

Comics Forum 2013

Small Press and Undergrounds: A
Conference on Comics

@ComicsForum

#comicsforum13

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Welcome to Comics Forum 2013

Hello and welcome to the fifth Comics Forum conference.

This year's conference focuses on small press and underground comics, and we were very pleased to receive a wide range of abstracts following this year's call for papers, reflecting the diverse set of subjects that falls under our general theme. In preparing the programme we looked to represent as much of this diversity as possible, while at the same time giving the conference a sense of thematic coherence. This year's speakers have travelled from around the world to speak on topics such as history, audience, gender, sexuality, authorship, art, politics and communication. We are also very pleased to welcome our friends from the excellent [Graphixia](http://www.graphixia.cssgn.org) blog (<http://www.graphixia.cssgn.org>) to talk about the work they are

undertaking, and comics scholarship more generally. We round out the conference with a keynote session that puts into conversation Paul Gravett, a key figure in the history of the British small press, and Roger Sabin, a noted expert whose book *Adult Comics: An Introduction* is one of the key cultural histories of the medium. A huge thank you to all of our speakers for joining us at this year's event.

We must also pass on our gratitude to the wider team who have been involved in organising Comics Forum this year. There are numerous people whose work behind the scenes has been essential to the success of the conference, and to the broader activities of the organisation, and it is fair to say that without them Comics Forum would not be able to

take place. Thanks go as ever to Lisa Wood and Clark Burscough and the rest of the Thought Bubble team for their continued support of Comics Forum, to Hattie Kennedy, Will Grady and Paul Fisher Davies, who have worked on various elements of Comics Forum this year, to Hannah Wadle for her work on the conference behind the scenes, to our consultants Hugo Frey, Mel Gibson and Roger Sabin, and to our designer Ben Gaskell. We would also like to say a big thank you to the Leeds Central Library team, who have been extremely generous in their support of the conference since 2012, and to Nabil Homsy and the Travelling Man team for hosting our book launch for

Comics Art on Thursday evening. Finally, we want mention our supporters: the University of Chichester, Thought Bubble, Routledge, Travelling Man, Dr Mel Gibson, and Molakoe Graphic Design, who have all provided valuable resources and support throughout the planning stages of this year's conference.

We very much hope you enjoy the conference; if you have any questions or feedback do not hesitate to speak to us at the event, or email us at comicsforum@hotmail.co.uk.

**Carolene Ayaka, Ian Hague
and Rebecca Macklin**

**Conference Directors, Comics
Forum 2013**

Programme

21/11/2013

0900-0930: Registration

0930-0945: Opening Remarks

0945-1100: Panel 1: History

Chair: Ian Hague

Lise Tannahill: Assessing *Ololé*: Vehicle for Breton Pride or Source of Shame?

David Huxley: 'I still have 50 Copies in the Attic': British Regional Underground comics 1970-1980

Martin de la Iglesia: Early manga translations in the West: underground cult or mainstream failure?

1100-1115: Break

1115-1215: Panel 2: Audience

Chair: Joan Ormrod

Cameron Fletcher: "Amateur" Hour

R.Finn: Using a webcomic comment thread to gauge reader experience

1215-1300: Lunch

1300-1415: Panel 3: Gender & Sexuality

Chair: Carolene Ayaka

Louisa Parker: Small Story – Big Picture

Laura A. Pearson: Nina Bunjevac's "Alternative" Catwoman in 'Bitter Tears of Zorka Petrovic'

Mihaela Precup: 'It came from Alpha Centaur looking for love': The Mutant and Non-human Body in Denis Kitchen's *Bizarre Sex* (1972-1982)

1415-1430: Break

1430-1545: Panel 4: Graphixia

Brenna Clarke Gray, Damon Herd, Hattie Kennedy, Ernesto Priego, Peter Wilkins and David N Wright: Small is the New Big: The Comics Criticism Blog as Small Press

1550-1620: Comics Forum Developments

1700-1830: Comics Art Book Launch (Venue: Travelling Man Leeds)

1830: Conference Dinner (Venue: Little Tokyo)

0900-0930: Registration

0930-0945: Opening Remarks

0945-1045: Panel 5: Authorship

Chair: Julia Round

Ian Horton: Dave Sim's *Cerebus the Aardvark*: Self-publishing, the Direct Market and Creative Freedom

Christopher J. Thompson: Comix Narrative Parody: Hunt Emerson's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

1045-1100: Break

1100-1215: Panel 6: Art

Chair: Simon Grennan

Gareth Brookes: Small Press Comics and Fine Art

Paddy Johnston: From Random House to Rehab: Julia Wertz and the Small Press

Dan Smith: Revisiting Donald Parsnips' Daily Journal

1215-1300: Lunch

1300-1400: Panel 7: Politics

Chair: Hattie Kennedy

Aysel Demir: Political Humor is Absolutely a "Serious" Job!

John Miers: Metaphor, financial crisis, and the small press

1400-1415: Break

1415-1515: Panel 8: Communication

Chair: Ian Horton

John G. Swogger: Underground Archaeology: Comics as alternative agents of professional discourse

Lydia Wysocki, Jack Fallows and Mike Thompson: Epic themes in awesome ways, or how we made *Asteroid Belter: The Newcastle Science Comic*

1515-1530: Break

1530-1630: Keynote: Paul Gravett in conversation with Roger Sabin

1630-1645: Closing Remarks

Panel 1: History

Chair: Ian Hague

Assessing *Ololê*: Vehicle for Breton Pride or Source of Shame?

Lise Tannahill

During the German occupation of France, children's comics (*bandes dessinées*) gradually disappeared from the market, either owing to economic pressures or to difficulties with the German authorities, particularly in cases where the publications were Jewish-owned. Eventually the only *bande dessinée* available in Paris and the majority of the occupied zone was the colourful, modern, German-backed publication *Le Téméraire*. However, it was not alone: in Brittany, a little known paper prospered until May 1944 — *Ololê*.

