



COMICS IN THE NORDIC REGION
Comics and Society: Research, Art, and Cultural Politics
Nordic Summer University (NSU)
17–19 March 2021, Online / University of Turku

SCHEDULE

All times in the schedule are EET (UTC+2).

WEDNESDAY 17.3.

13.30–14.00 Welcoming words

14.00–16.15 Theme Seminar: Racialised Violence and Comics in the Nordic Region and Beyond
(organized in collaboration with NSU network Narrative and Violence)

Part I 14.00–14.50

Holly May Treadwell: *The Bloodthirsty Savage: The Representation of Indigenous Violence in Popular American Comics*

Hege Emma Rimmereide: *Subversive Issues in Graphic Novels*

Break 14.50–15.00

Part II 15.00–16.15

Mihaela Precup and Dragoş Manea : “Let’s talk about something else!”: Perpetration and Incomplete Memory in *Sofia Z-4515*

Anna Nordenstam and Margareta Wallin Wictorin: *Violence against Women in Comics by Amalia Alvarez*

Oskari Rantala: *Mass Violence and Narrative Irony in Suomen suurin kommunisti*

THURSDAY 18.3.

13.00-16.30 Comics Studies in the Nordic Region: Work-in-progress Workshop

Part I 13.00–14.45

13.00 Sanna Ojanne: *Doctoral thesis plan: From the underground and the marginal – Kalervo Palsa’s comics as a countercultural instrument of exercising power*

13.30 Charlotte Johanne Fabricius: Research project plan: These Women's Work: Danish Comics in the Digital Age

14.00 Adriana Margareta Dancus: Oral presentation + article: The Pedagogy of Disgust in the Comics of Ane Barstad Solvang and Ida Eva Neverdahl

Break 14.45–15.00

Part II 15.00–16.30

15.00 Kristy Beers Fägersten: Article manuscript: The Dick Pic in Swedish Feminist Comic Art: Problematic or Problemetizing?

15.45 Essi Varis: Article manuscript: Images of Imagination: Drawing as a Medium of Thought in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

FRIDAY 19.3.

11.00–12.30 Comics Studies in the Nordic Region: Work-in-progress Workshop

Part III 11.00–12.30

11.00 Oskari Rantala: Comics Within Comics in Alan Moore's Comics: Mise-en-abyme and the Material Memory of the Medium

11.45 Laura Antola: Batmania in 1960's Finland

13.30–14.30 Open Discussion: Ideas for Nordic Collaboration

15.00–16.30 Book Launch Party

Kristy Beers Fägersten: *Language Play in Contemporary Swedish Comic Strips* (De Gruyter, 2020)

Robert Aman: *The Phantom Comics and the New Left: A Socialist Superhero* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

Kristina Arnerud Mejhammar: *Självsyn och världsbild i tecknade serier. Visuella livsberättelser av Cecilia Torudd, Ulf Lundkvist, Gunna Grähs och Joakim Pirinen* (Sanatorium, 2020)

Christina Meyer: *Producing Mass Entertainment: The Serial Life of the Yellow Kid* (Ohio State UP, 2019)

Mihaela Precup: *The Graphic Lives of Fathers: Memory, Representation, and Fatherhood in North American Autobiographical Comics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

Lars Wallner: *Det rutiga klassrummet: Serier, multimodalitet och litteracitet* (Studentlitteratur, 2020)

Sanna Hukkanen & Anna Voronkova (eds): *FUgrics – Sarjakuvia suomalais-ugrilaisesta maailmasta / Comics from the Finno-Ugric World / Комиксы из финно-угорского мира* (Umpihanki & Periodika, 2020)

ABSTRACTS

THEME SEMINAR: RACIALISED VIOLENCE AND COMICS IN THE NORDIC REGION AND BEYOND ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH NSU STUDY CIRCLE NARRATIVE AND VIOLENCE

Holly May Treadwell (University of Kent)

The Bloodthirsty Savage: The Representation of Indigenous Violence in Popular American Comics

