The 2019 Conference of the
Graphic Justice Research Alliance
University of the Sunshine Coast
28-29 November 2019
Welcome to USC

Dear (Graphic) Justice League,

Welcome to the 2019 Graphic Justice Discussions, the annual conference of the Graphic Justice Research Alliance. The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) School of Law and Criminology is proud to be hosting this event at our Sippy Downs Campus.

This year’s conference has been titled *Drawing the Human: Law, Comics, Justice*. This theme was intended to prompt presenters to reflect upon the power of graphic art and law to construct and draw the line between human and non-human, shaping identity, forging realities, and disrupting norms.

Presenters answered this call with a series of papers which celebrate the power of the image and the imaginary facilitated by the comic form. From robots to rhetoric, superheroes to stamps, comic contracts to cosmic artifacts - *Drawing the Human* promises to make you not only reflect on the power of comics, but also the power of law in an ever-evolving, ever-changing, ever-adapting world.

We hope you enjoy your time at USC!

Best wishes,

Timothy D Peters, Dale Mitchell, and Ashley Pearson
*Drawing the Human Organising Committee*
Getting to the University of the Sunshine Coast, Sippy Downs

By Car
USC is easily accessible by car. The campus is a 12–15 minute drive from Mooloolaba or Maroochydore. Parking is available on campus at a rate of $5/day.

By Taxi or Rideshare app
SunCoast Cabs may be ordered by calling 131 008 or by visiting their website.

Uber, Didi, and Ola all operate on the Sunshine Coast. Rates are determined by driver availability and the time of transit.

By Public Transport
Translink Queensland operates all public transport within the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and Gold Coast.

These transport options typically display through Google Maps or Apple Maps. Alternatively, the Translink Journey Planner will assist in planning your journey to USC.

If you are wanting to use Public Transport extensively during your trip to Queensland, it may be worthwhile to purchase a GoCard to tap-and-go on buses, trains, trams and ferries throughout South-East Queensland. The cards may be purchased from 7/11 outlets or from ticket machines.

Airport transfers
Whether you are flying into Brisbane or the Sunshine Coast Airport, Con-x-ion is able to help you get to your accommodation.

The Sunshine Coast is an incredible place to visit, live and work in. There are plenty of incredible natural environments to explore—from the bush to the beach and beyond!
Graphic Justice Research Alliance

BECOME A PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF SCHOLARS, ARTISTS AND LAWYERS EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF LAW, COMICS, JUSTICE AND THE GRAPHIC IMAGE

JOIN NOW ONLINE
NO MEMBERSHIP FEES

DRAW THE FUTURE OF OUR ORGANISATION AT THE GRAPHIC JUSTICE RESEARCH ALLIANCE AGM
12PM AEST, FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2019
UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST

DISCOVER MORE AT THE GJRA WEBSITE
### THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER

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<tr>
<td>8.30-9.00AM</td>
<td>Official Welcome &amp; Welcome to Country</td>
<td>Dr Timothy Peters, University of the Sunshine Coast &amp; Kerry Neill, Director, Goombuckar Creations</td>
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<td>9-10AM</td>
<td>Chair: Dr Timothy Peters</td>
<td>Keynote: “Conditioning the Law: Nature and Nuclear Energy in the Comic Form” Dr Sonja Schillings, Independent Scholar</td>
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<td>10-11.20AM</td>
<td>Panel 1: (Un)Drawing Boundaries: Comics and the Posthuman</td>
<td>Dr Thomas Giddens, University of Dundee – “Institution and Abyss in Joshua W Cotter’s Nod Away” Filippo Contarini, University of Lucerne – “The time of law in cyberpunk comics: questioning logic through the lenses of the future” Leah Henderson, Griffith University – “‘If You Prick Us Do We Not Bleed?’: Robot Human–Consciousness Striving for Human Rights</td>
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<td>11.40AM-1PM</td>
<td>Panel 2: Beyond the Panel: Making Use of the Visual</td>
<td>Dr Timothy Peters</td>
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<td>2-3.45PM</td>
<td>Panel 3: Drawing the Human in Comic Book Contracts</td>
<td>Professor Camilla Andersen, University of Western Australia (with video presentation from Peter Alexander Corner-Walker, Alternative Contracting) – “The Humans in Comic Book Contracts: A New Dimension in Relational Contracting” Loui Silvestro, Illustrator of Comic Contracting – “Drawing Avatars for Legal Documents” Verity White, Telstra – “Personifying Legal Information” Associate Professor Stuart Medley (with Bruce Mutard), Edith Cowan University – “Comics Literacy and the Law”</td>
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<td>3.45-4.05PM</td>
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<td>5.25-6.25PM</td>
<td>Comics Roundtable: Clockwork Bones</td>
<td>Thomas Hamlyn–Harris, University of the Sunshine Coast Dr Timothy Peters, Dr Thomas Giddens and Dr Ashley Pearson</td>
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<td>7PM</td>
<td>Conference Dinner</td>
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**FRIDAY, 29 NOVEMBER**

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<td><strong>Panel 5: The Authority of the Image: Drawing Legalities</strong></td>
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<td>Chair: Dr Ashley Pearson</td>
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<td>Belinda Qian He, University of Washington – “The Unmasked, the Defaced: Image, Law, and the Visual Economy of Counter-Revolution”</td>
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<td>Sophia O’Brian, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Propaganda from Paradise: Projections of Power, Patriotism and Progress in North Korean Postage Stamps”</td>
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<td>Dale Mitchell, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Gambling as Kryptonite and the Authority of the (Super) Image”</td>
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<td>10.40AM-12PM</td>
<td><strong>Panel 6: The Politics of the Image: Erasing, Protesting, Resisting</strong></td>
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<td>Johanna Commins, Melbourne Law School – “Composing the Handmaid: Image, Protest, Law”</td>
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<td>Joanne Stagg, Griffith University – “Proto Justice Warrior: Revolutionary Concepts of Law and Social Justice in Modesty Blaise Comics”</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Sandy O’Sullivan, University of the Sunshine Coast – “From Racist to Agentic Representation: The Story of First Nations’ Challenges to Symbolic Annihilation”</td>
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<td>12-1.15PM</td>
<td>Lunch (inc GJRA Annual Meeting)</td>
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<td>1.15-2.15PM</td>
<td><strong>Keynote:</strong></td>
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<td>“Redrawing the Lines: Superheroes as Law and Myth”</td>
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<td>Associate Professor Neal Curtis, University of Auckland</td>
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<td>2.15-3.35PM</td>
<td><strong>Panel 7: Comics and their Visual Afterlife</strong></td>
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<td>Associate Professor Cassandra Sharp, University of Wollongong – “War, Romance and Defiance: The trajectory of Marvel’s Peggy Carter through the Decades”</td>
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<td>Jordan Belor, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Vengeance and Justice in, of or Beyond the Law: Exploring The Punisher as Legal Theory”</td>
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<td>Eddie Ngalufe, Griffith University – “Reclaiming Time and Justice in Black Panther’s Sovereign Spaces”</td>
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<td>3.35-3.55PM</td>
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<td>3.55-5.15PM</td>
<td><strong>Panel 8: Seeing Law and the Reality of the Drawn</strong></td>
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<td>Dr Lara Christensen, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Drawing the Line: The Reality of ‘Virtual Child’ Exploitation Material”</td>
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<td>Dr Timothy Peters, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Superhero Comics and the Seeing of Law: Masks, Icons and Legal Emblems”</td>
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<td>Dr Theresa Ashford, University of the Sunshine Coast – “Wonder Woman: Contesting and Testing Justice One Swimsuit at a Time”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.15-5.30PM</td>
<td>Wrap-up, Close &amp; things to come</td>
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**JOIN THE ‘USC GUEST’ WIFI NETWORK**

