

Comics, Digital Literacy and Digital Creations: what are the challenges for tomorrow?

CAER and IREMAM International Conference
April 6 and 7, 2023



The research units CAER and IREMAM of Aix-Marseille University, represented by the organizers, Sophie SAFFI (CAER) and Juliette DUMAS (IREMAM), in collaboration with the festival Les Rencontres du 9ème art, and with the financial support of the European program

Erasmus+, propose on April 6 and 7, 2022 in Aix-en-Provence, an international colloquium around comics and digital.

The colloquium takes place over two days of work divided into 2 sessions of communications and 1 session of posters:

- **Session 1: The challenges of the transition to digital for artistic creation** (Evolution of comic book formats; Derivative products: cinema, series, video games, cosplay, etc.; Digital Literacy ; Tomorrow's jobs; Dialogue between creators/translators/developers and collective work...)
- **Session 2: Linguistic and cultural issues** (International collective creative work, multiculturalism and inter-comprehension of languages; Translation of digital works; Comic book translation; Digital translation tools; Gamification of teaching and training...)
- **Posters session : Open theme**

Papers are 20 minutes long and are followed by a 10 minutes discussion.

The main language of the conference is French, but papers in other languages (English, Turkish, Spanish, Italian, etc.) are accepted if the abstract and the PPT supporting the paper are in French and/or English. Translators will be present.

Parallel to the conference, a **Masterclass** and an **Exhibition** will be held in connection with an ongoing educational project (COMIX & DIGITAL, financed by the Erasmus+ program, website: <http://comix-digital.eu>). **Round tables** of comic book professionals and students will be held.

This conference integrates a data management project in the framework of Open Science.

Presentation of the scientific theme

From paper to new media, comics are now exploring new playgrounds. The intrusion of digital technology imposes new practices, both from the point of view of lettering and translation, throughout the creation and production chain.

Comics are migrating from paper to digital media and this evolution brings changes in the narrative, its elaboration, its devices, its formats. Today, we can read comics in homothetic format, they are accessible on e-readers or via ebook reading applications. We can also discover comics in tapable applications, scrolling comics (vertical scrolling and webtoon), or instagrammed stories (treated as thumbnails posted on the social network). The creations can be accessed on online media, on tablets and smartphones, in social networks, or in transmedia devices, i.e. offers of narrative content deployed on several media, each of them proposing not a simple duplication but a specific narrative on each media with different entry points into the story.

The narratives are either linear or interactive, the comics can be animated, take the form of graphic novels, consist of digital narratives without boxes or in turbomedia (a narrative designed natively for the digital format). There are adaptations in the form of video games or podcasts. Narrated comics can be performed in libraries, during literary meetings or even "battles".

In terms of the publishing market, the intrusion of digital technology, in its most basic form - producing a file for multilingual distribution - has also stimulated new practices. Record sales of comic books are stimulating the book market. In 2020, in France, this market will represent 53 million copies purchased (+9%) for a generated turnover of 591M€ (+6%) according to the GFK study. While digital comics only represent 1.5% of the comics market, this share increases every year and has tripled in four years (Sofia Barometer 2017). Audiences are now open to online reading: 1/4 of young comic book readers say they also read digitally and 1/3 of adults. The majority reads on a touch tablet or computer.

With the pandemic, usage has evolved. First of all, as far as uses are concerned, the under 25s started to read more during the two periods of confinement (42%) according to a communication from the

Syndicat national de l'édition on the results of a survey carried out on 10 and 11 December 2020 by the ODOXA Institute. 29% have consumed more ebooks. This progression of reading in digital form is a phenomenon that is not limited to France. Secondly, regarding versioning and translations, in the children's comics sector alone, in 2019, a total of more than 3,623 titles were transferred to foreign publishers, as revealed in the statistical report on key figures for the publishing market 2019-2020 produced by the Syndicat National de l'Edition.