Founded by Breton autonomist Herri Caouissin, *Ololê* offered a right-wing, traditionalist, Pétainist version of Breton

identity, with editorials, stories and older-style *bandes dessinées* focusing on Breton folklore and pride, and estimated print runs of 3000-10000. It also spawned spin-off books and a youth organisation with various chapters, Urz Goanag Breiz (Order of the Hope of Brittany). Upon the Liberation, Herri Caouissin was arrested for collaboration and stripped of his assets, including *Ololê*. In the 1970s the paper was resurrected as a traditionalist Catholic, pro-Breton magazine, *L'Appel d'Ololê*.

This paper will give an overview of this unique publication, virtually unstudied in French or English. It is of particular interest for its expression of Breton

identity pre-1968 and the presence of numerous notable authors of early *bande dessinée*, including Etienne Le Rallic, Benjamin Rabier and (without permission) Hergé. Although small, *Ololê* was connected to many key figures of early 20th-century Breton nationalism and contains rarely-mentioned work by major authors. Thus it is of interest both in terms of modern French history and the history of the *bande dessinée*.

Lise Tannahill is PhD student in French at the Stirling Maxwell Centre, University of Glasgow. Her research focuses on

portrayal of the French regions and French minority identity in the francophone *bande dessinée*. Current research includes work on graphic representations of minority cultures of Brittany, (in *Les Aventures de Bécassine* and *Ololê*) and Corsica (in Pétillon's *L'Enquête Corse*, *Astérix en Corse*, and others).

Her research interests include pre-1945 *bande dessinée*, European minority languages and expressions of regional identities.

'I still have 50 Copies in the Attic': British Regional Underground comics 1970-1980

David Huxley

Although the most famous British underground comics of the 1970s were the London-based *Cozmic Comics* and *Nasty Tales*, there were many other regional production centres in the UK. This paper will mainly concentrate on two of these,

the Birmingham Arts Lab and the Newcastle upon Tyne JPO. In particular the impact of technology on comic production will be examined, in the light of the Arts lab and 'Free Press' developments of the mid-1970s, and also the rise of

independent female comic creators. The paper will also look at the influence of art colleges on the comics produced at these two centres both in terms of aesthetics and narrative.

David Huxley is Senior Lecturer on the BA(Hons) Film and Media Studies course at Manchester Metropolitan University. His subject specialisms are the Graphic Novel, Comic Book & Comic Strip, Censorship, Hollywood Film and Animation. His PhD thesis was *The Growth and Development of British*

***Alternative Graphic Magazines 1966-1986*. Current research interests include the graphic novel and the comic strip, animation and the horror film and early twentieth century British Music Hall performers. He has drawn and written a wide range of adult and children's comics, and designed posters for conferences held at the university.**

He is joint editor of the new Routledge publication *The Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (first issue 2010).

Early manga translations in the West: underground cult or mainstream failure?

Martin de la Iglesia

In the 1980s, publishing translated manga in the Western world was still an unstable business. Manga had not yet been discovered to be profitable by established comic publishers in Western countries (e.g. Carlsen from 1991, DC/CMX from 2004, or Egmont from 1994), and most

specialised manga publishing companies such as Tokyopop had not been founded there yet. Back then, some translations were published by short-lived comic companies like First Comics (US edition of 'Lone Wolf and Cub', 1987) or Eclipse Comics (US edition of 'Mai, the Psychic Girl', 1987,

etc.). Others were published by companies that did not normally produce comics, like Rowohlt (German edition of 'Barefoot Gen', 1982), Verlag der Goethe-Buchhandlung (German edition of 'Haine', 1988) or University of California Press (US edition of 'Japan Inc.', 1988). Clearly, these titles can hardly be considered commercially successful. But who exactly were their readers, and how did this readership compare to the marketing goals of the publishers? For instance, First and Eclipse tried to break into the mainstream US comic market, whereas UC Press, Rowohlt and Goethe-Buchhandlung probably had an audience in mind that was interested in the content of their manga, but which was not necessarily comprised of regular comic readers at all. Even so, did those ill-fated manga translations sow the seeds of an underground cult following, which would grow to become

the manga boom of the 1990s and 2000s? These questions are part of a long-term research project, the first results of which will be presented in this paper.

Martin de la Iglesia studied Art History and Library and Information Science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In 2007 he wrote his Master's Thesis in London on the reception of US comics in the United Kingdom. Currently he is a PhD student at Heidelberg University (dissertation topic: the early reception of manga in the West). At the same time he works as a librarian in Göttingen, Germany. His fields of interest in research include comics, art geography, reception history and aesthetics, and art historical methodology. All of his publications are available in Open Access. He blogs at <http://650centplague.wordpress.com/>

Panel 2: Audience

Chair: Joan Ormrod

“Amateur” Hour

Cameron Fletcher

An exploration of the evolution of the fanzine from its simple beginnings to its current state, looking at both the technology and the relationship between the small medium and the mass medium it celebrates. This work will briefly look at the stages of development in terms of the technology and examine the notion that the fanzine played a developmental role in the cultural capital and structure that can be seen in the “fan boy” phenomenon that offsets the inherent stigma of the subject medium and for the purpose of this work will use comic books.

Due to time constraints this will not be an exhaustive examination of the Fanzine field but rather a whistle stop tour using the template of the

Comic Book Fanzine to illustrate the general principles. In some ways the Comic book Fanzine is like a microcosm of the comic book industry with larger than life characters whose pioneering in the fan communities helped shape the comic book industry into its current format.

In looking at the development of the comic book fanzine it would be a flawed piece if the most important component was overlooked, I am of course talking about the fan. As the fanzine has developed so have the fans and this work will look at that development from the enthusiastic “amateur” fan, to the fan as author/artist.

This work does not profess to bring forth profound answers

but seeks to promote discussion of the rich milieu that is the fan base.

I am an independent researcher, currently in final stages of research phase of a personal project. I have been reading and collecting comics since around 1965 and collection is a mix of British and American comics with a

particular emphasis on superhero comics. Married to Anne, we have one son Craig who has an interest in graphic novels. I have a BA(Hons) in Social Sciences and my dissertation was a joint Sociology and Economics piece on mainstream comics and their moral and economic effects on society.