**Username:** drawing2019  
**Password:** ){qCOH**
Law is traditionally about limits: the limits set to state power, to private property, to the duration of contractual arrangements, and to the escalation of conflict. Since 1945, the use of nuclear energy has forced a reconsideration of many of these constitutive limits, and of their philosophical foundation.

Nuclear energy has brought an awareness of pollution and contamination as human-made influences that affect the very properties of life for generations. The atom bomb in particular recalls the existential situatedness of the human not just in the world, but in the universe. In various ways, nuclear energy has fundamentally eroded any hard line that could be drawn between human and non-human existence, between nation states and a “nature” that is claimed to surround but never to condition the law. At the same time, nuclear energy’s usage as a technology has created a greater urgency to formulate new concepts of responsibility and agency in the face of this power, and in relation to nature.

Because nature, or “the environment,” has never been afforded a coherent language of its own in the modern West, the most influential and pervasive traditional representations of “nature” are visual. Comics can evoke these visual traditions not just as illustrations of storytelling, but as its defining and proper context. Comics are thus particularly able to make full use of the visual reservoir on nature in trying to making sense of the philosophical questions raised by nuclear energy.

From the short political cartoon to the serial epic, comics open starting points to imagine the law as conditioned by nature, and thus to rethink the human. This talk will especially draw on German and Japanese examples from the 1980s, such as the work of Marie Marcks, Katushiro Otomo, and Chlodwig Poth.

Sonja Schillings is a German researcher in American Studies whose work focuses on the fields of law and culture, and literature and philosophy. She has held postdoctoral positions at Freie Universität Berlin and Giessen University. She has published on themes of maritime piracy, American popular fiction, race and colonialism, and human dignity. Her first book, Enemies of all Humankind: Fictions of Legitimate Violence was published with University of New England Press in 2017. Her current book project focuses on human dignity in American literature of the post-1945 period.
REDRAWING THE LINES: SUPERHERO AS LAW AND MYTH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR NEAL CURTIS

From their inception superheroes have been agents of social change. Quite often, though, this purpose has been dulled by their use as carriers of dominant ideologies or deliverers of vengeful justice.

In order to reaffirm their progressive even radical role this paper considers the nomos of superheroes understood as both law and myth. Consequently, it deploys Robert Cover’s discussion of nomos where the law is understood as a set of stories we inhabit. Central to this habitation are the myths that both create and maintain a world. While considering the relationship between law, myth and world, the paper also reflects upon the general theme of the conference, namely “drawing the human”.

Drawing as the marking of lines is crucial to the nomos that delineates a sovereign space and dictates where the law does and does not apply. This is most evident in cartography and the marking of borders. To draw also means to pull (a pencil across a piece of paper). Drawing as the pulling of a sword from a sheath is also a sign of hostility, and drawing as the dragging of a body is also a punishment and the sign of sovereign power.

However, to draw also means to carry, and it is through this mode of drawing that we might reflect upon how superheroes carry the myths that sustain a world, but how they might also carry new myths to help transport us to an alternative world in which boundaries of race, gender and sexuality are redrawn. The paper explores a number of examples but focuses on challenges to the nomos in Kevin Grevioux’s Adam: Legend of the Blue Marvel, and Chelsea Cain’s challenge to the patriarchal nomos in her short run on Mockingbird.

Neal Curtis is Associate Professor of Media and Communication at the University of Auckland. He is a critical theory, and comics scholar with an interest in technology. His most recent books are Idiotism: Capitalism and the Privatization of Life (Pluto Press, 2013) and Sovereignty and Superheroes (Manchester University Press, 2016). His current project is entitled Hate in Precarious Times: Mobilizing Anxieties from the Alt-Right to Brexit (forthcoming with I. B. Tauris, 2020).

Roundtable

CLOCKWORK BONES
BY THOMAS HAMLYN-HARRIS

PANELLISTS INCLUDE DR THOMAS GIDDENS, DR TIMOTHY PETERS, AND DR ASHLEY PEARSON

The Clockwork Bones explores the pernicious relationships and violence lurking in classic fairy tales. In his first graphic novel, Hamlyn–Harris conjures a world of travelling curiosities, real mermaids, learned animals and a chess playing automaton called The Clockwork Bones, all set against a backdrop of rural Australia in 1914 and a family torn apart by grief.

Thomas Hamlyn–Harris is an illustrator, book designer and writer from the Sunshine Coast. He is a tutor in graphic design and creative writing at The University of the Sunshine Coast where he is also completing a DCA. Thomas’ work has been published in pop-up books, maze and puzzle books, magazines, digital games, interactive media, educational books and comics.
**Abstracts**

**Panel 1**

*(Un)Drawing Boundaries: Comics and the Posthuman*

**Institution and Abyss in Joshua W. Cotter’s Nod Away**
*Dr Thomas Giddens, University of Dundee*

In the graphic novel *Nod Away* (Fantagraphics 2016), mundane life is set against the backdrop of an endless and threatening universe, filled with inexplicable, monstrous life. Engaging critically with *Nod Away* in the context of an ecological and post-human discourse that seeks to reconnect human life with the vast expanse of life beyond our limited forms, the question of the institution and management of life against this horrific background will be elaborated and interrogated. The question of humanity’s relationship with the cosmos is one that raises profound concerns relating to the limits and security of law’s ability to bring meaningful justice, as well as the inscription of boundaries in the constitution of sovereign orders. If we exist as specks on the back of the universe, but interconnected with other forms of life, what does it mean to separate out human life under sovereignty, and to institute law? Examining law within this infinite context, drawing formal and substantive insights from *Nod Away* and engaging discourse upon the science fiction work of HP Lovecraft, and literatures around legal psychoanalysis, critical ecologies, and biopolitics, this paper seeks to develop a model of the institution of law as a screen or protective barrier against the vastunknowabilities of the universe.