Moreover, the porosity of the creative industries is confirmed. Webtoons are inspiring the cinema for adaptations on the big screen, TV series, video games and paper publishing. Comics already knew how to move from paper to screen: distribution models are evolving, comics inspire video games (Sin City, Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller, 2005) and vice versa, movies adapt albums (Marvel series, *Élève Ducobu*, etc.), the web revisits journalistic reporting (Zero Impunity, Marion Guth) and applications transpose comics (ICI, R. Mc Guire). Practices are evolving rapidly with these new narrative forms that associate comics with novels, films and video games (Florence, Ken Wong, Wes Anderson by Minetaro Mochizuki; Phallaina, *Petit Vampire*, Riad Sattouf adapting Joann Sfar; etc.).

The author of the story sees his status readjusted, the multimodal work, when it passes to the digital format, calls for other functions which all contribute to the writing of a new story: the author's view cohabits with that of the narrative architect who thinks of the interactive form appropriate to mobilize these convergent approaches, as with that of the creators of related forms (image, photo, sound, music, etc.) which develop an original vision of the story. It also implies at the first level the function of the translator. Confronted with the initial work and its digital version, he is the guarantor of the "portability" of the work on new markets accessible without limits via web diffusion but with a necessary rewriting. In any case, the evolution of the comic book market and the increasingly massive diffusion of albums abroad testify to the fact that the position of the translator and the letterer has evolved and this evolution is irreversible. As soon as the album is created, the translator's work and the letterer's intervention are involved. Today, translation and lettering are adapting to new formats and new narrative modes. The author, the developers, the translator and the letterer are part of a collaborative approach.

The strategies of writing, of visual creation, of translation are revisited by the authors who lead from the front a position of creators and a close adherence to the vision of the narrative that they develop or interpret with the installation of invitations to the readers, to the spectators, to the public to participate in the unfolding of the narration. The comic strip lends itself to different interactions with the reader.

Thus, in all the states of the comic strip, from the paper album to the interactive album, the role of the various actors is radically transformed. Everyone participates in an upstream vision of the project. The work can become collective or collaborative, it calls for new skills, an increased capacity for teamwork, a new status of author. New skills are expected and new relationships are established with all the actors involved. We must reinvent our relationship with creation. We have to learn to work in an agile and iterative way, to build together from the beginning and to identify the roles and timing of each person's intervention in the production chain (from ideation to printing/online publishing), on a recurring or occasional basis. It is necessary to integrate a practice of dialogue between the various trades concerned.

Comics will increasingly be seen as a composite work that mobilizes other professions: narrative architect, developer, game designer, sound designer, project manager, community manager. These formats will increasingly require sectorial collaborations and international project development. Networking between creators and creative fields is one of the elements at the heart of the innovation process.

Currently, publishers and booksellers are boosting their digital reading platforms, reinforcing the links with libraries and media libraries where the number of simultaneous loans is exploding. Hundreds of titles are distributed for free. Bookstores are trying to organize themselves to face Amazon and other GAFA. Tomorrow, what will be the fate of authors? How will they live, especially in the comics sector? Their future is not only in the graphic arts, but more broadly in the creative industries, with bridges being created between practices and works to access new audiences, new modes of creation and / or distribution. The training of future professionals requires that they be prepared for these synergies, that they explore the fields of co-creation of collaborative works, that they develop skills in oral and written intercomprehension of languages (Romance languages, for example) and in vehicular languages (such as specialized English).

As far as translation is concerned, available on a computer but also on a cell phone from a simple Internet connection, digital translators facilitate the transmission of information from one language to another in a click. They allow the user to benefit from considerable time savings in that the translation is completed in just a few seconds. These digital machine translation tools (DeepL, Google Translate,

Microsoft's Bing, etc.) work on statistical calculation systems that rely on large databases of texts. They do not translate a text according to its meaning, as a human brain would do, but look for the term that has the most possibilities to be found in the context of the sentence to be translated. In general, this method gives very good results but it still requires human proofreading since mistakes can be (and still are) made.

