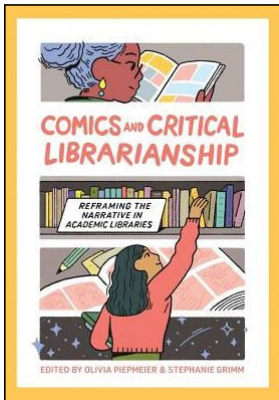


of the topic or example. While a substantial bibliography is included at the end of the book, because much of the volume is based on personal experience and recommendations, it is not a volume that contains many citations used within the endnotes for the text.

*The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* is a valuable primer for those who are interested in developing a better understanding of digital preservation and the key areas to cover when developing a digital preservation plan. Owens' expertise on the topic and highly accessible writing style allow him to craft a volume of great value to those who are new to the area of digital preservation, or who are looking to develop an understanding of the key principles of digital preservation to be able to support others who are actively working in this area.—Lisa M. McFall, *Hamilton College*

***Comics and Critical Librarianship: Reframing the Narrative in Academic Libraries.*** Olivia Piepmeier and Stephanie Grimm, eds. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2019. 338p. Paper, \$45.00 (ISBN: 978-1-63400-080-2).



*Comics and Critical Librarianship: Reframing the Narrative in Academic Libraries* looks at comics librarianship in the context of critical librarianship. Piepmeier and Grimm describe critical librarianship as something that “comes from an intentional engagement with the political and social dimensions of libraries and librarianship, including ideas of neutrality, authorship and authority, and the histories of censorship and affirming cultural divides within our own professions” (4). The chapters held in this important book identify conversations in comics librarianship that are lacking when it comes to collection management and organization, outreach, instruction, how language and classification can affect how comics are seen in academia, and more. The authors contribute needed

information to the conversation. This book is a timely and essential addition to academic library literature. The book is split into five distinct sections: the basics, collecting, organizing, teaching, and reaching.

“The Basics” section focuses on language used in terms of comics and diversity. In the first chapter, “Beyond Representation: Addressing the Role of Empathy through Diversity in Graphic Narratives,” Hatcher addresses the history and “impact of diverse authorship in independent comics, the potential of comics to engender empathy, and how libraries may employ comics in critical practice” (17). There is a great discussion of the history of the Comics Code Authority and the development and significance of independent and alternative comics. The author argues that independent comics provide the ability and opportunity for expression by implementing qualities that underground comics established early on as well as provide stories that “resonate with human experience” (18). In the next chapter, “The Work of Critical Sequential Art Selection in Academic Libraries,” Kuecker and Hawley discuss language included, or excluded, when libraries address comics and how language affects how comics are seen by academia. The authors discuss the history of libraries and comics, dialing down to how the terms comics and graphic novels are used, often incorrectly, when it comes to the holdings in collections. Their argument concludes with “we cannot continue to label a ‘good’ comic as a graphic novel, while dismissing the ‘bad’ comics” (43), something with which I firmly agree.

The second section, “Collecting,” provides examples of institutions that have created unique comics collections, including the processes, challenges, and results of the development

of said collections. Callison, Sinclair, and Bak, in "Making Use of White Space: The Mazinbiige Indigenous Graphic Novel Collection at the University of Manitoba," discuss the creation of the collection housed at the Elizabeth Dafoe Library, which is a collection of comics created by Indigenous people and serves to address representation and support scholarship and teaching (47), and how the collection is being used in instruction in a graduate history course. The next chapter in this section, "Black to the Future: A Librarian's Guide to Building an Afrofuturist Comics and Graphic Novels Collection," presents ways to develop and maintain such a collection. Smith and Connor-Gaten provide an excellent model for creating such a collection by offering tips on collection development, obtaining financial support, programs, leveraging social media to encourage conversation and promote collections, communicating with the Black nerd community, and creating and fostering relationships with small and independent publishers that specialize in Afrofuturist comics and graphic novels. They include two appendices with authors, series, and comic illustrators on Twitter, and recommended Afrofuturist comics and graphic novels titles. In the third chapter, "Challenging 'Stereotypes and Fixity': African American Comic Books in the Academic Archive," Flota presents a case study of his work developing a Black comics collection for the Special Collections department at James Madison University. He addresses the early anticomics movement, what invisible whiteness means in both comics and librarianship in terms of "power dynamics, legal codes, and into the assumptions people make about anything ranging from morality and values to one's taste in music and fashion" (111). Flota looks at collection development practices, stating "librarians have tended to focus on comic books or graphic novels written and illustrated by white authors" (111). He also compares the invisibility of whiteness in the comics industry to that of the same concept at work in academic libraries, noting that white supremacy has affected different aspects of both. Then, Thacker discusses the creation of the South Asian Comics Collection at the University of Illinois, which includes material from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Thacker presents a short history of India's comics industry, followed by a discussion about the collection and steps they took to create the collection, such as overseas purchasing trips to procure materials from a cautious comics collector. By including South Asian comics in their collection, they can preserve and highlight these unique resources.

In "Advocating for Diversity: Collecting Comics to Reflect Our Students," Crumpton, Mitchell, Jones Jr., and Solomon discuss their collection development efforts at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) and Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) by way of student involvement. The authors argue that comics can function as recreational *and* scholarly resources rather than operate independently. They address challenges of obtaining small publisher materials, mentioning collection development policies, Diamond Comics Distributors' own selection policies, complications with born-digital comics, and other pertinent issues. They involved students in collection development activities and provide information on how they addressed challenges of garnering suggestions. The chapter includes an appendix with information about diverse collection building. McGurk and Robb, in "Comics and Special Collections: Purposeful Collection Development for Promoting Inclusive History," present a case study exploring the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum (BICLM) collection development and promotion, emphasizing that Special Collections need to make efforts to be more "inclusive and correct past imbalances and erasures" (177).