The paper examines the oldest and most widely used category that Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous men, are written into: the Bloodthirsty Savage. The category has existed for hundreds of years, even before Europeans made first contact with any Indigenous peoples, and has been used to “justify” their ill-treatment, oppression, and even genocide. This paper examines the continuing presence of it in contemporary American comics and how these fictional narratives influence and uphold non-fictional colonial representations, silence Indigenous voices, justify their continued oppression, and erase the true narrative of colonialism. Specifically, it examines the ways in which Indigenous violence is taken out of the realm of (White) comic book violence and is foregrounded, decontextualised, presented as unnecessary, and even as enjoyable to the perpetrator. It also examines the use of language in the construction of this narrative, both historically and within these contemporary examples: whilst the Native Americans’ attacks (retaliations) on White communities were labelled slaughters and butcheries, the massacres committed by the White colonists were referred to as dispersals, land clearings, and expeditions by the newspapers. These euphemisms were a deliberate attempt to maintain the ‘conspiracy of silence’ surrounding the genocide and horrendous treatment of Indigenous peoples, and the presentation of characters such as Black Condor, Red Wolf, Warpath, Bishop, and Dani Moonstar continues to construct this narrative. This paper aims to draw attention to the ways in which Indigenous violence is constructed, raise awareness of the real-world damage such presentations can cause, and build towards a model for future representations in comics and in media more broadly.

Hege Emma Rimmereide (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences)

Subversive issues in graphic novels

This presentation will discuss graphic novels’ affordances for literary experience. Combining theories on graphic novel, narrative and Louise Rosenblatt’s aesthetic transactional reader-response theory for literary experience as well as Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory on polyphonic voices will serve as the theoretical underpinning to discuss the multi-perspectival blend of visual and textual narratives. Homi Bhabha’s notion of Third Space will enlighten the understanding of Self and Other. The selection of graphic novels in this presentation seek to inspire readers to engage in discussions on topics of cultural and subversive issues to encourage critical literacy, particularly focusing on aspect of violence in the civil rights movement in *March*, the level of violence in *Noughts & Crosses* set in a dystopic future based on the racially subversive narrative and the graphic novel adaptation of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. The graphic novels show an array of visual expressions allowing readers to engage in a dialogue with the texts through the temporal and spatial space to enhance cultural understanding. The topics of the graphic novels serve the purpose of engaging readers of English as a second language to engage in topics of democracy and citizenship.

Mihaela Precup and Dragoş Manea (University of Bucharest)

“Let’s talk about something else!”: Perpetration and Incomplete Memory in *Sofia Z-4515*

Sofia Z-4515 is a graphic narrative written by Gunilla Lundgren and Sofia Taikon, illustrated by Amanda Eriksson, and published in a bilingual Swedish-Romani edition in 2016. The translation into Romani, done by Romanian and Swedish Roma, adds a significant layer of collaboration to the story of Sofia Taikon’s deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau with her family in 1943. The sole survivor of a Polish Roma family made up of two parents and four children, Sofia is rescued by a Red Cross convoy, in an effort led by Sweden, a country whose citizen she becomes. This paper is based on both the English and the Romanian translation of Sofia’s testimony, whose publication in Romania is additionally significant in the context of the country’s ambivalent response to its participation in the Roma Holocaust and to the entrenched discrimination of Romanian Roma.

Sofia Z-4515, whose title explicitly connects the protagonist’s identity to her survival, is a rare and important document in the wider context of first-person Holocaust narratives. Sofia Taikon’s story is a belated testimony given a few years before her death and initially intended for her grandchildren—this leads her to only tell parts of her story. “Let’s talk about something else!” is a defensive sentence she utters whenever she is asked to speak of a certain level of violence that – as she puts it – “might make children sad.” Thus, even though we learn from the afterward that Sofia was beaten and molested in the camp, these moments are not mentioned in the graphic narrative itself.