*Thomas Giddens is lecturer in law at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He is a critical, comics, and cultural legal scholar, with particular interests in visuality, aesthetics, and epistemology. He is founding chair of the Graphic Justice Research Alliance, and author of On Comics and Legal Aesthetics (Routledge 2018).*

**The time of law in cyberpunk comics: questioning the logic through the lenses of the future**
*Dr Filippo Contarini, University of Lucerne*

In one of her Reportagen ([https://bit.ly/2ZBbgx](https://bit.ly/2ZBbgx)), the German journalist Eva Wolfangel has shown that in Japan both studies on artificial intelligence and companies that produce robots are influenced by manga comics, starting from “Ghost in the Shell”, the reference comic of cyber-punk (already well studied, e.g. by Thomas Giddens). As in “Alita”, the problem concerns the comparison between brains and brain-computers.

In my paper, I will question the post-legal system contained in those comics. Both “Ghost in the Shell” and “Alita” take place in a (Japanese) society in which the logic of everyday life functions according to the classical legal scheme rule/exception. The particularity is, however, that they are intersected by digital logics (e.g. augmented reality, society of control). Unlike in law, in informatics the exceptions are usually already programmed: they become rules in their turn. The brain becomes the narrative element that acts as a hinge between the temporal worlds of law and informatics: faced with the rigidity of the conditional program, the uncontrollability of the brain becomes an element worthy of protection (e.g. in “Ghost in the Shell”), or of resistance (e.g. in “Alita”) against the State.

It is obvious that the intrinsic value of these comics does not lie in the narrative of the society of the future. Rather, it is about questioning the mythologies about humans in the society of the present. Protecting the unpredictable ghost, being ready to resist for it, means mortgaging the intrinsic value of logic. To do so, however, the comic-designer brings robots at the extreme logical level: it is a paradox, which the freedom of the comic book narrative can help to uncover.
Filippo Contarini was born in Rome in 1986 and later grew up in Switzerland. He began his legal studies at the University of Lucerne in 2006 and in 2012 obtained the Master of Law. Since 2009, he has worked alongside Prof. Dr. Michele Luminati as a research assistant for legal theory. Between 2013 and 2016 he was, in addition, employed as an assistant at the Swiss Institute of Rome, where he cooperated on the organization of the transdisciplinary workshop StudioRoma (http://www.studioroma.istitutosvizzero.it/en/). He submitted his dissertation on the topic “The (post)modern Jury. Polycontestual study on the expectations placed in the popular justice in Switzerland “. He will defend his thesis in December 2019.

If You Prick Us Do We Not Bleed?': Robotic Human–Consciousness Striving for Human Rights
Leah Henderson, Griffith University

Vision: Director’s Cut (2017) is a short comic series about Vision, a robot Avengers superhero who builds his own robotic family out of his lonely desire for love and happiness. The story focuses on his wife, Virginia, and their two children, Vin and Viv, as they struggle to exist by means of a “normal” suburban life under Vision’s tutelage. An ethical dilemma arises in this plot because, although these characters are technically artificial, they can also think and feel like a human. Indeed, the story reveals these human feelings by focusing on the family’s attempts at happiness in the face of constant adversity. As beings of artificial intelligence, they are subject to social ostracism and abuse by a neighbourhood that refuses to accept them as part of the human community. Through this narration of a minority struggling against the prejudice of the majority, Vision: Director’s Cut enters into the debate about future ramifications of robots with a human–like consciousness. The writers are arguing that any human–like AI created ought to become subject to inalienable human rights, including human dignity, equality, and the right to life. This essentially means that once something has been created it cannot be turned off or “killed”. This paper will explore the idea of robotic human–consciousness as it is narrated throughout the text, and the ethical and legal ramifications this could have in our possible near future.

Leah Henderson is a PhD candidate at Griffith University, school of Humanities. Her thesis analyses three cases studies of serialisation in Western popular culture and explores questions about the way in which changing technologies affect our everyday living and perceptions of time. One of these case studies includes the Marvel Avengers film series (2012–2019). She has an article published in Forum: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture & Arts, an artwork published in the Pop-Up Poster Paddington June–August 2019 exhibition, run by Woollahra Municipal Council, and she has also presented a conference paper at the University of Warwick.

Panel 2
BEYOND THE PANEL: MAKING USE OF THE VISUAL

The Universal Language of Law
Professor Michael Murray, University of Kentucky College of Law

There is a universal legal language that can communicate across languages and cultural barriers: the language of visual images. Visual communication of law provides a means to transmit the content, meaning, and implications of law and legal analysis in legal documents that are accessible and understandable not only to those trained in the law or highly literate in the dominant written language of the communication, but also to those whose basic language skills in the dominant language of the communication would not otherwise allow them to receive or understand the legal advice, rights, or requirements contained in the communication.

In this Article, I continue a conversation on visual legal rhetoric that has examined cognitive psychology and the neuroscience of the brain, data visualization and rhetorical topics of visual arrangement, and modern argument theory in visual rhetoric. My focus in this Article is to examine visual methods of legal communication that seek as far as practicable to communicate across language and cultural barriers.
The subjects of my study are several examples of largely pictorial, non-verbally-oriented works of legal communication: cartoon briefs; pictorial or photographic briefs; graphic novel legal texts; exhibits and illustrations used in briefs, memoranda, and regulatory and administrative rule-making; and visual, proactive contract genres, such as comic book contracts and multimedia “smart” contracts. My lens is the discipline of visual legal rhetoric and narrativity, and within it, the overlapping principles of visual literacy regarding the reception, comprehension, and communication of law in cross-lingual and cross-cultural contexts.

Professor Murray (University of Kentucky College of Law) graduated from Loyola College in Maryland and from Columbia Law School. Murray practiced commercial, intellectual property, and products liability litigation at Bryan Cave law firm in St. Louis, and has previously taught at the law schools of Saint Louis University, University of Illinois, Valparaiso University, University of Michigan, and University of Massachusetts, and internationally in Florence, Italy, and Cambridge, UK. Professor Murray currently has published twenty-seven books and numerous law review articles on advocacy, legal research and writing, visual rhetoric, copyright, and art law.