Using a webcomic comment thread to gauge reader experience

R.Finn

Some webcomics allow readers to comment on single pages or complete narrative arcs either through embedded software or through links to affiliated, externally hosted message boards. In self-published works in particular—the model for most, if not all webcomics—this can create a uniquely intimate dialogue among fans and artists. Comments tend to range from participatory socio-commentary of characters' behaviours to emotional responses and general

expressions of positive or negative affect. These can offer interesting insights into the ways in which readers experience specific compositional features, make mistakes, and interact with the webcomic as a story and as a site for related social interaction. Within the self-publishing framework, they also provide a more privileged position to natural reading experiences, interpretations and appraisals, as opposed to traditional systems of publication and institutionally-

sanctioned criticism.

I will look at a chapter from Meredith Gran's webcomic *Octopus Pie* to show how this kind of reader-response data can be used to provide a map of salient narrative features and to gain an overall picture of readers' experiences of the story. From this analysis, I point to how such data can be used to examine claims about stylistic, compositional and conventional features both of individual stories and of comics in general.

Finn is a PhD student at the University of Sheffield studying

comics, consciousness and cognition. He has previously studied English and French language and literature at Wadham College, Oxford and linguistics at Lancaster University. His thesis examines ways in which psychological and cognitive linguistic theories can help develop understanding of comics storytelling and reading practices, with a focus on depictions of consciousness. He has worked in learning, development and communications for a mental health trust in Cumbria, as an English teacher in Paris and as a fryer in a fish and chip shop.

Panel 3: Gender & Sexuality

Chair: Carolene Ayaka

Small Story – Big Picture

Louisa Parker (@skiptomyloulou; @unacomics)

There is a growing movement in women's press in comics form, noted by the American academic Hillary Chute but also evident in UK comics, which has expanded the personal/political format into a new visual realm. The significance of this genre is evidenced by the numerous well-respected comics artists working within it, but what does the comics form contribute to political, gendered life writing that text based writing does not? What kind of space do graphic narratives (based in fact) create for the examination of women's lived experience and what is the value of this type of production? Does the

value lie in terms of audience, in the dissemination of marginalized narratives in popular form? Is there value for political writers in exploring themes through use of the slow and inherently contemplative process of drawing comics? What does the iconography and metaphor of visual imagery bring to the platform? And how do comics tackle the unspeakable more effectively than other forms of literary and visual work? Finally, is there a danger of reducing or trivialising challenging ideas and serious issue based stories by working in this format?

These are the questions that my project, *Small Stories* is attempting to explore. The first two small press publications for the PhD, *On Deserving a Medal* and *On Life and Death*, explore the lived experience of women born in the post war years, re-imagined in comics form by a woman born into generation X, in an attempt to produce material featuring women's lives centrally located in a social historic context.

Louisa Parker is an artist and practice based researcher at Loughborough University working on a PhD titled *Small*

***Stories*, in which she examines contemporary social history from a gendered perspective through the medium of comics. She also works under the pseudonym Una, producing small press comics which tackle subjects including sexualized violence, serious mental illness, disability and political activism. Her novel length graphic narrative about misogyny, violence and growing up during the hunt for Peter Sutcliffe has received attention from Paul Gravett and will be published by a small London publishing house in the near future.**

Nina Bunjevac's "Alternative" Catwoman in 'Bitter Tears of Zorka Petrovic'

Laura A. Pearson

Belonging to the argument that the comics medium is undervalued as an art form worthy of serious study, it may be redundant to say not enough small press comics authors and artists are getting the recognition they deserve. Nina Bunjevac's recent Doug

Wright Spotlight Award (Canada, 2013) for her graphic novel collection *Heartless* (2012) may have triggered a change for her. Yet, to date and beyond a few reviews, there is an absence of scholarly criticism on her work. Partially and previously printed in the

underground zine *Mineshaft* and recently published as a collection by Conundrum Press (which “has quietly become a major force in alt-comics publishing”—Rob Clough, tcj.com), this rich compilation of personal and political comics contains a treasure-trove of stunning art and multilayered storytelling.

My presentation explores the “Bitter Tears of Zorka Petrovic” sequence of *Heartless*, with special attention to how Bunjevac constructs and deconstructs mainstream views in two divergent but related areas: mainstream comics and the politics of gender. Evidenced by representations of abortion, masculinity, femininity, and transgender for example, I will argue that this suite of stories draws attention to the fine line comics can walk between conventional, orthodox, and even stereotypical views on one

hand, while suggesting subversive and transformative ideas on the other. Tapping into traditions of funny animal comics, not-so-funny animal comics, and “Wimmen’s Comix,” I will discuss how Bunjevac’s “alternative” catwoman utilizes and presses the boundaries of the comics medium, speaking to contemporary and controversial concerns surrounding performativity, agency, and ideologies of gender.

Laura A. Pearson is a postgraduate researcher in the School of English at the University of Leeds. Her doctoral project combines aspects of postcolonial zocriticism and comics studies, looking at animal-human relations in contemporary graphic fictions, and is specifically interested in the transcultural, ecocritical, and sociopolitical overlaps in the study of animals, literature, and culture.

'It came from Alpha Centaur looking for love': The Mutant and Non-human Body in Denis Kitchen's *Bizarre Sex* (1972-1982)

Mihaela Precup (@pilpel)

Of the countless American underground comics anthologies, Denis Kitchen's 10-issue *Bizarre Sex* (1972-1982) was among those that ran the longest, possibly also because of its clearly focused subject matter: aberrant sex. This narrative thread gave the series coherence, but it was also responsible for the creative freedom implied by the wide term "bizarre," read differently by each cartoonist involved. *Bizarre Sex* features the work of a large number of artists, among whom Howard Cruse, Art Spiegelman, Robert Crumb, and Trina Robbins. Throughout the series' 10-decade existence, "bizarre sex" ended up including incest (with which the series famously debuted), animals having sex with humans, half-human half-animal characters having sex with humans or one another, giant genitals having sex with

various objects, humans having sex with insects, exploding genitals, a wide range of masturbatory practices, etc. *Bizarre Sex* thus borrows explicitly from several defunct EC titles, but also indulges in the celebratory questioning of visual and ethical boundaries that often hides behind its own absurd humor.

