard](#))

Tezuka Osamu's reputation as the so-called 'God of *Manga*' remained virtually unquestioned in Japan until the publication of *manga* theorist Itō Gō's provocative book 'Tezuka is Dead' in 2005. In particular Itō takes issue with the claim of rival theorist, Takeuchi Osamu, that since the death of Tezuka in 1989, the standard of contemporary *manga* has slipped into terminal decline. For most critics, Tezuka's perfection of visual techniques resembling those of Hollywood continuity editing has been positively viewed for driving the movement from simple four frame comic strips to the longer narrative *manga* that dominate mainstream production today. Itō's claim, however, is that such norms of story-telling and character subjectivity are no longer representative of 'postmodern' Japanese society. Instead Itō proposes an alternative model for *manga* production. First, he discusses the division between modernism and postmodernism through the difference between *kyara* (icon) and *kyarakuta* (character). Second, he looks at how this division is represented visually in the distinction between frame composition (*koma kōsei*) and frame development (*koma tenkai*). Such concepts are used to illustrate how new story forms can be developed outside of 'cinematic' style. In tracing the outline of Itō's multi-faceted theoretical model, I question the validity of the so-called 'postmodern' break and his particular positioning of Tezuka.

"Welcome to the Shadow Gallery...": Archives, Alan Moore and the Historio-Graphic Novel ([Tony Venezia](#))

Formulations and contestations of the archive have provoked transdisciplinary conversations across the humanities and social sciences in the past decade and a half following the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995). The theorising of archival discourses has built on the established work of Michel Foucault and has proved congruent with New Historicist, Cultural Materialist and Post-colonial approaches that mark the archive as a contested political arena, a site that is both

physical and imaginative. This has coincided with a proliferation of representations of the archive in film and fiction, as identified by Suzanne Keen in *Romances of the Archive* (2001), while more recently Jared Gardner has noted an 'archival turn' in contemporary comics and in the subculture of fans and collectors. I propose to extend and clarify such an archival model for comics scholarship, critically drawing on debates on the nature of the archive, with particular attention to the writing of Walter Benjamin on history and cultural production, to emphasise a dialectic of the material and the textual. I will use examples of Alan Moore's work (*V for Vendetta*, *Marvelman*, *Watchmen*, *From Hell*) to argue that the comics form, a constellation of fragmented image and text, is potentially ideally suited to portray and problematise representations of history. The contemporary comic, as exemplified by Moore, is capable of realising this potential in structure and subject. I hope to show not merely the figuration of archives in comics, such as the Shadow Gallery in *V for Vendetta*, but also to demonstrate how the comic *embodies* the archive (literally so in the extensive appendix in *From Hell*), producing not so much a graphic as a historio-graphic novel.

Lesbian and Gay Comics in the 70s and 80s: Archives of Queer Trauma and Conflict (Sina Shamsavari)

LGBT comics constitute an archive of queer lives, feelings and subcultures. My research aims to produce an archive of queer comics, and the comics I discuss are themselves efforts to document queer lives and cultures. These comics constitute what Ann Cvetkovich (2003) calls "an archive of feelings". They are repositories for queer emotions, for feelings of pleasure and connectedness but also of trauma and alienation.

This talk will focus on the LGBT comics of the 1970s and 1980s. The early gay comics were concerned with constructing and affirming a strong sense of gay identity/community. As anger grew throughout the 80s at government-sanctioned homophobia and around the AIDS crisis, many comics used humour and positive representations of gays and lesbians in order to counter the vilification of gay people in heterosexual media.

However cartoonists also addressed the traumas, the internal divisions and conflicts within the lesbian and gay communities. Comics by Howard Cruse, Jerry Mills and Vaughn can be understood as collectively forming a memorial to the gay male sexual

subculture of the 1970s and 1980s which was irrevocably altered by the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic. The work of Alison Bechdel and Jennifer Camper can be seen as interventions into the heated debates in the lesbian community around bisexuality and SM.

The gay comics in which such difficult questions were taken up, paved the way for the new, "queer" generation of comics that emerged in the 1990s, concerned with archiving an even wider range of queer identities, lives and emotions.