**Mayah’s Lot: Teaching Environmental Justice with Comic Books**  
Professor Rebecca Bratspies, CUNY School of Law

“Environmental Justice, I bet you don’t even know what that means…I had no idea that it actually affects every one of us. That is until it came to my home”

So begins Mayah’s Lot, the environmental justice comic that tells the story of Mayah, a young girl who inspires and organizes her urban neighbors to save a vacant lot from becoming an industrial toxic storage waste facility. It is a story that rings true for many environmental justice communities which are all too often overburdened with polluting industry, while rarely accruing much of the wealth those activities generate. Since its publication in 2012, Mayah’s Lot has been used in classrooms around the world. Readers learn alongside Mayah as she helps organize her neighborhood to prevent the siting of a hazardous waste facility in her already overburdened community.

This paper traces the Mayah’s Lot book project from its collaborative roots to its use in classrooms around the world. It explains the rationale for adopting the graphic novel (or comic book) format for a serious environmental justice project, and documents how the comic book has been used to teach basic civics, to build environmental justice advocacy skills, and to excite New York City students about learning more generally. Finally, the paper uses the resonance Mayah’s Lot has for law students, undergraduates, children, and community groups to draw some generalized lessons about using comic books for education about social justice.

Rebecca Bratspies teaches at the CUNY School of Law and directs the CUNY Center for Urban Environmental Reform. Her research explores the role of individuals and communities in the regulatory state, human rights, environmental democracy, and food justice. Her environmental justice comic books (Mayah’s Lot, and Bina’s Plant) have been used widely in classrooms and by state environmental agencies. She serves on EPA’s Children’s Environmental Health Protection Advisory Committee, is a member–scholar with the Center for Progressive Reform and the Environmental Law Collective. She blogs with The Nature of Cities. She is past–Chair of the AALS Section on the Environment.

**Communicating Research Findings with Community Members Using Animation**  
Dr Susan Rayment–McHugh, University of the Sunshine Coast  
Dimity Adams, Griffith Youth Forensic Service

Researchers have a civic responsibility to effectively communicate research findings with a range of audiences including community members. Following a multi-year research project in a remote Aboriginal community, which aimed to reduce the prevalence and impacts of youth–perpetrated sexual violence and abuse, an
The five-minute animation was produced through a genuine collaboration between community leaders, researchers, and an Indigenous graphic design company. The animation tells the story of a community problem, a comprehensive practice and research project that addressed this problem, and the role of community members in establishing and maintaining safety. Community leaders provided important input into animation imagery, script, and voice-overs, ensuring the animation reflected this community and their understanding of, and investment in, this project. This presentation will outline the steps taken to develop the animation, and discuss the importance of community input in this process. Importantly, the impacts of this animation on enhancing community understanding of and engagement with research, will be explored.

*Sue Rayment-McHugh is Lecturer in Criminology and Justice and Co-Leader of the Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She is also an Adjunct Research Fellow with the Griffith Criminology Institute. Sue has a PhD in Criminology and a Master’s degree in Forensic Psychology. Her current research interests are focused on understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse, including in Indigenous communities and in youth-serving institutions. Sue presents nationally and internationally in relation to sexual violence and abuse prevention and intervention.*

*Dimity Adams is a psychologist and Senior Clinical with the Griffith Youth Forensic Service. Dimity has worked in the sexual violence and abuse field for twelve years. In this time, her primary focus has been on the provision of clinical services for Indigenous clients and their families, within rural and remote locations throughout Queensland. Dimity has a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology and holds a postgraduate qualification in Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing. She presents nationally and internationally on prevention and responses to sexual violence and abuse in Indigenous communities.*

**PANEL 3**

**DRAWING THE HUMAN IN COMIC BOOK CONTRACTS**

**The Humans in Comic Book Contracts: A New Dimension in Relational Contracting**

*Professor Camilla Andersen, University of Western Australia*

*Peter Alexander Corner-Walker, Alternative Contracting*

Legal Design has been developing different streams of theory and practice throughout the world, innovating and changing the way lawyers work. Researchers at UWA have taken this to a whole new level, creating contracts in comic book form which are read, understood and (so far!) undisputed. This new format of contracting which drives behaviour to avoid conflict, and offers pathways to justice for some, is popular in industry and presents a novel approach for law and legal interpretation. Prof Andersen from UWA Law School will present her most recent projects, including contracts in employment, disability services and banking, and demonstrate some of the data from the impact testing of these brave new contracts. Contributing with his experiences via a short video is Peter Alexander Corner, who has recently turned the concept into a private enterprise.

The paper will explore the potential of visual and alternative contracting formats and raise the important issue of how to interpret these images if they are disputed, and draw the human in this new context.

*Dr Camilla Baasch Andersen is Professor of International Commercial Law at University of Western Australia. She is a Trade Law Expert for UNCITRAL and a member of the core group of the Pro-Active Think Tank. She has written extensively on the CISG, international commerce, pro-active approaches to law and comparative commercial law. She works closely with business, government and academia in pursuit of improving legal solutions, recently on her new project on Comic Book Contracting and the visualisation of law (see*
Verity White is founder of Checklist Legal, and works as Legal Counsel for Telstra. She is a legal innovator with a keen interest in demystifying the law. Passionate about plain language, she is always looking to present legal concepts simply and visually. Her many accolades include: Finalist, Clear Communication Awards, Legal Category In-house Leaders Rising Star Finalist, Technology, Media and Telecommunications Lawyer of the Year Value Champion 2017 (Team award), Most Innovative Legal Department for 2017 (Team award), Finalist – Young Lawyer Achiever of the Year, Finalist – In House Team of the Year.

Mr Peter Alexander Corner is a Research Assistant at UWA, and the founding manager of the legal consultancy Alternative Contracting (see www.alternativecontracting.biz) which consults with industry on visualization of contracting. His involvement in the Comic Book Contracting project has allowed him to draw on his experience from various industries, and he holds degrees in History and a Master of Research. His current research projects are examining the history of images in legal instruments, as well as the changing face of banking.

**Drawing Avatars for Legal Documents**  
**Loui Silvestro, Illustrator of Comic Contracting project**

I’ll discuss the process of ‘drawing avatars for legal documents’

Loui Silvestro has been a professional freelance illustrator for many years in book publishing, corporate communications and drawing live at seminars!

**Personifying Legal information**  
**Verity White, Telstra**

Contracts at parties: In our digitised world, contracts are not pieces of paper any more. We need to start looking at contracts and legal documents differently. Legal documents are tools to achieve specific purposes. These purposes can be difficult to grasp when thinking about pieces of paper. Each contract has its own personality and purpose. It’s often difficult to describe the purpose behind legal documents or technical legal information.