Roma and Sinti women’s stories of survival have generally been included in oral archives and have rarely been published, part of “a narrative of the Holocaust that has never really gone away, on the one hand, and has never been taken seriously, on the other” (Brooks 2012). Similarly, little academic work has been done on the more unconventional testimonies of survivors of Porrajmos, the Romani word (“Devouring”) used in Roma communities to refer to the Holocaust (Kadar 2005). Our paper, as such, focuses on both the rare visibility of the story of a Roma woman survivor of the Holocaust and on the visual tropes and omissions generated by Sofia Taikon’s generous impulse of shielding her grandchildren from her trauma (partly also motivated by cultural specificities related to truth-telling and confession).

The English translation of *Sofia Z-4515* is available in full here:

<https://www.romarchive.eu/en/collection/zofi-z-4515-sofia-z-4515/>.

Anna Nordenstam (University of Gothenburg) and Margareta Wallin Wictorin (Karlstad University)

Violence against Women in Comics by Amalia Alvarez

The comic field in Sweden has for a long time been dominated by Swedish creators and readers. The activist project “Tusen serier” [Thousands of comics] was founded in 2011 in Malmö with the aim of opening up the Swedish comic field for comics artists and readers with international background (<https://www.hybriden.se/tusen-serier/>). “Tusen serier” wants to support comics artists with international backgrounds, who have other narratives to tell and in new ways. The project supports and arranges workshop and exhibitions and publishes comics regularly and – they make difference. One of the comics artists involved in “Tusen serier” is Amalia Alvarez, an anti-racist activist, living in Sweden with a background in Chile.

Alvarez' comic album *Fem papperslösa kvinnors historier* [The stories of five undocumented women] from 2013 is based on stories of five women who have lived in Sweden as illegal immigrants. The stories, written in three languages, Swedish, Spanish and English, all present on every page, are narrating the different lives of the women. In all of them violence is a common motif – e.g. violence against the woman who is imported by a man to become his wife, violence against the mother who is not allowed to see her child and violence against a refugee who is forced to live in uncertainty while waiting and hoping for a residence permit. This presentation will discuss how these five stories of Alvarez are narrated, visually and verbally (Groensteen 2007/1999, Mikkonen 2017). It discusses from an intersectional perspective how ethnicity/race, class, gender and age are connected as grounds of discrimination (Hill Collins & Bilge 2016).

Oskari Rantala (University of Jyväskylä)

Mass violence and narrative irony in *Suomen suurin kommunisti*

In my paper, I discuss the graphic novel *Suomen suurin kommunisti* ("The Greatest Communist of Finland") by Jesse Matilainen, focusing on the illustration of political violence against national minorities in the Soviet Union in late 1930s during Stalin's Great Purge. Matilainen's graphic novel deals especially with the decimation of the Finnish émigré community, later dubbed as "Isoviha" ("The Great Hate") by the survivors. The Soviet secret police operation against Finns led to 20,000 deaths by some estimates, even though the exact number of victims will probably be never known.

Following the brutal 1918 Finnish Civil War between the nationalist and socialist factions, the remnants of the losing socialist side fled to Soviet Russia. In 1920s and 1930s, tens of thousands of Finns escaping political persecution joined them in exile or were forcibly deported by nationalist groups, with thousands of Finnish immigrants also emigrating from North America. Tragically, this diaspora community was almost completely wiped out in the Stalinist purges preceding the Second World War -- a fate shared by numerous minority nationalities. Whereas the earlier Soviet campaigns of mass repression had targeted the "class enemies" of the Communist regime, the years 1936-37 saw an outbreak of terror that was increasingly based on ethnicity and nationality, with widespread persecution of non-Russian communists.

Matilainen's graphic novel is a fictionalized historical account of the lives of the leaders of the Finnish communists -- of their power struggles, relationships and ultimately unsuccessful attempts to survive the political repression on both sides of the Finnish-USSR border. An especially noteworthy aspect is the graphic novel's use of appropriations of early Soviet political avant-garde artworks and visual propaganda. The comics narrative employs the designs of recognizable artworks with their contents subverted in order to emphasize political disillusionment and narrative irony.