Comic Strip Careers and Heartfelt Advice: *Girl* and girlhood in the late 1950s ([Mel Gibson](#))

Girl, a key publication for girls in the 1950s, was created by the Hulton Press in 1951 and continued publication until 1964. It was, as many publications for girls were throughout the 1950s and on, a mixture of comic strip and other items. Amongst the other items was an advice page 'What's Your Worry?' launched in the mid-1950s, which the publishers saw as one of the first aimed at younger readers (predominantly under 16s). This was not, however, the only way in which Girl attempted to guide the aspirations, offer potential roles, behaviour, and address the concerns of the predominantly middle-class readers. The producers of this publication were then, as Tinkler suggests of all publishers in this field, implicated "in the construction of the 'girl'" (in Andrews & Talbot, 2000, p.99).

This paper looks at sample issues from the late 1950s, exploring how the reader is directed towards 'suitable' (that being middle-class) activities and careers, and how the publisher attempted to balance readers' needs and desires against those of concerned adults. Further, there are other tensions involved in Girl to be explored here, particularly in using comic strips in an era when the comic was considered problematic. The contradiction between the comic as 'bad' medium and the construction of the 'good' girl means that comic strips for girls may act to undermine, or destabilize traditional ideals of femininity and act as a flash point in relations between adults and children, even when they appear conformist.

Profiles

Ofer Berenstein

Ofer Berenstein is a graduate student in the political communication program at Bar-Ilan university, Israel. He is currently writing his master's thesis about "the representation of publicly elected American officials in American mainstream comics" and is engaged in various projects relating to the scholarly study of Israeli and international comics.

In his spare time, he edits and reviews comics publications for various Israeli artists and publishers and was a founding member of the Israeli comics readers and collectors society.

Dan Berry

Dan Berry teaches on the BA (hons) Illustration for Graphic Novels degree at the North Wales School of Art & Design, part of Glyndwr University. This course offers the support and opportunity to people who wish to explore a career in comics. It introduces students to the creation of characters, developing engaging storylines and publishing work in a variety of formats.

Hugo Frey

Dr Hugo Frey is Head of History at the University of Chichester, UK. He has worked extensively on French collective memory of the Vichy period and the wars of decolonization. Publications include a monograph on Louis Malle (Manchester UP: 2004) as well as contributions to *Yale French Studies*, *Journal of European Studies* and *Modern and Contemporary France*. He is currently writing a history of French national identity and the cinema, to be published by Reaktion books, London.

Mel Gibson

Dr. Mel Gibson is a Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University. She is a comics scholar and consultant who has run training and promotional events about comics and graphic novels for libraries, schools and other organizations since 1993. Her doctoral

thesis was on British women's memories of their girlhood comics reading and her MA thesis also focused on comics. She has published a number of professional and academic articles and chapters in relation to the medium and has also been involved in organising academic conference strands on comics, pedagogy and visual literacies.

Ian Hague

Ian Hague is a PhD student working on the theory of comics at the University of Chichester under the supervision of Dr Hugo Frey. He did his BA in English at the University of Hull and his MA in Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds. His research interests are wide ranging and include semiology, psychoanalysis, critical theory, literature, art, film and postmodernism.

Chris Howard

Christopher Howard is Teaching Fellow in Media and Film at SOAS, University of London. He specialises in Japanese cinema and popular culture.

Keith McDonald

Keith McDonald holds a PhD from Birkbeck College, University of London, and is a lecturer at York St John University. His publications appear in Biography: an Interdisciplinary Quarterly, The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror and Scope: an Online Journal of Film and TV. He is the author of Film and Television Textual Analysis (Auteur, 2006) and his research interests include popular culture, new media and pedagogy.

Aaron Meskin

Aaron Meskin is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Leeds. Before moving to Leeds in 2005, he taught at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. He has published numerous articles in academic philosophy journals and anthologies including three recent articles on philosophical issues raised by comics and graphic novels. He recently co-edited Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology (Wiley-Blackwell, 2007). He serves as Treasurer of the British Society of Aesthetics and is on the Board of Trustees of the American Society for Aesthetics.

Duncan Rowland

Dr Rowland has worked as a researcher at the University of St Andrews (gaining his PhD in 1998 in the area of Psychologically Verified Computer Graphics), Michigan State University, The University of Lincoln (where he was appointed Reader in Social Computing), and the University of Nottingham where he is currently a Senior Research Fellow. He has also worked as a commercial games developer with credits including Colin McRae Rally 3.0 and at an animation start-up venture in New Jersey. Duncan has published over 30 academic papers and his research interests are broad, but are currently focussing on computer-aided storytelling.

Roger Sabin

Roger Sabin is Reader in Popular Culture at Central Saint Martins College of Art, University of the Arts London. He has written several books about comics, including *Adult Comics: An Introduction* (Routledge) and *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels* (Phaidon).