What if we could think about contracts differently... what if we started to depict contracts as people? When we start to think about contracts as people, we can more easily understand and explain their purpose. We started personifying our legal documents with a simple but powerful question... how would this document introduce itself at a party? We used this technique to gamify legal business training about the various parts of a legal process and a contract framework. We use this technique to help us get clear on the purpose behind different types of contracts. We also use this question so we can focus the intention of the documents we create to help our business understand legal processes.

Verity White is founder of Checklist Legal, and works as Legal Counsel for Telstra. She is a legal innovator with a keen interest in demystifying the law. Passionate about plain language, she is always looking to present legal concepts simply and visually.

For more details visit: [https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/persons/camilla-andersen](https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/persons/camilla-andersen). For recent on her new project on Comic Book Contracting and the visualisation of law (see [www.comicbookcontracts.com](http://www.comicbookcontracts.com)).
**Comics Literacy and the Law**

*Associate Professor Stuart Medley (and Bruce Mutard), Edith Cowan University*

With a range of digital comic-making tools available online, lawyers intent on literally drawing up a contract can make their own comics. However, before they begin, they need to be aware of the conventions of comics and some rudiments of visual communication. Inter- and intra-panel reading direction, and the order of clauses, both verbal and visual, can determine the difference between mere legibility and pleasant readability.

Communication through comics also comes from knowing when and where to set the scene and establish characters’ positions within these, and when to ‘move in’ for a close up to show relevant body language, facial expression and emotional response.

One of the trickiest areas of depiction is representing parties appropriately and not inadvertently in an objectionable way with visual stereotypes or other negative association. This requires visual literacy, which is an area of expertise found among graphic designers and comics makers. This panel will discuss these problems and need for visual literacy in making comics contracts and also, potential solutions.

We have worked as consultants with Professor Andersen at UWA Law and seen first-hand some of the issues associated with trying to represent potential clients through depiction. Some of the findings are that a lawyer-artist team can avoid fidelity in representation; parties to an agreement need not even be depicted as human. New symbols can be established in their stead. Furthermore, by escaping visual realism, other important communicative aspects of pictures, such as line, shape, colour and direction may come to the fore to emphasise qualities pertinent to an agreement.

A/Prof Stuart Medley is an illustrator with clients including the Imperial War Museums and Berg’s Publishing. Stuart currently makes comics for service design to help improve employment and housing for the disadvantaged. His research focuses on deliberate communication using pictures, and he is the author of the book, *The Picture in Design*. Stuart has presented character design workshops in the UK, China, Europe and Australia. He is a Co-founder of the Perth Comic Arts Festival.

Bruce Mutard is a comics maker, publisher and researcher. His graphic novels include *The Sacrifice, The Silence, A Mind of Love*, *The Bunker and Post Traumatic*. He has a MDes from Monash University, which resulted in the comic for spatial exhibition: *An Anzac Myth*. He is currently a PhD candidate at Edith Cowan University. His new graphic novel *Bully Me*, was published as *Souffre Douleur* in France in 2019. He is also co-founder and chairman of the Perth Comic Arts Festival, and editor and publisher of the Ledger Annual (recognising the best in Australian comics).

**PANEL 4**

**THE DRAWN IDENTITY**

**A Powerful Absence: Theorizing Racial Whiteness in Comics**

*Dr Frederik Byrn Kohlert, University of East Anglia*

Most scholarship on the representation of ethnoracial difference in comics concerns the form’s reliance on the same type of stereotyped shorthand that underlies and props up racist ideology. While this small but growing body of work has examined how comics might either uphold or subvert certain established visual paradigms concerning the exclusion and ridicule of ethnoracial minorities, there is close to no scholarship on the representation of racial whiteness in comics. This critical omission is perhaps not surprising, given the general cultural tendency to consider whiteness as both universal and invisible, a perspective that also has important implications for comics: to be raced as white in a comic commonly means to not have your outline filled in—to be at once racially invisible and at one with the white page.

This paper will address this gap in the scholarship through a theorization of whiteness in comics, with a special emphasis on racial representation. Because whiteness on the comics page commonly indicates (as it often does in racial terms) that there is nothing to see here, so move along, the paper will also examine strategies for what Richard Dyer calls “making whiteness strange”—that is, to interrogate and draw attention to whiteness, in order to challenge its transparency and make it visible on the page. Only by drawing and seeing the transparent white human in comics as white, I will argue, can we begin to address the implicit racial biases that result from the overwhelming formal naturalization of the comics page.
Law, Queer Performance, and the Bat: Cassandra Cain as Becoming More
Sasha Purcell, Queensland University of Technology

This paper argues that the character Casandra Cain is representative of a queer performance of identity as shaped by the authority of law. This is argued through visual jurisprudence and queer theory as seen in the form of a superhero comic book. The first section argues that queer theory has identified a legal binary, and the emerging breakdown of that binary through the methods of representing and interpreting the law. This is done by analysing queer theory, visual jurisprudence, and their connection to comics and graphic novels. The second section argues that the Batman franchise and the meta-text within, which is where Cassandra Cain exists, engages with these legal binaries and their breakdown. By emphasising the dual-identity of characters and the role of family, it argues that the meta-text allows new stories to engage with contemporary legalities and its effect on identity. The third section argues that Cassandra, in Batman Detective Comics Volume 3 – League of Shadows, is performative of queer jurisprudence through both textual and visual elements. In particular she is performative of a breakdown of binaries in her attempts to transcend their structure, becoming more than a passive subject of binary identities, and becoming more of a true self.

Sasha is a final year Law and Fine Arts (Creative and Professional Writing) student at Queensland University of Technology. She is current student representative on the QUT Equity Committee and QUT’s LGBTIQA+ Working Party, as well as an active member of QUT’s Pokemon Club and Quidditch team. Sasha hopes to continue researching next year, with the aim of commencing a PhD.

Not What She Seems: Exploring Perceptions of the Female Prosecutor through Stevenson’s Nimona
Associate Professor Bethany Gullman, George Washington University Law School

“We assumed she was a girl disguised as a monster, but she’s not. She’s a monster disguised as a girl.”