COMICS STUDIES IN THE NORDIC REGION WORKSHOP: WORK-IN-PROGRESS AND FUTURE PLANS

Sanna Ojanne (University of Jyväskylä)

Doctoral thesis plan: From the underground and the marginal – Kalervo Palsa's comics as a countercultural instrument of exercising power

My doctoral dissertation for the Jyväskylä University Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies titled *From the underground and the marginal – Kalervo Palsa's comics as a countercultural instrument of exercising power* is based on a Foucauldian approach. I will investigate Palsa's comics

in relation to American underground comics and their countercultural nature. In addition I will analyse the intertextual dimensions of Palsa's art with respect to his numerous artistic role models in art as well as literature. It is my intention to detach Palsa from the customary interpretations tying him to Lapland and events in his personal life and indicate a place for the artist in relation to the radical and intellectual movements of the 1960s as well as European art history in general.

Charlotte Johanne Fabricius (University of Southern Denmark)

Research project plan: These Women's Work: Danish Comics in the Digital Age

The idea, provisionally titled *These Women's Work: Danish Comics in the Digital Age* explores the work of Danish women cartoonists whose primary work is in forms that have traditionally been considered 'marginal' to comics; webcomics, Instagram comics, compilation publications, and the like. Artists under consideration are Line Kjeldsen Jensen, Stine Spedsbjerg, Signe Parkins, Line Høj Høstrup, and others (the list is as yet incomplete). Methodologically, I am interested in conceiving of these women and their work as an assemblage encompassing drawings, published comics, social media profiles, mediated 'private life,' and interpersonal relationships and networks within the Danish comics milieu. Through this framework, I expect to explore themes of womanhood, motherhood, precarity, and creative community, although these are definitely subject to change. I also want to center discussions of work and work-life balance, as well as situating the project in a larger context of women's autobiographical comics.

I would find it especially helpful to receive feedback on the framing of the project, as well as suggestions for theoretical angles, methodological inspiration, and suggestions for artists to include. I would also love the opportunity to talk through some of the dilemmas of focusing on women and womanhood, and including considerations of motherhood, without reducing womanhood to cisheterocentric norms. And finally, being able to discuss these ideas with other Nordic scholars would be particularly helpful in establishing connections to any similar studies being carried out elsewhere, as well as forging connections for future collaboration.

Adriana Margareta Dancus (University of South-Eastern Norway)

Presentation + article: The Pedagogy of Disgust in the Comics of Ane Barstad Solvang and Ida Eva Neverdahl

Compassion occupies a central place in literature didactics, with many educators enthusiastically embracing Martha Nussbaum's thesis that literature can contribute to a more just, equal and democratic society by enhancing and training readers' compassion. Disgust, on the other hand, is nearly banned from literature didactics. This is because disgust jeopardizes the aesthetic and moral ground of literature when readers can recoil both from the literary text and others' wounds and suffering as depicted through literature. Moreover, as Nussbaum has pointed out, disgust has a terrible political past with innumerable examples throughout history where groups in position of power have used it as an argument to discriminate against, suppress and even exterminate minorities. Can the negativity of disgust be mobilized not to stigmatize vulnerable others, but to respond to their vulnerability? Can disgust do things for us as readers that compassion cannot? In this talk, I will answer these questions through examples taken from Ane Barstad Solvang's graphic novel *Frykt & medlidenshet* ([Pity & Compassion], 2018) and Ida Eva Neverdahl's graphic short story "I'm a girl, it's fantastic" (2017). I will demonstrate how Solvang and Neverdahl use disgust as an aesthetic and

political strategy to draw the readers into the literary universe and challenge established discourses that have sanitized the young female body and construct it as a site of easily programmed fertility.

Kristy Beers Fägersten (Södertörn University)

Article manuscript: "The Dick Pic in Swedish Feminist Comic Art: Problematic or Problemetizing?"