My paper focuses specifically on the possible ideological implications of the recurrence of mutant bodies (and humanized body parts), as well as non-human (i.e. alien, animal, mixtures of both) bodies engaging in sexual practices. I am interested in questioning the preference visible in this series – but also elsewhere in underground American comics – for dismembered and reassembled bodies, and what this means in terms of the sexual acts these bodies are engaged in. Are these impossible bodies

used here because they signify bodies that do not matter/that cannot be framed as important because they are so “bizarre” that anything can be done to them? And, in that case, how is the ideology of *Bizarre Comix* different from the mainstream policing of non-normative sexuality?

In this paper, I am in conversation with Judith Butler and Donna Haraway, but I am also using Bob Levin's *Outlaws, Rebels, Freethinkers, and Pirates* (2005) and Robert Crumb's *Your Vigor for Life Appals Me* (1998). I am also relying on important archival work by comics historian Patrick Rosenkranz, who documents essential out-of-print fanzines and short-lived underground publications in his *Rebel Visions: The Underground Comics Revolution 1963-1975* (2008).

Mihaela Precup is an Assistant Professor in the American Studies Program at the

University of Bucharest, Romania, where she teaches American visual culture, popular culture, film studies, as well as American literature. Her main research interests include autobiographical comics, trauma studies, and family photography. She is the recipient of a Fulbright fellowship with the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program at Yale University (2006-2007). She edited a volume of essays entitled *American Visual Memoirs after the 1970s. Studies on Gender, Sexuality, and Visibility in the Post-Civil Rights Age* (Bucharest: Bucharest University Press, 2010). She is currently involved in two research projects funded by the National University Research Council of Romania (NURC), *Cross-Cultural Encounters in American Trauma Narratives: A Comparative Approach to Personal and Collective Memories* and *Women's Narratives of Transnational Relocation.*

Panel 4: Graphixia

Small is the New Big: The Comics Criticism Blog as Small Press

Brenna Clarke Gray, Damon Herd, Hattie Kennedy, Ernesto Priego, Peter Wilkins and David N Wright

We propose a *Graphixia* panel at Comics Forum 2013 in which the members of our team discuss the significance of blogging to the comics scene today as an alternative to academic publishing, presenting *Graphixia* and other grassroots blogs as critical analogues to small press comic publishers. Furthermore, we will talk about our experience in leveraging a small-scale blog into a relatively powerful platform for developing academic activities on the subject of comics. We will also address how the open access model of the blog yields both global conversation and future development that includes an international network of comics scholars, multi-institutional on-line courses on comics,

international conferences and student exchanges, and a system of independent yet confederated blogs covering a range of possible academic discussions about comics without excessive overlap or redundancy. Our belief is that simply making comics scholarship one more conventional academic discipline is a mistake; rather, we should harness the DIY, “punk” elements of comics scholarship to create a new kind of academic experience in line with 21st century developments in global society and technology.

If our proposal is accepted, we will record the panel as a podcast for the *Comics Forum* and *Graphixia* web-sites. Each

attending member of the team will address an aspect of Graphixia's activities. Other team members and audience members will be encouraged to respond in kind. Issues will include comics and open access publishing, comics and the global humanities, comics and the digital humanities, the future of comics in the academy, and comics and identity. We modelled this kind of panel at our *Comics and the Multimodal World* conference to good effect, and the interactive, conversational engagement it fosters is in line with the new academic culture *Graphixia* wants to promote.

The Graphixia project began in 2010 with Douglas College English faculty members David N Wright and Peter Wilkins writing back and forth to each other on a Google Document and creating podcast discussions as ways of

combining their interest in comics and web 2.0 technology platforms. Brenna Clarke Gray, also from the English Department at Douglas College, and Scott Marsden, librarian at Alexander College, joined in 2011; their arrival introduced thematically clustered posts and videocasts. Hattie Kennedy, of the University of Edinburgh, and Damon Herd, of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design at the University of Dundee joined in 2012, and most recently in 2013, Ernesto Priego of City University London and editor-in-chief of *The Comics Grid*, has joined our ranks. The blog has served as a springboard for presentations by members of the team at conferences in Spain, China, and the UK, and in June 2013 we hosted the Comics and the Multimodal World conference, at Douglas College in Vancouver, Canada.

Panel 5: Authorship

Chair: Julia Round

Dave Sim's *Cerebus the Aardvark*: Self-publishing, the Direct Market and Creative Freedom

Ian Horton

Cerebus the Aardvark (1977-2004) is a remarkable achievement in the field of comics. Over the course of 300 issues this sword and sorcery parody became the most sustained example of self-publishing in the medium. Although never as popular as other self-published comics of the period such *Elfquest* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* it had, at its height, a monthly circulation of 37,000. In the early 1980s, to further extend this fan base, creator Dave Sim also began re-publishing *Cerebus* in collected 'novel' length volumes.

In *Alternative Comics* Charles Hatfield states that "Cerebus...stands as a signal example of the medium's

creative growth under direct market conditions." However, Hatfield, along with other critics and scholars, highlights problems with the overarching narrative of *Cerebus* and is critical of the republished volumes as standalone graphic novels. In this paper this dominant viewpoint is countered by focusing in detail on Sim's relationship to the direct market and comic fan culture and how these are evident in the content and form of both the comic books and the collected volumes.

Dave Sim clearly acknowledges the importance of the direct market to the success of *Cerebus* and the potential creative freedoms allowed by self-publishing in comics. Sim

also displayed his own fanboy credentials in many aspects of *Cerebus*, as this was crucial in developing an audience for his work. In examining these features it is argued that its serial nature was central to *Cerebus* and that to interpret it outside this context is to undervalue the importance of the direct market on its creation.

Ian Horton is a Senior Lecturer at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. He has published papers on national identity and architectural aesthetics, text-based public art and colonialist stereotypes in European comic books.

His present research focuses on experimental typography and comic books. In 2008 he was co-organiser of the *Beyond the Margins* International Experimental Typography Symposium held in Cambridge. Recently he has presented papers on information design and comic books, experimental typography and curatorial practices at international conferences by organisations such as the Association of Art Historians, the Comics Forum, Comics Grid, Graphixia, International Association of Word and Image Studies and the Oral History Society.

Comix Narrative Parody: Hunt Emerson's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Christopher J. Thompson (@Christo_HST)

This paper will examine the incongruous "extra-narrative" events that occur in *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1989) by Hunt Emerson.