The titular character of the graphic novel Nimona by Noelle Stevenson is introduced as a child who wants to work as a sidekick to a so-called villain, Blackheart, in an unspecified kingdom. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that Nimona has powers that are not understood by her “boss,” Blackheart, or by the realm’s protector, Goldenloin. Blackheart and Goldenloin incrementally recognize that Nimona’s abilities are beyond their capacity to quantify or contain. Nimona struggles to hold on to and communicate her identity, resisting objectification and constraint. Forced to take monstrous forms to defend herself, Nimona gives in to the way Nimona is treated at various points in the graphic novel parallels how female prosecutors in the legal system have sometimes been objectified, limited, and feared. Prosecutors in many ways resemble the traditional comic book superhero – they prosecute “bad guys,” have immense power in prosecutorial discretion, and use the legal system to mete out justice. This can create tension for female prosecutors, who wield the penal power of the state and in doing so challenge societal expectations about their own identities. The paper will use characterizations of American prosecutors Kamala Harris and Marcia Clark as case studies in drawing parallels to Nimona.
Amid the escalating divides and hostilities of today’s world, the panel seeks to rethink what hold people together and what drive them apart through the lens I call “exposing”. As the visual proliferated as the basis for belonging, identifying, and expelling, exposing not merely describes ways of visualizing enemies or rendering the “criminal” visible, but also becomes a daily matter of categorizing and classifying people into images and imaginaries of different kinds across a broad spectrum of deviance. Identifying who was “inside” and who was “outside” of the people was a matter of intense visibility at the core of Maoist class struggle. Much emphasis has been given to either the violent components of “class war” or class struggle as a project defined by spectacularity. The paper points to the intersection of both, class struggle as spectacular violence and spectatorial violence that remains underexplored. Concerning the intertwined violence and spectacle vis-à-vis a singular and overarching system of partitioning coded in “class”, the paper examines people’s material and mediated encounters with the making of counterrevolutionary crime and its laws (“the Law on the Punishment of Counterrevolutionary Activities of 1951” and beyond) across time. It offers a refreshing take on how a modern state deployed graphic media and a generic network of images when policing political threats and dissent (real or imagined), as well as reveals the role and importance of image-making as it functions crucially in the working of social control and criminal justice particular to the Chinese socialist state.

Belinda Qian He is a PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media at the University of Washington. Her research revolves around the historical and interdisciplinary study of Asian cinema, photography, art, and exhibition culture, associated with law, atrocity, violence, and witnessing. Her recent article on cinematic experience has recently been published by the Journal of Chinese Cinemas. Her dissertation is tentatively titled Looks of Enmity: Cinema, Punishment, and the Art of Exposure in Revolutionary China (1925–1985). Her ongoing project on image, justice, and the criminological imagination in Chinese/Sinophone art is funded by the Asia Art Archive and the Robert Ho Family Foundation. She also curated the Inter-Asian Historiophoty Research Group film series. She is a current Mellon Fellow (2018–2019) and co-organizing Graduate Research Cluster on Dissent Images. She is the recipient of the Society of Scholars Fellowship, CLIR Fellowship for Dissertation in Original Sources, among others.

Propaganda from Paradise: Projections of Power, Patriotism and Progress in North Korean Postage Stamps
Sophia O'Brien, University of the Sunshine Coast

North Korean postage stamps are forms of official propaganda. These objects are both functional and aesthetic; intended to inform and to influence by communicating state ideologies through idealised representations of life in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (the ‘DPRK’). Rife with allusions to key tenets of DPRK ideology, such as the juche idea, and chollima, the selected artifacts depict the glories of life in this self-proclaimed ‘Worker’s Paradise’. As with most North Korean propaganda, these artifacts project power and promote motivational and cultural ideals rather than reveal the gritty truths of prolonged economic hardship, totalising rule and international isolation. The selected works are largely in the vivid socialist realist
style, wherein the human form is represented variously as soldier, as enemy, as worker, and as citizen in order to remind the audience of the DPRK’s claims to military and industrial excellence and its citizens’ solidarity against external and existential threats. This article focuses on a common thread that links these representations of the human form: their referability to the DPRK’s ‘socialist legality’, a nationalistic mode of governance which accords centrality to state and party institutions in political, legal, economic and social affairs, and which commodifies and subsumes the individual in the name of collective interests. It argues that key hallmarks of the DPRK’s socialist legality pervade the artifacts via visual cues to mass movements, mass mobilisation and national unity in conjunction with the colours and symbols of communism. As spec on the back of the universe, but interconnected with other forms of life, what does it mean to separate out human life under sovereignty, and to institute law? Examining law within this infinite context, drawing formal and substantive insights from *Nod Away* and engaging discourse upon the science fiction work of HP Lovecraft, and literatures around legal psychoanalysis, critical ecologies, and biopolitics, this paper seeks to develop a model of the institution of law as a screen or protective barrier against the vast unknownabilities of the universe.

Sophia O’Brien is a lecturer in law at the University of the Sunshine Coast and a PhD candidate at Bond University. She predominantly teaches and researches in the fields of public international law, international human rights law and constitutional law. Sophia has a strong interest in Asian systems of law and government, and the extent to which human rights norm diffusion is taking place in Asian legal systems.

**Gambling as Kryptonite and the Authority of the (Super) Image**

*Dale Mitchell, University of the Sunshine Coast*

‘Of all the evils, gambling is one of the most vicious – it’s toll of human suffering is almost beyond belief!’ This statement from Superman in one of his earliest comics, *The Gambling Racket in Metropolis* (1938), exemplifies the morality that the character embodies throughout *The Golden Age of comics*—and, in particular, a moralisation of gambling itself. However, as time has passed and gambling has become more socially and legally acceptable, Superman can also be found to use gambling as a tool of justice. He uses his supernatural alien powers to “cheat” in a card game and serves as a “Robin Hood”—like figure to return funds to the wronged gambler. Gambling becomes appropriate as its ‘just’ purpose justifies the means of its use. The “capture” of Superman by these devices and the acceptance of this practice, reaches its peak in the appearance of Superman within gambling itself—the authority of the image enforced in a different form of sequential imaginary: the slot machine.

What has occurred with this trajectory is, to use Giorgio Agamben’s terminology, a profanation of Superman’s image along with a consecration of the act of gambling—that is, it is authorising and making acceptable this practice. This paper seeks to analyse the way in which the image of Superman is functioning in these spaces. The power of the superhero image and the transcendence of Superman across these modalities offers an alternative means of seeing gambling as a representational practice. Reading the relation between Superman and gambling as form provides a means of understanding the capacity of this practice to slip into the gutter of legality—disappearing between the panels of language and materiality which are central to the regulation of gambling. To overcome these challenges regulators themselves threaten to become “Super”, transformations which deepen the biopolitical power of the State. Yet, the power of the superhero image and the transcendence of Superman across these modalities offers an alternative means of seeing gambling as a representational practice: a form of graphic (in)justice.