I would like to present my work-in-progress on an article with the working title: "The dick pic in Swedish feminist comic art: problematic or problemetizing?" The goal of the article is to consider how unsolicited dick pics are rendered and themetized in the feminist comic art of Nanna Johansson and Ellen Ekman and whether these artists' engagement with dick pics should be viewed as trivializing or problematizing the sending and receiving unsolicited dick pics. The growing collection of dick pic research suggests that, far from being viewed as the flirtatious overture men claim them to be, unsolicited dick pics are classified by the majority of women who receive them as sexual harassment, many experiencing the constant onslaught of unsolicited dick pics as highly traumatic. Research has further established that one way women deal with unsolicited dick pics is by turning to satire and humor. However, instead of shaming the perpetrators, a humorous framing of dick pics may serve to undermine the sexual violence they represent. The comics of Johansson and Ekman highlight the gendered asymmetry of the dick pic as sexual overture, but also contribute to its humorous framing, which raises the question of whether such comic art should be viewed as problematic or problemetizing - or both.

Essi Varis (University of Jyväskylä)

Article manuscript: "Images of Imagination: Drawing as a Medium of Thought in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*"

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss a planned article manuscript, in which I will investigate the speculative cognitive activities that pictures and the act of drawing portray and enable in Brian Selznick's heavily illustrated novel *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (2007). The imaginations of the novel's protagonists are captured by an automaton, which, when winded up, draws an enigmatic picture of a rocket and the moon. This turns out to be an intertextual reference to another visual narrative, Georges Méliès' short film *A Trip to the Moon* (1902).

I will first analyze how the novel establishes connections between images and the characters' imaginations. Then, I will use the resulting insights as a spring-board to discuss the visual nature of imagining more generally. My ultimate aim is to argue that drawing is a legitimate method of (imaginative) thinking, although it is not understood very well as of yet, nor utilized to its full potential – particularly not in the academia. I am planning to perform some drawing exercises of my own as a part of the research process and might even include the results in the finished manuscript if they prove fruitful in any way. In case it adds to the overall argument, I may also compare the novel to Martin Scorsese's film adaptation (2012). I will only start working on the manuscript in early 2021, so many details still remain unclear, but I should be able to produce the first draft by the time of the workshop.

The finished work will constitute the second or third article publication in my three-year research project *Metacognitive Magic Mirrors* (2020–2023) funded by Finnish Cultural Foundation. As a whole, the purpose of the project is to explore how texts and images are used as means of imaginative and

speculative thought in art and research. The finished article will be submitted to an appropriate peer-reviewed journal, such as *Image & Narrative* or *Word & Image*.

Oskari Rantala (University of Jyväskylä)

Article manuscript: Comics Within Comics in Alan Moore's Comics: Mise-en-abyme and the Material Memory of the Medium

I'd like to attend workshop and present an article draft discussing the use of nested comics narrative structures in writer Alan Moore's works and the ramifications of mise en abyme in the medium of comics. The article discusses *Supreme* (1996-2012, illustrated by Joe Bennett, Rick Veitch et al), *Tom Strong* (1999–2006, illustrated by Chris Sprouse et al) and *The Spirit: New Adventures* (1998, illustrated by Dave Gibbons) with the key concepts including mise en abyme, medium-specificity and metatextuality.

Laura Antola (University of Turku)

Article manuscript: Batmania in 1960s Finland

I will present an article draft discussing the 1960s “Batmania” in Finland as the *Batman* TV-show made its debut in 1966. Children all over the country were enthralled by the Dynamic Duo in the TV show, and toy makers, advertisers and marketing professionals quickly realised the potential of these favourite characters. *Batman* was the first television phenomenon in Finland that was firmly connected to producing different artefacts that accompanied the show. These were primarily targeted at children, with products ranging from Batman’s cape and cowl to safety reflectors for the long Finnish winter, the Batmobile and of course the Batman soft drink. In the article, I will analyse the Finnish Batmania through the lens of adaptation studies. What interests me in Batmania is not the TV show itself, or even the comic book which, in a way, was presented in Finland as the adapted version of the TV show, but the larger phenomenon it started in Finland.