On the authority of Alan Moore, Hunt Emerson is 'The British Alternative Comix Artist' (Emerson 1983:1). Emerging from the alternative comix scene of the 1970s and 1980s his

style is marked by an outrageous sense of humour in the tradition of George Herriman, Gilbert Shelton, Robert Crumb and French cartoonist Edika. His oeuvre includes significant work in adaptation of literary classics in which he adopts a sophisticated range of narrative attitudes at the service of parody, yet despite this has received little scholarly attention.

Throughout his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Emerson employs a range of humorous devices and visual puns that exploit a seemingly naïve verbal narrator. These “extra-narrative” events are characterised as being both incredibly weird (a Wedding Guest sitting on Mick Jagger from the Rolling Stones, instead of a simple rock as implied by the poem for example) and have little to no impact on the unfolding story, yet play a significant role in setting the mood of the comic reinforcing its “lampoon” of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s 1817 poem of the same name.

This paper shall explore the ways in which Emerson masterfully constructs a parody through the conflict between visual and verbal channels of communication. In doing so, it will draw upon advances made in narratology by Monika Fludernik treating narrative as a fundamentally experiential phenomenon. This paper will utilise the concept of “narrativization”, the process by which a reader imposes narrativity on discourse (rather than merely recognising it as a narrative), to explore the ways in which these conflicting channels are recuperated into ambiguous narrators at odds with one another.

Currently I work in supporting adult learners in lifelong learning, access and professional development at the University of Oxford. I have attended the Comics Forum for many years now and look forward to the opportunity to present my own research. My article on Hunt Emerson was published in *Studies in Comics* 4.2 in 2013.

Panel 6: Art

Chair: Simon Grennan

Small Press Comics and Fine Art

Gareth Brookes (@brookes_gareth)

Over the last five years UK comics have undergone a transformation. I'd like to explore how the small press has driven this change, in particular how small press creators relationship with fine art has fed the innovation that is re-shaping British comics.

I will argue that an increasingly sophisticated comics audience, disillusioned art students, the DIY and resurgent zine movement and giant leaps in technology and the affordability of print have come together to produce a rich seam of experimentation feeding up through the roots of small press and zine fairs, into the output of emerging publishers such as Nobrow, Myriad Editions and Blank Slate.

My talk will explore the relationship of my own practice

to fine art as well as the output of other creators (such as Oliver East, Joe Kessler, Donya Todd, Mark Oliver and Malcy Duff) who inhabit the ground between Comics/Fine Art and Small Press/Mainstream. This will include a discussion of the conceptual in comics, the use of new materials and printing methods and the appropriation of strategies for using image/text. I will also ask the question of what, if any status Comics are likely to be afforded in the art world, and whether such status is even desirable.

I studied fine art at the RCA, and have been involved with small press comics publishing since 2005, beginning with collaborations with Banal Pig and later becoming involved with groups such as The Alternative Press and The Comix Reader.

My graphic novel *The Black Project*, a comic created entirely in the mediums of embroidery and linocut relief

print, won the First Fictions First Graphic Novel Prize and will be published in September by Myriad Editions.

From Random House to Rehab: Julia Wertz and the Small Press

Paddy Johnston

In 2009, autobiographical cartoonist Julia Wertz received a surprising call from a literary agent who wished to represent her, having seen her popular underground comic series *The Fart Party*. The agent sold her book, *Drinking at the Movies*, to an imprint of Random House (US), who published it in 2010 during what Wertz has described as a fleeting period of heightened interest in graphic novels from mainstream book publishers.

For her next book, *The Infinite Wait*, published after a stint in a rehab clinic, Wertz chose to distance herself from Random House and work closely with a Canadian Small Press, Koyama Press, which she makes clear in

The Infinite Wait was a much better home for her work for numerous reasons. She also received an offer to turn her series *The Fart Party* into a television series, which would have brought significant money and fame, and turned it down, fearing a compromising of the essence of her work as a comics artist.

This paper will explore, in the context of the categories of Douglas Wolk's division between 'mainstream comics' and 'art comics,' why Wertz's comics are better off being published by a small press. Through close examination of Wertz's comics and how they embody the qualities of 'art comics,' I hope to realise and

present how small presses have grown with the rise of art comics and how the two interact to create the landscape of art comics, paying close attention to the qualities which make a comic an 'art comic' and why these comics are more often than not published by small presses.

Paddy Johnston is a doctoral researcher at the University of Sussex, currently working on his

PhD which will examine the relationship between comics and work, paying attention to comics' portrayal of manual labour and the history of comic production. He has previously given papers on Chris Ware, advertising, the gutter and digital comics. He also has a day job in publishing, makes his own comics intermittently and is a singer/songwriter. He is on twitter @paddyjohnston.

Revisiting Donald Parsnips' Daily Journal

Dan Smith (@utopianimpulse)

The artist Adam Dant currently makes elaborate ink drawings related to maps, museology and satire, with an emphasis on the Eighteenth Century, creating links between artists such as Hogarth and life in Twenty First Century London. However, for this paper I would like to focus on an earlier work of his - *Donald Parsnips' Daily Journal*. Produced between 1995 and 2000, Dant produced a publication every day. Fascinated by London's

historical associations with pamphleteering, he would produce the *Daily Journal* in editions of 100, and distribute them by hand between the photocopy shop in Bethnal Green Road where they were printed and Agnew's Gallery in Bond Street, where he worked at the time.

It was a small press activity in the extreme, one that had a regular audience every day, and that established a high profile within and around the

peripheries of the world of contemporary art. However, the ephemeral nature of the work has meant that the actual material is not very visible today. I would like to return to the specificity of the printed material, and would like to suggest that the real significance of the work lies in recognizing that these are not some neutral form of pamphlet, but are comics. These daily underground comics were engaged in satire, offering humorous documents of some of the lifestyles and values of the artworld around Dant in the 1990s. I aim to recover the history of a lost ephemeral practice that transgressed boundaries between comics, contemporary art and social encounter.