*Dale Mitchell is a PhD Candidate at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) School of Law and Criminology. His dissertation reads select legal paradigms (stasis; persona; polis) as they transform, translate and transcend the boundaries of form through adapted multi-texts. Operating on the threshold of legal rhetoric and cultural legal analysis, this study uses adaptation analysis as a way of re-articulating and re-reading legal terms, providing insights into legal concepts and their forms of mediation.*
Composing the Handmaid: Image, Protest, Law

Johanna Commins, Melbourne Law School

In Margaret Atwood’s award-winning novel, The Handmaid’s Tale, the protagonist Offred composes herself through language – through her vivid, ironic account of life at the political margins of a totalitarian regime. Under a regime that prohibits women from reading and writing, and reduces fertile women to “ambulatory chalice[s]” whose only authorised speech is a ritualised version of call and response, Offred is a speaking subject in a silenced world.

Women dressed up as handmaids silently protesting the erosion of reproductive rights is a phenomenon which has been repeated throughout the United States and internationally in recent years. While silent protest has a long history, my hunch is that the power of this approach is in part derived from the way in which the silent figure simultaneously and ironically evokes Offred’s biting commentary about present circumstances and her (and our) complicity in arriving here.

This talk will take up the graphic novel in which Canadian artist Renee Nault reimagines The Handmaid’s Tale. The question it asks is, if woman is made, not born, as Offred tells us, echoing Simone de Beauvoir, how is Offred composed through the visual language of the graphic novel and especially alongside the silent protester who stands in relation to the law that silences her?

Johanna Commins is a PhD Candidate at Melbourne Law School and a member of the Institute for International Law and the Humanities. Her research is interdisciplinary, combining approaches to jurisprudence and legal theory with literature, art and the humanities generally. Johanna’s professional background is in refugee status determination and research in New Zealand, together with work as an English teacher in South Korea, a post-graduate advisor at the University of Auckland and as an abstract writer for the New Zealand Law Society. She holds a BA/LLB, BA (Hons) and MA (First Class Pass) from the University of Auckland.

Proto Justice Warrior: Revolutionary concepts of law and social justice in Modesty Blaise comics

Joanne Stagg, Griffith University

Half a century before Kamala Khan as Ms Marvel affronted reactionary sensibilities, a newspaper comic strip depicted a Middle-Eastern woman busting spy rings and criminal gangs. From 1963 to 2002, Peter O’Donnell wrote the syndicated comic strip Modesty Blaise whose titular character, a former Middle-Eastern refugee and reformed criminal, partnered with a working-class English male side-kick and diverse minor characters to save the innocent and mete justice to villains. The strip ran in international newspaper syndication, generated 13 popular books, and spawned two films.

The Modesty Blaise comic strip is now dated, showing sometimes problematic racial and gender stereotyping, failings common to its contemporaries, like early James Bond offerings. However, it also was remarkably ahead of its time in other depictions of non-white characters, disabled characters, masculinity, and female roles and competence. It reflected then–radical thinking that later underpinned the civil rights movement and the beginnings of critical legal theory in the 1970s. The strip used approaches that today would be labeled the work of “social justice warriors” and which have led to internet outrage when used in recent works like Captain Marvel, or the third Star Wars trilogy.

This paper will explore notions of social roles, criminality and extra–legal justice in the Modesty Blaise comics. Using a feminist critical legal approach, the author will argue that despite some problematic ideas, the comic was emblematic of and
encouraged radical social shifts that underlay modern social justice movements and critical jurisprudential thinking in the 21st century.

Joanne is a Lecturer in the Griffith Law School at Griffith University, in Queensland. Her current research interests include issues around law, gender and medicine. In addition to core law offerings, she teaches in the area of law and gender. She is also a bit too fond of relatively mindless fiction that depicts kick-ass female protagonists or subverts traditional gender roles.

From racist to agentic representation: the story of First Nations’ challenges to symbolic annihilation
Associate Professor Sandy O’Sullivan, University of the Sunshine Coast

As a part of a developing project on Challenging symbolic annihilation in cultural representation, this presentation will examine the role of First Nations’ character portrayals in comics and graphic novels, including their agency, audience and trajectory. It will explore Indigenous characters as targets of racism, and in both sympathetic and problematic representations (Terra Australis). It will also consider ways that First Nations’ Peoples have become engaged as an intended audience (Condoman, Lubelicious, Streetwise) and how this changes representation and character formation.

Associate Professor Sandy O’Sullivan is a Wiradjuri (Aboriginal) academic, researcher and creative practitioner. Their research and teaching include queer studies, art and design, built environment, music, performance, and cultural representation, with a particular focus on First Nations’ agency and aspiration.

Panel 7
Comics and Their Visual Afterlife

War, Romance and Defiance: The trajectory of Marvel’s Peggy Carter through the decades
Associate Professor Cassandra Sharp, University of Wollongong

As a human-being sans any particular superpower, Agent Peggy Carter applies her human intelligence, wit and empathy to effective use as a resistance fighter and as a covert operative for S.H.I.E.L.D. Despite the success Marvel has experienced with its superpowered heroes, particularly in the MCU, the character of Agent Carter nevertheless captures and translates the emotions of love, vulnerability and defiance in ways that contrast with her superheroic counterparts. This paper will explore the trajectory of Peggy Carter through the marvel comics of the 1950s to the present, and will demonstrate the discursive gendered, and legal, construction of female agency.

Dr Cassandra Sharp is Associate Professor, and Head of Postgraduate Studies, in the School of Law at the University of Wollongong. With a combined Bachelor of Arts (English Literature)/Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and a PhD in cultural legal studies, Cassandra’s research draws on cultural studies, narrative theory, and legal theory to interrogate public interaction with legal consciousness, and she is the co–editor of Cultural Legal Studies and Law’s Popular Cultures and the Metamorphosis of Law, Sharp, Cassandra and Leiboff, Marett (eds) (Routledge, 2015). Her primary research interest lies in the expression and transmission of law within the public imaginary through mediated popular fictions, and her research/teaching philosophy is based on encouraging others to recognize and reflect on the storied nature of law. Cassandra’s current project examines the use of emotion and narrative in social media as legal critique and uses terrorism as the lens through which to undertake this exploration.

Vengeance and Justice in, of or Beyond the Law: Exploring The Punisher as Legal Theory
Jordan Belor, University of the Sunshine Coast

‘Kill one man, and you are a murderer. Kill millions of men, and you are a conqueror. Kill them all, and you are a god’ (Jean Rostand, Thoughts of a Biologist, 1938). This
statement made by Rostand raises three questions as to whether it is acceptable to kill, which is crucial to understanding the (non)value of human life within the law. Is it okay to kill anyone with impunity? When can a sovereign power exercise violence to preserve the very foundations of its existence? Can anyone assume the sovereign’s mantle and determine ‘the necessity of authorizing “the annihilation of life unworthy of being lived”’ as Giorgio Agamben had explored? This thesis will conduct a Cultural Legal reading of Marvel’s eponymous anti-hero The Punisher, and its display of the inevitability of death, to explore the legality and morality of killing another human being. While an anti-hero in comics and on the big and small screen today, is the Punisher a murderer or a man society is in dire need when faced with peril?