Sina Shamsavari

Sina Shamsavari is a cartoonist, artist and academic researcher. He has self-published a range of zines and mini-comics and his comics have also most recently appeared in *The Book of Boy Trouble Vol 2* edited by Robert Kirby and David Kelly, and *Alternative Press: Publish You* edited by Dimitri Pieri, Peter Lally, Gareth Brookes, and Saban Kazim. He is currently working on his PhD, on the history of queer comics, at Goldsmiths College, London.

Bryan Talbot

Bryan Talbot has produced underground and alternative comics, notably *Brainstorm!*, science fiction and superhero stories such as *Judge Dredd, Nemesis the Warlock, Teknophage, The Nazz* and *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight.* He's worked on DC Vertigo titles including *Hellblazer, Sandman, The Dreaming* and *Fables* and has written and drawn the graphic novels for which he is best known: *The Adventures of Luther Arkwright, Heart of Empire, The Tale of One Bad Rat* and *Alice in Sunderland.* In July he was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Arts by Sunderland University. His new book, *Grandville,* was published in October.

Tony Venezia

Tony Venezia has recently completed the first year of an MPhil/PhD at Birkbeck on representations of history in the work of Alan Moore. He also did his MA at Birkbeck (Modern & Contemporary English Literature), and his Master's dissertation was on narrative in comics, looking at examples from Frank Miller, Jaime Hernandez and Harvey Pekar.

Ian Williams

I am a visual artist and GP based in North Wales. In an attempt to bring the two sides of my 'career' together I embarked on an MA course in Medical Humanities, which casts a critical eye upon medicine using the conceptual tools of the arts and humanities. Rather surprisingly, I found that the common ground lay in my love of comics, which I have always enjoyed, although I would not class myself as a hardcore fan and certainly not an expert.

I edit a website, www.graphicmedicine.org, which discusses medical narrative in graphic novels and comics and am currently setting up a conference to discuss medical narrative in graphic fiction, which will take place in London next June.

Supporting Organisations

The Institute for Comics Studies

www.instituteforcomicsstudies.org

The Institute for Comics Studies (ICS), a "think tank" for comics studies, is a non-profit organization designed to promote the study, understanding, recognition, and cultural legitimacy of comics, and to coordinate communication within and about the medium.

The Institute undertakes this mission through communication with the general public and within the scholarly, professional, and fan communities. The Institute holds conferences, seminars, workshops, and symposia; coordinates and enables collection development; indexes secondary and other scholarly materials related to the study of comics so that scholars and the general public may access these materials; and acts as an umbrella organization for other comics-oriented organizations, institutions, and academic programs.
The activities of the Institute fall into five areas:

Communication: The building of relationships between and within the comics academy and the industry.

Knowledge: The creation of new knowledge and understanding via scholarly activity.

Expertise: The promotion of comics scholars as experts in the academic, media, legal, and professional communities.

Support: The development of materials, funding, and faculty in the academy.

Other: Projects suggested and initiated by the academic and professional communities.

Dr. Mel Gibson on Comics

Dr Mel Gibson, Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University, comics scholar and consultant was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) by the Higher Education Academy in 2006. This prestigious award for excellence in university teaching and learning has enabled Mel to support and develop various events and resources in relation to comics scholarship in the UK. These have included, amongst others, supporting the 'Possibilities and Perspectives' conference and organising conference strands for the Association for Research in Popular Cultures (ARPF). In addition, Mel has used the award to develop a website, 'Dr Mel Comics' which offers a list of resources for a range of professionals wishing to work with or research comics, from librarians and teachers to academics. Find the site at: http://www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk/. She has also started a discussion list for UK comics scholars, which aims to circulate information across academic disciplines and institutions, helping to build up a network of researchers (contact her via the website if you would like to join) and to share information about opportunities to study the medium. Finally, the award has enabled Mel to work with national organisations like Booktrust, Youth Libraries Group and others to further their awareness of, and engagement with, comics, manga and graphic novels.

Thought Bubble

The Thought Bubble Festival celebrates and promotes sequential art through activity that engages and brings together new and aspiring artists and writers with established and leading industry figures. Our four day festival hosts: workshops, master classes, talks, live art installations, comic based screenings and a huge book crossing which takes place at various venues across Leeds.