Dr Dan Smith is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Theory at Chelsea College of Art and Design. His book *Traces of Modernity* is an archaeology of the shadow of the Great Exhibition of 1851, through an exploration of the ruins of the Crystal Palace in Sydenham and the dinosaurs that remain, the Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens, Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum and *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells. He is currently working on *Agamben Reframed* for I.B. Tauris. He has been a regular contributor to *Art Monthly* magazine, and is now blogging for the Huffington Post in the UK. His drawings can be found at danthatdraws@blogspot.com, and writings at utopianimpulse.blogspot.com, and twitter [@utopianimpulse](https://twitter.com/utopianimpulse).

Panel 7: Politics

Chair: Hattie Kennedy

Political Humor is Absolutely a “Serious” Job!

Aysel Demir

In this study, it is explained that political humor is very important instrument for Turkish comic press. It has a very powerful effect on people's ideas about politics. Comic press as Penguen, Lemana and Uykusuz played a key role on Gezi Occupy Movement because of critiques against Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan who hate from caricatures about himself. In this paper, I showed that Erdogan's negative reactions against the comic press and I criticized his reaction with humor against the humor. I supported my arguments with some jokes and caricatures about Erdogan's undemocratic implementations for Gezi Park protests through comic press, Facebook, Twitter. Finally I said that comic press and especially political humor are a necessity

for Turkey like every society. Because they are a mirror of society and a bridge between authority and the one who is ruled.

In comic press, political humor is a way of critical expression to show what is going on in a country. Penguen, one of comic press, usually makes covers with very ironic and absurd events in Turkey's agenda. Especially Erdogan's some comments are absurd and Penguen uses them in their caricatures very cleverly. Penguen uses a disproportionate intelligence against Erdogan. Penguen critiques him with intelligent, ironic, anarchist drawings and people just smile in spite of everything when they see those caricatures. Because they know

that the humor is the best gun to beat the enemy. Therefore, political humor is absolutely a "serious" job!

I am Assist. Prof. Dr. Aysel Demir who works at Aksaray University in Turkey. I graduated from Istanbul University, Philosophy

Department and I got my Ph.D from Ankara University, Philosophy Department. My study areas are Political Philosophy, Ethic, Film philosophy, Media and Communication. I love humor, especially intelligent ones.

Metaphor, financial crisis, and the small press

John Miers

The cognitive linguistic theory of metaphor is built on the idea that metaphor pervades our speech and structures our understanding of the world, particularly the way we grasp abstract concepts. Metaphorical expressions are found throughout what is usually considered literal or everyday speech: in the previous sentence the words *built* and *grasp* were linguistic expressions of common conceptual metaphors, in which theories are understood using properties of buildings, and abstract understanding is conceptualised in terms of handling a physical object.

If the conceptual metaphors that contribute to our discussion and understanding of the world go largely unnoticed, any ideological implications they carry will often be hidden. Cover illustrations for *The Economist* published in the second half of 2008 frequently depicted the global financial crisis and its effects as a natural disaster, carrying the implication that nobody was to blame. Political cartoons from the same period, while making full use of pictorial stereotypes associated pejoratively with politicians and financial sector workers, also frequently employed this pictorial metaphor.

British small press cartoonists have been unanimous in their scorn for the austerity programme introduced by the current government. However, as the above examples suggest, texts intended to be critical can still be shaped by the metaphors that permeate public discourse. This paper will extract and analyse some of the conceptual metaphors that structure accounts of the austerity programme in comics by British cartoonists associated with the small press, and compare these to the

metaphors that underlie the government's own account.

John Miers is working on a practice-based PhD at Central St Martins, University of the Arts London, where he is also a visiting practitioner. John curated and edited the exhibition and anthology *Score and Script* as part of his PhD, and self-publishes his own comics anthology *I Got Comics*. He's also a regular contributor to exhibitions at the Comica and International Alternative Press festivals and publications such as *Solipsistic Pop*.

Panel 8:

Communication

Chair: Ian Horton

Underground Archaeology: Comics as alternative agents of professional discourse

John G. Swogger

The publication and presentation of archaeological data, interpretation and experience is dominated by formal modes: site-reports, peer-reviewed journals, teaching texts, and news-stand and high-street print. Access is tightly-controlled and resultant publications utilised for highly specialist information. This excludes many kinds of narratives and data from presentation, even from those with access, and excludes many practitioners entirely. The result is that aspects of professional discourse remain undocumented and unrecorded. Even the recent

shift to digital media has resulted only a shift in medium, not necessarily greater access.

Comics represent an interesting alternative to these formal presentations of professional and scholarly discourse. Employed by both those with and without access to traditional modes of publication and dissemination, they are being used as genuine alternatives in the presentation of archaeological data, interpretation and experience.

Use of small-press and digital-based distribution has resulted in a small but growing

underground of archaeological comics, graphic novels, autobiographies and comix, resulting in new kinds of content being disseminated and new voices being heard. This paper examines the work of five contemporary archaeological comics creators (Atalay, De Boer, Hackett, Lovata, and Wesolowsky) and the author's own comics to consider the nature of these alternative agencies of professional discourse and their impact on scholarship and the public understanding of archaeology.

John Swogger is an archaeological illustrator. He worked for ten years on the

international excavations at the site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey, and now works for archaeology projects in Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and on the island of Palau in Micronesia. In 2010 he wrote a 12-part educational comic entitled "Archaeology in the Caribbean", and since then he has written on the subject of archaeology and comics for the Visualisation in Archaeology project, Comics Forum and the Society for American Archaeology. He is currently working on graphic novels about working on excavations in Turkey and the Pacific islands.

Epic themes in awesome ways, or how we made *Asteroid Belter: The Newcastle Science Comic*

Lydia Wysocki, Jack Fallows and Mike Thompson
(@nclsciencecomic; @lyd_w; @skippa23; @teltos,
@paulxthompson; @brittcoxon)

The *Newcastle Science Comic* project
(<http://newcastlesciencecomic.blogspot.co.uk/> and
<http://twitter.com/@nclscience>

comic) is a story of how a bunch of small pressers from Newcastle made a funded, 44-page, newsprint, 10000 copy print run comic for the British

Science Festival 2013 hosted by Newcastle University.

Our comic *Asteroid Belter* is a collaboration between a total of 76 artists, writers and scientists, led by our editorial team: Lydia Wysocki, Paul Thompson, Mike Thompson, Jack Fallows, Britt Coxon and Mike Duckett. *Asteroid Belter* aims to speak with children age 8-13 about science, not to disguise science as a comic.

