

Literary Research Review

Edited by

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A Brief History of Transition: From Print Comics to Webcomics

Divyani Sharma

Webcomics, according to Marianne Hicks, can be broadly defined as “comics produced primarily for the web rather than for print” (3). They “exist within the larger world of digital comics, which can include digitized versions of analog comics and comics published as a supplement or counterpart to print materials” (Halsband and Grimm 120). In the history of comics, which has evolved simultaneously with the evolution of technology, including the breakthroughs in print, webcomics are those comics that make use of the technologies offered by the World Wide Web, and are either updated or published on the online medium. They are “often the work of one creator or a small team (an artist and writer)” which is the distinguishing factor that “sets them apart from many of their ‘digital comic’ counterparts which are usually produced by large teams or by major comics publishers” (Halsband and Grimm 120). Webcomics can be of several types: they can be born-digital, with the entirety of creation and production, from writing, drawing, layout, to colouring, taking place in a digital environment, or they can be “traditionally hand-drawn and later scanned for editing and viewing on the web”, i.e. comics which are made using conventional print standards, which are then uploaded on the digital medium. (Halsband and Grimm 121).

Like print comics, webcomics can cover a range of different genres and subjects, without being restricted to any particular subset of topics. Webcomics are usually hosted on online sites, and share some “standard features” such as providing the audience links to “archived content”, which are links to the previous comics on that particular site, usually listing all the comics since its inception, an introduction to the author, artist, or the creator, “character sheets or summaries, and links to additional content including merchandise pages and other webcomics” (Halsband and Grimm 121). Most webcomics have designated sections on the site which cater as an online store where the reader can buy prints or merchandise related to the comic in question.

“The Influence and Continuation of the Comix Revolution”, one of the earliest academic articles on webcomics, written by Fenty et al. compares

The PG Section of the Department of English, Shri Shikshayatan College, publishes an academic journal every session. In its tenth year, a compilation of essays was planned as the first ISBN publication of the department. Twelve essays were chosen for the volume, with contributions from both teachers and students as has been the practice with the journals. Between them, they map the landscape of English literary studies with remarkable diversity and distinction. Spanning several centuries of artistic output, the essays offer new readings of both canonical and alternative works, bringing together the classical and the contemporary in interesting comparisons and contrasts. Demonstrating a wide range of theoretical standpoints, the essays in this volume bear testimony to the richness of the discipline both as it is structured in classrooms and in its more unconfined avatars outside. Read individually or as a collection, the volume will provide stimulating and thought-provoking approaches to and interpretations of texts both familiar and novel to all students of the discipline.

This volume hopes to be the first of many to grace the research efforts of the postgraduate section of the Department of English, Shri Shikshayatan College. The effusive response to the call for papers and the stellar quality of the contributions have been heartening, and have provided hope for taking this publication initiative forward in the years to come.

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