The third section in this book addresses organizing and describing collections once they have been established. "Apocalyptic Comics, Women Detectives, and the Many Faces of Batgirl:

Creating More Inclusive Comic Records through Flexible Cataloging Practices” addresses the complications and challenges of cataloguing comics and graphic novels for the Edwin and Terry Murray Collection at Duke University Libraries. Adams and Murray discuss subject analysis, the complications with former and current cataloguing practices, and how they addressed their problem. They provide great information on how they made the collection searchable, as well as addressing complications in cataloguing that multiverses pose for the field in general. In “Specter of Censorship: Comics in Academic Library Leisure Reading Collections,” Wang discusses the relegation of comics in academic libraries to leisure reading collections and the effect this practice has on the materials themselves. The author presents a brief but solid history of comic book censorship and the Comics Code Authority, mentioning that librarians were among the comics naysayers in the beginning, a position that has thankfully changed over time. He also addresses problems that comics relegated to leisure reading collections can cause and/or perpetuate. Wang also provides some suggestions regarding shelving practices and classification (213), as well as making use of digital space such as LibGuides.

The next section of the book presents five chapters on instruction. In “The Extraordinary Result of Doing Something Ordinary,” McElroy presents a reflective chapter, looking at her approach to teaching using Lynda Barry’s work. In “Visualizing Arguments: Constructing Comics to Unpack Scholarly Texts,” Kirk and Guardiola present an activity where undergraduate students create comic panels from academic journal articles to help them parse the often-heady language and subject matter found in peer-reviewed literature. The authors discuss the processes and theories they used for the exercise and their results. They emphasize that, while the exercise is experimental, they hope that other academic librarians and teachers of any grade level take the activity and use it, retooling it as needed. Then, Woken, in “Comics as Social Movement Primary Sources: The Consciousness-raising Comics of the Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste,” provides an overview of comics in labor movements and discusses teaching comics from Oregon’s Latinx farmworkers movement, using social movement primary source documents in Spanish for native speakers at the University of Oregon (UO) (247). Diab, in “The Value of Nonfiction Comics for Critical Information Literacy Instruction,” discusses an information literacy session using nonfiction comics that she held for first-year undergraduate students. The qualitative study was “conducted on post-secondary instructors using comics in literature and visual arts courses in Canadian institutions” (262). Next, Paterson and Gamtso present their case study of using comics in a crime fiction class in “Excavating Visual Texts: Information Literacy, Critical Thinking, and the Graphic Novel in the Crime Fiction Classroom.” The authors discuss critical information literacy, the construction of the course, preparing for and holding the information literacy session with the graphic novels class, and the results of the session.

Chapters in the final portion of the book concentrate on outreach efforts. In “Drawing Them In: Critical Use of Comics in Library Exhibitions and Programs,” Natal and Martinez Wormser provide an “overview of the ways academic libraries have used critical librarianship within creating exhibitions and programs.” They analyze why comics are valuable tools to “effect social change” in terms of comics as pop culture, specialized and direct language, and the “other” in comics. They also present information regarding comics as teaching tools and examples of programs and exhibitions that use the lens of criticism, emphasizing that libraries can take advantage of space to highlight materials housed in their collections. “Comics in the Clinic” by Houk, Green, Matthew, and Pomputius provides information regarding graphic

medicine, which presents narratives of illness, treatment, struggles through the perspective of patients and practitioners using sequential art as a medium. They present an interesting history of the subgenre and how it can be helpful for those who have chronic illnesses, mental illness, and more. In short, representation matters. The authors also discuss collection development, acquisitions, instruction, and outreach. In "Feminist Curating with *Our Comics, Ourselves*," Descartes and Johnson discuss a traveling exhibit titled *Our Comics, Ourselves: Identity, Expression, and Representation in Comic Art (OCOS)*. They discuss the creation of the exhibit, the importance and necessity for feminist curating, how this type of curation drives the decision-making processes and using library spaces. Gibb, in "Minicomics Workshops and Comic Arts Fairs to Empower Our Communities," presents a helpful guide on how to host minicomics workshops and comics art fairs in an academic library setting. The author covers representation in comics as a driving force to host a minicomics creation workshop and cites authors and creators whose works address and represent mental health, disabilities, feminism, and global activist movements. Gibb then explains why independent publishing can lead to better representation and presents a good guidebook to how academic libraries can host a minicomics workshop, including creating the right setting, selecting a theme, making the event approachable, and the creative process and skill level (in that it is a nonissue and anyone can create minicomics, referencing *Hyperbole and A Half* and its simplicity and effectiveness in conveying certain messages, emotions, and the like). She includes comics fairs best practices regarding accessibility, dissemination of information, size and scope, programming, creating a marketplace, and collecting self-published minicomics, providing resources for collecting and cataloguing such materials.

Both editors have extensive knowledge and experience with comics and critical librarianship in academic libraries. Olivia Piepmeier, Arts & Humanities Librarian at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, created a strong graphic novel collection while at Greensboro College and taught a course for two semesters on reading comics with a feminist pedagogy. Stephanie Grimm, Art and Art History Librarian at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, created a minicomics collection at the University of Michigan university libraries. She has worked with comics and illustration students at art and design schools and research universities. —Lizzy Walker, *Wichita State University Libraries*