

Gothic Studies Special Issue 25(3)
Call for Papers: Gothic and Comics
Guest Editors: Julia Round and Susanne Schwertfeger

Comic books are as transgressive in nature as the Gothic. The comics medium traverses the boundaries of sign systems because of its composition of images and words. Comics are uncanny and liminal: their visual narrative's iconic-sequential logic makes the obvious seem strange, and time and space merge into one as (temporal) sequences spread out in front of the reader on the (spatial) site. Pages are haunted as images and icons are echoed and repeated; identity is destabilized as voices and perspectives become fragmented and multiple, and the narratives themselves are partial and obscure. In addition, the comics medium has been consistently discredited as harmful or trivial with no intellectual credibility. From their shared roots in penny dreadfuls and pulp publishing, to their modern incarnations as wildly popular cult franchises, the comics medium and the Gothic mode therefore seem to be a perfect match.

Both horror and Gothic always have been thematic staples for the comics market and, in turn, comics have added significant themes and subjects to the Gothic – whether from the early portfolio of the publisher EC or in the form of a cape-wearing dark crusader. This proposed special issue on Gothic and Comics (25/3, to be published November 2023) will explore how comics tell and enhance Gothic stories.

We invite papers that investigate the intersections of comics and Gothic in historical, thematic, cultural, structural, formalist or other terms. Suggested themes might include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What strategies do comics use to achieve terror or horror, or to convey key Gothic themes such as the abject, the uncanny, and the grotesque?
- What roles do Gothic motifs such as masks, doubles and Others play in comics and their history?
- What can comics add to the meaning and experience of 'classic' Gothic tales when adapted into a new medium?
- How might comics narratologies be considered Gothic?
- What structural, linguistic or visual qualities of comics speak to the Gothic, and how?
- Analyses of relevant historical subgenres of comics or the appearance of Gothic archetypes
- Explorations of Gothic themes such as trauma, social commentary, paranoia, monstrosity

Please send detailed proposals of 500 words and a 100 word biography to jround@bournemouth.ac.uk and schwertfeger@kunstgeschichte.uni-kiel.de by 1 March 2021. Informal enquiries may also be sent to the editors at these addresses.

Contributors will be notified of the outcome by 1 June 2021. The deadline for submission of completed draft articles (c.6000 words) will be 1 March 2022.