BOOK LAUNCH PARTY

Kristy Beers Fägersten: *Language Play in Contemporary Swedish Comic Strips* (De Gruyter, 2020)

This book focuses on the unexplored context of contemporary Swedish comic strips as sites of innovative linguistic practices, where humor is derived from language play and creativity, often drawing from English and other European languages as well as social and regional dialects of Swedish. The overall purpose of the book is to highlight linguistic playfulness in Swedish comic strips, as an example of practices as yet unobserved and unaccounted for in theories of linguistic humor as applied to comics scholarship. The book familiarizes the reader with the Swedish language and linguistic culture as well as contemporary Swedish comic strips, with chapters focusing on specific strategies of language play and linguistic humor, such as mocking Swedish dialects and Swedish-accented foreign language usage, invoking English language popular culture, swearing in multiple languages, and turn-final code-switching to English to signal the punchline. The book will appeal to readers interested in humor, comics, or how linguistic innovation, language play, and language contact each can further the modern development of language, exemplified by the case of Swedish. More info:

https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/524620?utm_source=linguistlist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LS_linguistlistnewtitles_WW&utm_term=AK&utm_content=brand_building

Robert Aman: *The Phantom Comics and the New Left: A Socialist Superhero* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

This book is about the Phantom in Sweden, or, more correctly, about Sweden in the Phantom. Robert Aman uncovers how a peripheral American superhero – created in 1936 by Lee Falk – that has been accused of both racism and sexism has become a national concern in a country that several researchers have labelled the most antiracist and gender equal in the world. When a group of Swedish creators began their official production of licensed scripts based on *The Phantom* comic in 1972, the character was redefined through the prism of New Left ideology. The plots of these comics, besides aiming to entertain, also sought to affirm for readers the righteousness and validity of an ideological doctrine that, at the time, was dominant among the Swedish public and influential in the country's foreign policy. Ultimately, Aman demonstrates how the Swedish Phantom embodies values and a political point of view that reflect how Sweden sees itself and its role in the world. More info: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030397999>

Kristina Arnerud Mejhammar: *Självsyn och världsbild i tecknade serier. Visuella livsberättelser av Cecilia Torudd, Ulf Lundkvist, Gunna Gråhs och Joakim Pirinen* (Sanatorium, 2020)

This thesis researches the ways that comics artists represent themselves in their work and use their own personal life experience to create visual life narratives. The main purpose is to investigate concepts of both self-image and world-view in comics by Cecilia Torudd, Ulf Lundkvist, Gunna Gråhs and Joakim Pirinen, in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of life narratives in a broader sense. The study also aims at giving an account of the development of alternative comics in Sweden during the period 1965-2015, including the rise of the autobiographical comics genre at the turn of the millennium. In individual case studies, I present the life and work of these four Swedish artists, who all emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, at a time when so-called adult comics (vuxenserier) became prominent in Sweden. I analyse and interpret a number of life narratives by their hand, applying theories on art and visual communication, comics and life narratives. These analyses reveal common and individual themes as well as visual and narrative strategies. Particular attention is paid to the contribution of the image in the creation of story worlds where personal style and the skill of drawing are highlighted as means to create a sense of credibility. By putting their work in a historical, cultural and social context, and through an interdisciplinary approach, the study results in a deeper knowledge of these comics as a medium for self-expression. The study shows that life narratives are indeed already prominent in the Swedish comics of the 1980s. By seeing self-image as a concept of oneself in interaction with others, and world-view as a subjective perception of the outside world that is conveyed through the comics medium, this thesis gives a broader perspective on the ways that the self and the world take shape in the comics medium. Cartoonists who portray themselves and use their own experiences to tell stories convey new world-views through their visual life narratives. Mejhammar's doctoral thesis (in Swedish) is available online: <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1463883/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Christina Meyer: *Producing Mass Entertainment: The Serial Life of the Yellow Kid* (Ohio State UP, 2019)

Emerging mass culture in nineteenth-century America was in no small way influenced by the Yellow Kid, one of the first popular, serial comic figures circulating Sunday supplements. Though comics existed before, it was through the growing popularity of full-color illustrations printed in such city

papers as *Inter Ocean* (Chicago) and the *World* (New York) and the implementation of regular, weekly publications of the extra sections that comics became a mass-produced, mass-distributed staple of American consumerism. It was against this backdrop that one of the first popular, serial comic figures was born: the Yellow Kid.