Interest and appreciation of sequential art has exploded in recent years with source material entering the mainstream through films such as blockbuster superhero movies and art house productions such as Persepolis and Ghost World. The vast

diversity of Sequential Art places it in the unique position of appealing to a potentially huge and engaged audience. A key aim of Thought Bubble is to promote literacy through the art form and engage new and aspiring artists and writers from across the Yorkshire region and engender trust, confidence and creativity in environments that are inclusive and accessible for all.

The Thought Bubble festival is an annual event which occurs every November. The festival is now in its 3rd year and has grown to become one of the leading events of its kind in the UK. This year's festival is expected to be even more popular with audiences tripling in size over the last 2 years. The biggest part of our festival is a huge one day convention event which takes place at Saviles Hall, and attracts guests and public from across the UK and Europe. Thought Bubble has also just gained major funding from Arts Council, England which shows that funding bodies are taking comics a lot more seriously.

The University of Chichester

www.chiuni.ac.uk

The University of Chichester is one of the newest in the UK, having gained university status in 2005, but can trace its higher education origins back to 1839. It is one of the smallest universities in the country with just over 5,000 students - and one of the most distinctive with two campuses in the county of West Sussex - the Cathedral city of Chichester and Bognor Regis, the sunshine capital of the UK.

Chichester offers a close and supportive environment, where students are supported in their learning by a strong sense of community. Therefore it is not surprising that students rate our institution highly. It has the highest level of overall student satisfaction of any modern university in the country (National Student Survey 2008 & 2009). It was ranked the top modern university for all-round student experience (Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2009) and voted the best modern university in the UK for 'student experience' (Complete University Guide 2009). The University also has the best graduate job prospectus of any university on the South Coast. 94.2% of its students are in a job or further study six months after graduating (HESA survey 2009).

The University has a wide portfolio of courses from foundation level through to degrees, MAs and PhDs. Over 300 courses are on offer in a range of subjects within the Arts, Humanities, Business, Sports, Education and Social Sciences. Each subject area has a curriculum that reflects this ethos and encourages the development of skills valued by employers. The University is ranked the best modern university in terms of degree completion rates, (Complete University Guide 2009) and it has an excellent graduate success rate with 91.3% either in employment or further study (2006 data) shortly after completing their first degrees.

The University prides itself on providing students with a friendly, informal and sociable atmosphere. Lecturers will get to know you individually and provide good support and guidance to you during your study.

Analysis of comics as a source for cultural historians and a means of interpreting the past are studied in the History department on the BA (Hons) History degree. This features as a level 3 module titled 'History in the Graphic Novel'.

To find out more about studying at the University of Chichester please visit www.chiuni.ac.uk or call Admissions on 01243 816002.

Molakoe Graphic Design

www.molakoe.co.uk

Based in Leeds and London, Molakoe offers bespoke digital and print design for cultural and arts based organisations and projects. Visit www.molakoe.co.uk or call 07595 420 695 for more information about this up and coming conceptual design agency.

Comics Scholarship on the Net: A Brief Annotated Bibliography by Dr. Mel Gibson

This listing flags up a few of the sites that take an academic perspective on comics. These links, along with further contacts, bibliographies and other resources, can be found at Dr Mel Comics: http://www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk/sources/academic.html

Comics Research Bibliography

http://www.rpi.edu/~bulloj/comxbib.html

This is an international bibliography of articles on comic books, comic strips, animation, caricature, cartoons, bandes dessinées, and related topics. The list incorporates newspaper and other articles on comics alongside more scholarly works. It consists of around 14,400 entries divided into four sections, arranged alphabetically by author. It also offers a number of lists on specific topics, including British Comics (which does have some gaps). Whilst patchy, it can, nonetheless, be a very useful starting point. The creators are also aware that there is much more material not yet included and welcome contributions.

Comics Research Libraries

http://comics.lib.msu.edu/otherlib.htm

The site introduction says that, "The libraries in this list all have some special collecting interest in the area of comics or cartoons. Many of the collections listed here fit into related but more general collections. Therefore, each entry begins by describing the part of each collection that makes it of special interest to comics researchers, and then, if appropriate a few words are given about the scope of the general collection at that institution". Again, the list is international, incorporating some of the key European collections.

http://comics.lib.msu.edu/index.htm

The Comic Art Collection holds over 150,000 items, predominantly consisting of comic books and nearly 1,000 books of collected newspaper comic strips. It also includes collections of comics from France, Denmark, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Britain, Canada, Holland, Korea and Sweden and a specialist Latin American Comic Art Collection. Finally, it incorporates several thousand books and periodicals about comics, and a classified index is under construction. As with many of the listings on the Comics Research Libraries you will find that the site consists of their index of holdings rather than electronic access to those holdings. It is all very tantalising. If you are researching American comics in particular, and can afford to travel, this is the collection to physically visit.