The strategies implemented to translate a comic strip call, on the one hand, on the bicultural knowledge necessary to understand the original text (Cómitre Narvaéz, 2015), and on the other hand, on the creativity of re-expression (Delisle & Fiola, 2013: 240) or "translational creativity" according to the terminology proposed by Dancette, Audet & Jay-Rayon (2007), for a less invasive adaptation of the text or, conversely, the possibilities of creating new contexts that can only retain the functions of the original text. Starting with onomatopoeia, but not only, comics have always highlighted more than in literature the difficulty of adapting certain linguistic expressions to different cultural contexts.

Comics are characterized by the coexistence and interaction of written text and drawn images, which can be combined in various ways. Therefore, its distinctive feature determining the complexity of the reading of comics and graphic novels comes from the constant tension between the two extremes of the symbolic-iconic continuum represented, on the one hand, by the written text and, on the other, by the images. Alphabetic symbols, even before being interpreted as part of words and sentences, that is, as part of the verbal code, have an iconic value. Words can therefore be used as graphic elements, as is often the case with onomatopoeia and sound representations. In addition, the different types of characters can be associated with particular connotations. Additional elements that should not be overlooked, especially when translating, are lettering and paratext.

Paper session 1 "The challenges of the digital transition for artistic creation"

- How do the evolution of media and the intrusion of multimodal transform the comic book 'product'?
- What are the difficulties of this rapid evolution of the sector (for the different actors)?
- Don't the new uses of comics lead to a loss of artistic meaning?
- Aren't we witnessing the disappearance of the figure of the author?
- What are the impacts of the internationalization of the sector (globalization of tastes, uberization of professions, etc.)?
- Doesn't the explosion of derivative products lead to a reversal of the hierarchical relations with the product of appeal, becoming less profitable, or even secondary to its derivative products?
- What are the possible specificities of the evolution of the comic sector, compared to other creative productions?
- How is a constructive dialogue built between creators/translators and developers?
- What do cosplays say about gender relations and the experiences of disguise/transvestism that they allow?
- Why participate in a cosplay and whose costume (what) do we wear?
- Etc.

Paper Session 2 "Language and Cultural Issues"

- Faced with the fragmentation of skills, how to train / be trained for the comic book professions?
- How to adapt useful skills in real time so that as soon as they are acquired and mastered, their obsolescence is not already programmed?
- How can we anticipate the contours of professions that are being completely revisited?
- How can we model new training paths, evaluate, document and implement the expertise that is essential to their mutation in the graphic arts and comics?
- How to bring comics closer to other creative sectors?
- How can we ensure the transliteration of comics, but also of all their derivative products?
- What is the place of translation, intercomprehension, intercommunication and plurilingualism in the elaboration of collective works?
- How can strategies of intercomprehension and intercommunication be developed in order to liberate creativity?
- For the translation of artistic works, what is the real contribution of translation tools?
- Faced with the explosion of productions, as well as derivative products, how can we scientifically study/analyze comic book corpora?
- Etc.

Session 3: Posters

The organizers are very attached to the role of springboard that this event can and must play. A poster session will therefore be organized in order to provide a space for expression for Master's students and doctoral students, in addition to interested researchers or teacher-researchers.

If the conference is held in person, you must plan an oral presentation of 5 to 10 minutes, for the participants who will present your poster. Posters will be displayed in the coffee break room. The presentation of the works by their authors to the participants of the symposium is planned in the final program of the symposium at each coffee break, i.e. twice a day.

If the conference is organized remotely, a session will be set aside for participants to present their poster in 10 minutes in the form of a commented slide show (PPT).

The theme is free.

Document standards: The contributors are invited to respect the document model proposed by the conference (A0 poster).