Our talk will focus on *Asteroid Belter's* achievements in terms of education, public engagement, and as a comic. We will present how we set up a project structure to achieve these aims, and offer our reflections on what was and was not successful in this project.

Lydia Wysocki is an artist, writer, and Editor in Chief of *Asteroid Belter: The Newcastle Science Comic*. Lydia makes comics, zines, and artist's books, and considers them all books with some sort of educational value. She works in educational development at Newcastle University, and has a background in English Language Teaching. Her recent

Master's in Education took a focus on language as a tool to share ideas, and this thinking helped shape the *Newcastle Science Comic* project.

Jack Fallows is a Newcastle-based comic book artist and illustrator who has been self-publishing comics for over a decade. He founded Newcastle's Paper Jam Comics Collective in 2007 and shortly after, began delivering comic book workshops for young people in the North East. He has written, drawn and edited a number of publications, including *The Gentleman Ghost* and *The Big Bang*. His comics work has been featured in *Scream* and *Starburst* magazines and he has curated exhibitions, concerts, film screenings and online platforms to promote and celebrate the medium. He has recently begun a career as a primary school teacher.

Mike Thompson is the manager of *Travelling Man* in Newcastle and has worked in comics retail for nearly 10 years. He is also a recent Librarianship graduate

whose final year project focused on the formation of policy regarding the use of graphic novels in school libraries for educational purposes. He is a host on the

currently "resting" Travelling Man podcast and is proud to be part of the editorial team for Asteroid Belter: The Newcastle Science Comic.

Keynote Event

Paul Gravett in conversation with Roger Sabin

A key figure in British comics, **Paul Gravett's** career started in 1981 when he launched the Fast Fiction stall at Westminster Comics Mart. The stall was one of the major intersections between the British small press and the European bande dessinée scene. Paul later went on to work for *Pssst!*, and subsequently launched the important anthology *Escape* with Peter Stanbury, which again marked up the importance of *bande dessinée* in its artistic style and approach to comics, as well as including early comics work by noted creators such as Eddie Campbell, Neil Gaiman, Myra Hancock, Rian Hughes, Dave McKean and Carol Swain. Paul has played a major role in the British comic scene ever since, promoting creators and talents, and finding spaces for comics in locations and communities where they might not otherwise have been seen. Paul's latest

book *Comics Art* is published in November 2013 by Tate.

Roger Sabin is a journalist and academic who has written for *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *New Statesman*. He is now Reader in Popular Culture at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. He is the author of *Adult Comics: An Introduction*, a significant cultural history of comics, and *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art*, which takes an international look at the medium of comics.

Chair Biographies

Carolene Ayaka

Dr Carolene Ayaka has a doctorate in social policy from the University of Chichester. She did her MA in Gender studies and diversity at the University of Bradford. Her main area of interest is identity; how it is theorised and presented as well as its negotiations and diverseness (thus far having mainly focused on African female identity). Her interest in comics stems from her enjoyment of exploring how they are used to represent and translate people's everyday lives and imagined lives. She hopes to write a comic strip one day!

Simon Grennan

Simon Grennan has been practicing internationally as an artist since 1990. As part of collaborative artists team Grennan & Sperandio, he is well known as a pioneer of interventionist, New Genre and post-relational practice, through publishing, television and social action projects.

Simon has also been Director of Viewpoint Photography Gallery, Salford and Director of Public Art Forum (now IXIA). He received his doctorate from University of the Arts London in 2011. Grennan & Sperandio are at www.kartoonkings.com

Ian Hague

Dr Ian Hague completed his PhD on comics and the senses at the University of Chichester in 2012. He did his BA in English at the University of Hull (2004-2007) and his MA in Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds (2007-2008). His research interests include comic theory, the senses and technology. Ian's recent publications include 'Beyond the Visual: The Roles of the Senses in Contemporary Comics' in the *Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art* and 'Adapting *Watchmen*' in *Framing Film: Cinema and the Visual Arts* (Intellect, 2012). His book *Comics and the Senses: A Multisensory Approach to Comics and Graphic Novels* will

be published by Routledge in 2014.

Ian Horton

Ian Horton is a Senior Lecturer at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. He has published papers on national identity and architectural aesthetics, text-based public art and colonialist stereotypes in European comic books.

His present research focuses on experimental typography and comic books. In 2008 he was co-organiser of the *Beyond the Margins* International Experimental Typography Symposium held in Cambridge. Recently he has presented papers on information design and comic books, experimental typography and curatorial practices at international conferences by organisations such as the Association of Art Historians, the Comics Forum, Comics Grid, Graphixia, International Association of Word and Image Studies and the Oral History Society.

Hattie Kennedy

Harriet Kennedy is a PhD student in the Centre of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Her thesis is entitled *Québécois Bande Dessinée: A Quiet Revolution?* Her research is focused on the representations of nationalism and the Québécois struggle for independence in the bande dessinée produced in the province. It is primarily concerned with questions of voice and the potentials of form.

Joan Ormrod

I am researching women in comics and subcultural identities. Research into subcultures develops my PhD, 'Expressions of Nation and Place in British Surfing Identities' which focused on analysing representations of surfing and national identity through film and popular culture. I have extensive publications in surfing, surfing cultures and their representations.

I am currently writing a book on

Wonder Woman which examines cultural, political and social influences upon the representation of the human body from the 1940s. I co-edit Routledge's *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rcom) with David Huxley.

Julia Round

Julia Round (MA, PhD) is Senior Lecturer in the Media School at Bournemouth University, UK, and edits the academic journal *Studies in Comics* (Intellect

Books). She has published and presented work internationally on cross-media adaptation, television and discourse analysis, the application of literary terminology to comics, the 'graphic novel' redefinition, and the presence of gothic and fantastic motifs and themes in this medium. She is currently completing a monograph on comics and the Gothic (McFarland, 2013). For further details see www.juliaround.com.

Comics Forum

Carolene Ayaka

Comics Forum 2013 Co-Director

Dr Carolene Ayaka has a doctorate in social policy from the University of Chichester. She did her MA in Gender studies and diversity at the University of Bradford. Her main area of interest is identity; how it is theorised and presented as well as its negotiations and diverseness (thus far having mainly focused on African female identity). Her interest in comics stems from her enjoyment of exploring how they are used to represent and translate people's everyday lives and imagined lives. She hopes to write a comic strip one day!