Producing Mass Entertainment: The Serial Life of the Yellow Kid offers a new take on the emergence of the Yellow Kid comic figure, looking closely at the mass appeal and proliferation of the Yellow Kid across different media. Christina Meyer identifies the aesthetic principles of newspaper comics and examines the social agents—advertising agencies, toy manufacturers, actors, retailers, and more—responsible for the Yellow Kid’s successful career. In unraveling the history of comic characters in capitalist consumer culture, Meyer offers new insights into the creation and dissemination of cultural products, reflecting on modern artistic and merchandising phenomena. More info: <https://ohiostatepress.org/books/titles/9780814214169.html>

Mihaela Precup: *The Graphic Lives of Fathers: Memory, Representation, and Fatherhood in North American Autobiographical Comics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020)

This book explores the representation of fatherhood in contemporary North American autobiographical comics that depict paternal conduct from the post-war period up to the present. It offers equal space to autobiographical comics penned by daughters who represent their fathers’ complicated and often disappointing behavior, and to works by male cartoonists who depict and usually celebrate their own experiences as fathers. This book asks questions about how the desire to forgive or be forgiven can compromise the authors’ ethics or dictate style, considers the ownership of life stories whose subjects cannot or do not agree to be represented, and investigates the pervasive and complicated effects of dominant masculinities. By close reading these cartoonists’ complex strategies of (self-)representation, this volume also places photography and archival work alongside the problematic legacy of self-deprecation carried on from underground comics, and shows how the vocabulary of graphic narration can work with other media and at the intersection of various genres and modes to produce a valuable scrutiny of contemporary norms of fatherhood. More info: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030362171>

Lars Wallner: *Det rutiga klassrummet: Serier, multimodalitet och litteracitet* (Studentlitteratur, 2020)

The comic book is a broad popular culture form of fiction that most people encounter at some point in their lives and attach different meaning to. Some throw themselves over Garfield or Cathy in the Sunday paper, while others are faithful subscribers of Donald Duck or Marvel comics, and some have collected every single issue of the Walking Dead. We encounter comics on a daily basis, and yet they are almost nowhere to be found on Swedish school curricula.

Working with comics, reading them and making them, is a multimodal practice, one which entails all of our senses. The combination of different modalities is key for interpreting comics – if one is changed or removed, the perception of what is left changes. As a form of fiction, comics might be most readily available to teachers of language and literature, but other subjects are also appropriate for the use of the comics grid format. This could include everything from climate change and development of technology, to values around power, gender and inclusion.

This book gives a foundational knowledge of comics from an educational perspective. The author presents research on comics in school, and descriptions and a discussion on how teachers can use comics in their work, both for reading and creating. The book is aimed at teacher students, as well as active schoolteachers in all subjects, in primary and secondary school. More info: <https://www.studentlitteratur.se/kurslitteratur/sprakvetenskap-och-sprakdidaktik/sprakdidaktik-f-6/det-rutiga-klassrummet/#show>

Sanna Hukkanen & Anna Voronkova (eds): *FUgrics – Sarjakuvia suomalais-ugrilaisesta maailmasta / Comics from the Finno-Ugric World / Комиксы из финно-угорского мира* (Umpihanki & Periodika 2020)

This book is a collection of comics created by Finno-Ugric minority language speakers from Russia, Finland, Norway and Estonia. It is part of a Living Language community art project that has introduced comics as a means of supporting endangered languages. The authors of the comics are journalists, teachers, NGO activists, and cultural workers from libraries and museums who speak their native languages. Their comics construct a fascinating picture of the small language groups' history, traditions and contemporary life in the pressure within a dominant culture. More Info: <https://rauhanpuolustajat.org/kirja/fugrics-sarjakuvia-suomalais-ugrilaisesta-maailmasta/>