The selection criteria for the posters will be mainly the clarity and originality of the proposed contents. The selection of the proposals retained for a poster presentation will be made by the Scientific Committee.

Submission of proposals

A call for papers will be issued in July 2022.

Proposals for papers will be returned to the organizers by email before November 1, 2022.

The selection of the proposals retained for a communication will be made by the Scientific Committee. Notification of acceptance will be sent by email before December 1, 2022.

Return of the poster proposals to the organizers by email, before January 1, 2023.

The selection of the proposals retained for a poster presentation will be made by the Scientific Committee. Notification of acceptance will be sent by email before March 1, 2023.

Registration fees

-Teacher-researcher : 50 euros

-Doctoral student / master student : 15 euros

The registration fees include lunch buffets and coffee breaks.

The publication of the proceedings will be done in collaboration with the University Press of Cluj (Romania), and possibly the University Press of Dumlupinar University (Turkey). The digital version of the proceedings in 4 languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Turkish) will be available online for free on the websites of the laboratories and on the website of the European project <http://comix-digital.eu>.

Scientific Committee (by alphabetical order):

ABROUS Nacira (CNRS Engineer, USR, Berber specialist, MMSH Interdisciplinarity, AMU)

CHARLET-MESJIAN Béatrice (Professor in Neolatin, linguistics and publishing, CAER, AMU)

CORP Mathieu (Lecturer in Contemporary Latin American Visual Arts, CAER, AMU)

CULOMA SAUVA Virginie (Lecturer in Italian Linguistics, CAER, AMU)

DUMAS Juliette (Lecturer in Ottoman History, IREMAM, AMU)

KAYAALTI Mahmut (Lecturer, Erciyes University, Turkey)

LACELLE Nathalie (Professor, Chair of Digital Literacy, UQAM, Canada)

MANCO Alberto (Lecturer in General Linguistics, University of Naples "L'Orientale", Italy)

SAFFI Sophie (Professor of Italian and Romance Linguistics, CAER, AMU)

SEN Mustafa Kemal (Lecturer in English, Dumlupinar University of Kütahya, Turkey)

VELEZ Antonino (Lecturer in French Literature and Translation, University of Palermo, Italy)