Paul Fisher Davies

Comics Forum Committee, Facebook Administrator

Paul is a PhD student researching visual narrative theory at the University of Sussex, where he also gained his BA in English and MA in Literature and Visual Culture. He teaches English Language and Literature at Sussex Downs College on the South Coast, and dabbles in comics creation amongst other creative endeavours. You can find samples of his work at www.crosbies.co.uk.

Hugo Frey

Consultant

Hugo Frey is Reader and Head of History at University of Chichester, UK. He has published widely on Francophone comics and graphic novels in *Modern and Contemporary France*, *Yale French Studies*, etc. He has

edited special issues of *Rethinking History* and *European Comic Art* and he is currently co-authoring, with Professor Jan Baetens, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Graphic Novel* (forthcoming 2014).

Since 2011 for Leuven University Press he is 'editor in chief' of a new series of books on European graphic narratives, working with a board composed of Jan Baetens, Bart Beaty, Ann Miller and Charles Hatfield.

When not researching on comics he has also worked extensively on French history, literature, politics and cinema, including the books, *Louis Malle* (Manchester UP, 2004) and *Cinema and Nationalism in France* (Berghahn, forthcoming, 2014).

Mel Gibson

Consultant

Dr Mel Gibson is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Northumbria. Her teaching and research focuses on comics, manga, graphic novels, young people, literature and media and she has published

extensively. In addition, she has run training and promotional events about comics and graphic novels for libraries, schools and other organizations since 1993. As a consultant she also runs events on manga and anime, working with young adults, picture books as art, visual literacies and, also, the links between children's books and other media.

William Grady

Comics Forum Committee Secretary, News Editor

William Grady is working on a PhD in the faculty of Humanities at the University of Dundee, focusing on American West comic books. He has articles on American West comic books in the anthologies *Comic Books and American Cultural History*, and *Undead in the West II*, and in the journals *Studies in Comics*, and the *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*.

For full list of news correspondents, see <http://comicsforum.org>.

Ian Hague

**Comics Forum Committee
Chair, Comics Forum 2013 Co-
Director, Website General Editor**

Dr Ian Hague completed his PhD on comics and the senses at the University of Chichester in 2012. He did his BA in English at the University of Hull (2004-2007) and his MA in Cultural Studies at the University of Leeds (2007-2008). His research interests include comic theory, the senses and technology. Ian's recent publications include 'Beyond the Visual: The Roles of the Senses in Contemporary Comics' in the *Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art* and 'Adapting *Watchmen*' in *Framing Film: Cinema and the Visual Arts* (Intellect, 2012). His book *Comics and the Senses: A Multisensory Approach to Comics and Graphic Novels* will be published by Routledge in 2014.

Hattie Kennedy

**Comics Forum Committee
Treasurer, Comics Forum 2013
Organising Committee, Twitter
Administrator**

Harriet Kennedy is a PhD student in the Centre of Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Her thesis is entitled *Québécois Bande Dessinée: A Quiet Revolution?* Her research is focused on the representations of nationalism and the Québécois struggle for independence in the bande dessinée produced in the province. It is primarily concerned with questions of voice and the potentials of form.

Rebecca Macklin

**Comics Forum Committee
Comics Forum 2013 Co-Director**

Rebecca Macklin holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Leeds and has worked in the publishing industry for a number of years. She is currently a publisher at an academic publishing house in West Yorkshire and is on the committee of the Society of

Young Publishers North & Midlands. She has an abiding critical interest in literary and graphic representations of identity and how it is shaped by culture and trauma.

Roger Sabin

Consultant

Roger Sabin is Reader in Popular Culture at Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, University of the Arts London. His books include *Adult Comics: An Introduction* (Routledge), and *Comics, Comix and Graphic Novels* (Phaidon). He reviews graphic novels for the press and radio. *The Daily Telegraph* once called him 'The F.R. Leavis of the graphic novel', and he's still not sure if that's a compliment or an insult.

Hannah Wadle

Comics Forum 2013 Organising Committee

Hannah is a social anthropologist, journalist and philanthropic taking regular baths in human everyday and tourism culture in different parts of Europe. She graduated with a Masters in History and European Ethnology from Freiburg University (Germany), started her PhD at the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change (Leeds Met.) about the socio-cultural impacts of post-socialist tourism on a small village in Northeast Poland and is continuing it now at Manchester University. Her interests in the medium of comics are comics as a new language for ethnography and comics and Socialism.

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Comics Forum is always open to suggestions for new services it can provide, and keen to showcase as wide a range of comics scholarship as possible, both online at comicsforum.org, and at conferences and other events. If you would like to make a suggestion, please speak to one of the Comics Forum team at this year's conference, or email comicsforum@hotmail.co.uk.

Comics Forum is open to collaborations with individuals and other organisations, and if you think we can help with something you're working on just let us know!

Become a News Review Correspondent

The Comics Forum News Review is a monthly column at comicsforum.org that provides a roundup of all the major news

events in comics scholarship around the world. We are very lucky to have a great team of correspondents who send us updates from their location each month, but we are always on the lookout for new writers who can expand the coverage we are able to offer. If you would be interested in becoming a News Review correspondent, please contact our News Editor, Will Grady, at: comicsforumnews@hotmail.co.uk.

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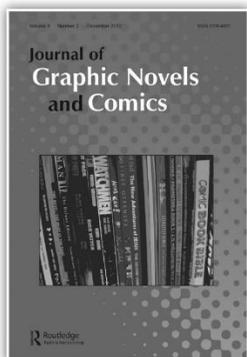
Comics Forum is pleased to announce that comicsforum.org will soon be launching a new monthly Reviews column. Reviews will cover academic texts, events and exhibitions. We are looking for contributors so if you would like to write for Comics Forum

and think that you would be able to commit to writing 500 word reviews for us on a regular basis or even if you would just like more information then please get in touch with our Reviews Editor, Hattie Kennedy,

via email at comicsforumreviews@outlook.com. Alternatively, why not approach her during the conference to ask your questions in person?

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