My name is Jordan Belor. I am in my final semester of USC’s Bachelor of Laws (Honours)/Bachelor of Criminology and Justice program. To be honest, I undertook this program because I am interested in, among other things, the way people ‘tick’ particularly behaviour that is prohibited by law to understand why any rule would exist. Honours is a great way for me to delve into this area as it allows me to combine my skills and knowledge from both law and criminology. So, why superheroes? Well, they are the marvels of pop-culture and confounders of law and legality.

Reclaiming time and justice in Black Panther’s sovereign spaces

Eddie Ngaluafe, Griffith University

Ryan Coogler’s Black Panther became the highest-grossing solo superhero film worldwide in 2018—only six months after the repugnant ‘Unite the Right’ rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. While cultural critics have mined the film’s rich vein of post-colonial politics, less has been written about how sovereign power engages with itself in the spaces of Wakanda: from the Kingdom hidden in plain sight to the ancestral plains that is accessed through the heart-shaped herb. My paper seeks to understand how T’Challa utilises these sovereign spaces to challenge past authority and reclaim moral legitimacy after Wakanda abandoned the African-American diaspora, distilled keenly in Eric Killmonger’s self-righteous and wrathful challenge to be King.

Eddie Ngaluafe is a Marketing and Communications officer at Griffith University. He has a keen interest in cultural studies and comics. Black Panther is his first research project.

Panel 8

Seeing Law and the Reality of the Drawn

Drawing the Line: The Reality of ‘Virtual Child’ Exploitation Material

Dr Lara Christensen, University of the Sunshine Coast

While cartoon imagery of child sexual abuse does not involve ‘real’ children, it begs the question of whether these cartoons of child exploitation material should be classed as ‘child pornography’. This presentation discusses the emerging issue of virtual child exploitation material. The legal landscape of virtual child pornography legislation at an international level will be mapped, drawing attention to the discrepancies in legislation. A discussion on the primary forms of cartoon imagery developed will be provided. The emerging tighter controls on virtual child exploitation material has been met by firm opposition from some artists and publishers; such debates will be explored. A discussion on the dangers of the material along with the moral harm associated with the abuses of imagery will be canvassed. The presentation will conclude with a discussion on the difficulties faced by law enforcement, due the problematic and challenging space of virtual child exploitation material, and areas for improvement and prevention.

Dr Lara Christensen is Program Coordinator of the Bachelor of Criminology and Justice in the School of Law and Criminology, USC Australia. Lara holds a primary research interest in the prevention of sexual violence. With a PhD in Psychology (forensic psychology), she is co-leader of the first University-led Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit
Superhero Comics and the Seeing of Law: Masks, Icons and Legal Emblems

Dr Timothy D Peters, University of the Sunshine Coast

Superhero comics seem at once both the most and least obvious place to undertake a legal analysis. Most, because of their excessive concerns with criminality, legality, justice and the exception. Least because of their overdetermined plots, their incessant hybridity, and almost untrammelled commerciality which leave us wondering whether they can possibly say anything of critical value in regards to law beyond the current dominant ideology. This paper seeks to set out a project on comics, form and the superhero that analyses the way in which the visual (as well as narrative) tropes of superhero comics implicitly and explicitly draw on the visuality of law, whilst also inviting a form of critique of our modern legal visuality. Whether it be through the explicit reference to Justitia and blind justice by a superhero such as Daredevil, implicit adopting of the formal sovereign or legal office by Batman, or simply the figurations of iconic emblemata deployed by the superhero in the form of the mask, cape, costume and other trademarked and highly visible devices, superhero comics are saturated with visual legality. Yet, the very visuality of the comics form also asks us to consider the nature of what it means to see law. For the comics form itself, deployed as a representational medium both mimics and critiques the forms of law and asks us to re-think law as and through visual form. Through an analysis of comics as visual form, this paper therefore seeks to bring together and address two questions: what is that we ‘see’ when we see comics? And is it possible to ‘see’ law at all?

Dr Timothy D Peters is a Senior Lecturer in Law at the USC Law School, University of the Sunshine Coast, an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Law Futures Centre, Griffith University and President of the Law, Literature and the Humanities Association of Australasia. His research has two major focuses, examining: the intersections of legal theory, theology and popular culture; and critical theories of the corporation and corporate law from the perspective of political and economic theologies. Tim has been a Managing Editor of the Griffith Law Review (2012–2017) and Secretary of both the Law, Literature and Humanities Association of Australasia (2009–2016) and Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand (2006–2016). He is currently an editorial board member of the Griffith Law Review, the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law and Springer’s new book series on ‘Law and Visual Jurisprudence’.

Wonder Woman: contesting and testing justice one swimsuit at a time

Dr Theresa Ashford, University of the Sunshine Coast

In this paper I would like to take a different path to think with Wonder Woman as an assemblage of human and nonhuman actors clustered on a page. This critical engagement will highlight the possible narratives of virtue and vice that are manifested though an armoured swimsuit, a magic lasso, shiny bracelets and a star emblazoned tiara. By positioning these technologies as actors that commonly enlist objectification and subordination, I am attempting to suggest another reading. Bondage is a common and well described theme in the critic of Wonder Woman comics but I am suggesting there is a bondage that exceeds the simple narratives of her love for Steve, the inked chains of men, and the sultry descriptions of her body by co-characters. I ask how does the depiction (technologies and all) of Wonder Woman help us to think about possible applications of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics? How does including technologies as actors that co-produce the affect and effect of comics change how we can read and understand these critical meta narratives caught in between the drawn lines? Ultimately my aim is to lift Wonder Woman from the two-dimensional pages, in particular George Pérez’s Destiny Calling, and to view this
complex character as a mobilisation of virtue thereby reconfiguring the beautiful female superhero in tight clothing into our own test of how we view and understand justice.

Dr Theresa Ashford is a Lecturer in Social Science whose passion is exploring interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary borderlands. Her undergraduate and postgraduate education is in Geography and spans science, human and cultural geography domains. Dr Ashford’s PhD research (2018, Education, UQ) used Actor-network theory to investigate the emergence of digital ethics in 1:1 classrooms. Of particular interest is thinking about the world with an ANT lens and tracing how this approach changes how we view and be in the world.

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Conference Dinner

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