Organizing Committee

SAFFI Sophie

DUMAS Juliette

KOYLU BAYDEMIR Saime Evren

ABROUS Nacira
CULOMA SAUVA Virginie
SOUSSE Martine

Coordination and administration : Absa D'AGARO-NDIAYE

Indicative bibliography

- BORODO, M. (2015), 'Multimodality, translation and comics', *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 23(1), pp. 22–41. doi:10.1080/0907676X.2013.876057.
- CHIUSAROLI, F. (2012), « Scrittura brevi oggi: tra convenzione e sistema » in F. Chiusaroli & F. M. Zanzotto (eds), *Scritture brevi*, tome 1, Napoli, Quaderni di Linguistica Zero, 4-44.
- COHN, N. (2021), *Who Understands Comics? Questioning the Universality of Visual Language Comprehension*. London & New York: Bloomsbury.
- COMITRE NARVAEZ, I. (2015), « Traduction et créativité dans la bande dessinée *En route pour le Goncourt* de J.F. Kierzkowski & M. Ephrem » in *Çédille*, 11, 131-154.
- DANCETTE, J., AUDET, L., JAY-RAYON L. (2007), « Axes et critères de la créativité en traduction » in *Meta*, 52 (1), 108-122.
- DELESSE, C., RICHET, B. (2009), *Le coq Gaulois à l'heure Anglaise. Analyse de la traduction anglaise d'Astérix*. Arras: Artois Presses Université.
- DELISLE, J., FIOLA M. A. (2013), *La traduction raisonnée. Manuel d'initiation à la traduction professionnelle de l'anglais vers le français*, 3e éd., Ottawa, Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.
- GERBIER, L. (2012), « Le trait et la lettre. Apologie subjective du lettrage manuel » in *Comicalités*, revue en ligne : <https://journals.openedition.org/comicalites/1202>
- GERBIER, L. (2017), « Lettrage » in *Neuviemeart2.0*, revue en ligne : http://neuviemeart.citebd.org/spip.php?page=imprimer_articulo&id_article=1171
- GROENSTEEN, T. (2021), *Le Bouquin de la bande dessinée*, Paris, Robert Laffont, Bouquins.
- HATFIELD, C. (2005), *Alternative comics: an emerging literature*, Jackson, University Press of Mississippi.
- HULLEY, B. (2020), 'Traducción Con Tijeras: How Fantagraphics' Spanish Fever Cut A New Path In Comics Translation', *The Comics Journal*, 14 May, Available at: <http://www.tcj.com/traducion-con-tijeras-how-fantagraphics-spanish-fever-cut-a-new-path-in-comics-translation/> (Accessed: 16 June 2021).
- KAINDL, K. (2004), 'Multimodality in the translation of humour in comics' in E. Ventola, C. Charles, M. Kaltenbacher (eds) *Perspectives on Multimodality*, Amsterdam & Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 173–192.
- KAINDL, K. (2013), 'Multimodality and Translation' in C. Millán, F. Bartina (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 257–268.
- KRESS, G.R., LEEUWEN, T. van (2001), *Multimodal discourse: the modes and media of contemporary communication*, London/New York, Arnold/Oxford University Press.
- LACELLE, N., BOUTIN, J.-F., LEBRUN, M. (2017), *La littératie médiatique multimodale appliquée en contexte numérique*, Montréal, Presses de l'Université du Québec. Ouvrage non paginé, accessible en ligne : https://books.google.fr/books?id=9W09DwAAQBAJ&pg=PT124&lpg=PT124&dq=Lacelle+%26+al.+2017,+p.+66.&source=bl&ots=blA_44G0VX&sig=ACfU3U2UY1keHn_X4ToWJ6ZASMPB2vw3TQ&hl=fr&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiWyKuXxNnzAhXyx4UKHYD_AxYQ6AF6BAGQEAM#v=onepage&q=Lacelle%20%26%20al.
- LOIRE, M. (2019), « Comic Con Paris : « Le Lettreur a un rôle plus graphique que littéraire », explique Stephan Boschat » in *20minutes.fr*, interview de Stephan Boschat publiée en ligne le 24/09/2019, <https://www.20minutes.fr/arts-stars/culture/2612123-20190924-comic-con-paris-lettreur-role-plus-graphique-litteraire-explique-stephan-boschat>, consulté le 15/10/2021.
- McCLOUD, S. (1994), *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Harper Paperbacks.
- MANCO, A. (2018), "La pertestualità: principi teorici, applicazioni, traduzione" in S. Saffi & C. Teissier, *Cahiers d'Études Romanes*, Aix Marseille Université, 37, 93-103.
- MUELLER, P.S. (1989), *Playing fast and loose with time and space*, New York, Meadowbrook Press.
- SARACENI, M. (2003), *The Language of Comics*, London/New York, Routledge.
- TURGEON, D. (2011), « Le dessin dans l'écriture » in *Du9 l'autre bande dessinée*, <https://www.du9.org/dossier/dessin-dans-l-ecriture-le/>, consulté le 15/10/2021.
- ZANETTIN, F. (1998), 'Fumetti e traduzione multimediale' in *inTRAlinea*, 1. Available at: <http://www.intralea.org/archive/article/1622> (Accessed: 18 June 2021).
- ZANETTIN, F. (2014), 'Visual adaptation in translated comics' in *inTRAlinea*, 16. Available at: <http://www.intralea.org/archive/article/2019>.
- ZANETTIN, F. (2017), 'Translation, censorship and the development of European comics cultures' in *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 26(6), 868–884. doi:10.1080/0907676X.2017.1351456