ComicsResearch.org, featuring The Comics Scholarship Annotated Bibliographies

http://www.comicsresearch.org/

A gem. As the introduction says the bibliography "covers book-length works about comic books and comic strips, from 'fannish' histories to academic monographs. This site was designed to provide more information and guidance on such books than you'd normally find in a library catalogue entry. The goal for each entry is to include the book's Table of Contents as well as (if applicable) a list of comics works reprinted in it (and their sources, sometimes undocumented), other general notes on content and organization, ISBN numbers, and reviews - either included on these pages (*R*), listed from print sources (*P*), or linked to from on-line sources (*O*). Books in any language, about comics from any country, are included". This really helps to take wondering if a book may be useful on title alone out of the equation. However, it isn't the only use of this site, which has an extensive list of links included in the bibliography. Further, it has a selection of links through the Other Links section, mostly to popular sites dealing with specific creators, genres, publishers and national schools, and one to the contents pages of the International Journal of Comic Art, a

key periodical in the field. It has not been updated for a while, but is still a hugely useful site.

Comics Scholars' Discussion List

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http://www.english.ufl.edu/comics/scholars/index.shtml

This list offers an academic forum for those involved in research and teaching related to comics. It is possible to discuss all aspects of comics and cartooning and the list is open to theoretical and critical perspectives from all academic fields. As the list introduction says, "the list's common ground is its foundation in scholarship and its willingness to examine all the givens of comics form, history, fandom, etc. ...It is a place to debate theoretical and historical issues; course syllabi and assignments; call attention to potentially useful scholarship and other resources; and call for submissions for books, journals, and conferences. It is also a place to discuss job searches, pedagogy, library acquisitions, conferences, financial resources, and other institutional factors that affect comics scholarship". It also offers examples of online syllabi and links to other academic sites.

Online Essays on Comics

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http://www.angelfire.com/on2/smbergson/comicsessays.htm

A bibliography which largely consists of scholarly essays about comics. As these are all online the bibliography offers direct links to the original work. Not been updated for several years, but gives a good coverage of the period it focuses on.

Comic Art and Comics Area of the Popular Culture Association

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http://pcaaca.org/about/about.php

Here, key areas of interest are (in addition to the information on this conference, which has a major comics scholars presence) the Resources for Permissions in Publishing section and that on Comics Scholarship Citation Guidelines. Whilst it addresses the American situation with regard to copyright, the concerns and

problems described are very similar to those in Britain. There are also links to resources on this issue.

The British Library

These British Library links cover the British comics collection, incorporating both a key essay and a listing of holdings:

- **http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/britcomics/index.html**
- **http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/journals/comiclist/index.html**

The following British Library links cover Zines, fanzines, alternative comics, and graphic novels held at the library:

- **http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/zines(part1)/zines1.html**
- **http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/zines(part2)/zines2.html**

The Grand Comics Database

http://www.comics.org/

An ambitious attempt to create an online catalogue including as many comic books from around the world as possible. The aim is to include "key story information, creator information, and other information which is useful to readers, fans, hobbyists, researchers". Most entries about specific comic books give contents information at the very least and some include scans of covers.

The British Cartoon Archive

http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/

Website of the Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature established in 1973 at the University of Kent at Canterbury. The aim of the collection is to, "collect and preserve British cartoons of social and political comment, and make them freely available for study" and it contains a huge electronic archive of cartoons. It does not focus on comic books, but offers a superb resource in a related field.

The International Bande Dessinée Society

http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ibds/

A forum for scholarly exchange on all aspects of French language comics

The Anime/Manga Web Essays Archive

http://corneredangel.com/amwess/

 A very comprehensive listing of articles about manga and anime on the internet. Includes academic essays in a special section.

The Comic Art in Scholarly Writing: A Citation Guide

http://web.english.ufl.edu/comics/scholars/guide.html

Has not been updated for a number of years, but is still helpful.

The International Association of Word and Image Studies / Association Internationale pour l'Etude des Rapports entre Texte et Image (IAWIS/AIERTI)

http://www.iawis.org/

Seeks to foster the study of Word and Image relations in a general cultural context and especially in the arts in the broadest sense.

Anime Research

http://www.animeresearch.com/

Anime, manga and Japanese popular culture research database

Scottish Word and Image Group

http://www.dundee.ac.uk/english/swig/