

[Comic, Catastrophe, and Conservation: Reflections Beyond the Pandemic](#)

Announcement published by Ananya Saha on Wednesday, January 4, 2023

Type:

Call for Publications

Date:

January 15, 2024

Location:

India

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Literature, Popular Culture Studies, Teaching and Learning

Depictions of apocalyptic (non/alternative) futures have been popular in the comic 'mode' (as McCloud suggests), irrespective of the approach to formalistic manifestation: manga, graphic narratives, visual novels and so on. In the 20th century, wherein humanity has been torn apart by repeated belligerences of modern warfare and violence, doomsday sagas have garnered sustained attention; whether it is MARVEL's 'Apocalypse', or the Herculean 'mecha' robots of anime. The recent pandemic perhaps has fueled the darker side of imagination even further. However, the objective of the proposed volume is not to augment the extant discourse of the cyberpunk-ish, post-apocalyptic dystopia. Rather, it is to focus on the possible constructive purpose which comic narratives can serve during the survivalist aftermath.

Allied to the context, comic and graphic texts have long been recommended for the purpose of publicity and propaganda, owing to their visual appeal. *Captain America* was conceivably a symbol of perseverance against the Nazi atrocities, which gained sustained favor with the audience. Manga has been used by Japan for both military recruitment in the pre-WW II era, and for the cultivation of pro-peace sentiments during the US Occupation period. Contemporary comic creators have often employed their art as a medium to disseminate social, political, and other community-oriented messages related to ecology, health, sanitation and more. In the 1990s, Indian graphic artist Orijit Sen published the volume titled *River of Stories*, intent on representing the challenges faced by a certain indigenous populace, as the construction of a dam upended their regular lifestyle. Studio Ghibli has been creating environmentally conscious tales for decades now, when it comes to cinematic renditions. During the pandemic, Japan has conspicuously resorted to the soft power of manga/anime/allied merchandise for spreading awareness regarding

the necessity of masks, sanitizers, and vaccination. Several webtoon artists have preferred the comic form to talk about anxiety, depression, and other mental ailments, which are often considered unspeakable taboos in certain cultures. For instance, artist Dan Piraro in the series titled *Bizarro Comics* has imagined 'Waldo', the popular character from children's puzzle-game as someone who is not hiding from others, but his own self! Teachers working for different levels of education have actively included comic content in their curriculum, in order to perhaps facilitate better communication with their students in online/offline classrooms.

In the Post- Pandemic era, wherein human race is coping with the aftershock of their physical and mental health being ravaged, it has perhaps become imperative to reflect on the ideas of conservation and sustainable perpetuation. For the proposed volume, critical insights that consider the possible interdisciplinary interfaces in the praxes of comic studies, graphic medicine, ecocritical theories, pedagogical practices, and any other likely critical overlaps, are invited. While one can engage with older texts, contributors are encouraged to work with more recent ones, which have a pertinence to the context of the pre/during/post-pandemic times.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

1. Role of comic in ecology, indigeneity, and diversity preservation.
2. Comic and the apocalyptic aftermath: Towards a solarpunk-ish future.
3. Comic and Therapy: Narratives of suffering and healing.
4. Comic, journalism, and infotainment/edutainment.
5. Comic and the caregivers.
6. Comic and conscious propaganda/publicity.
7. Comic and digital conservation/divide.
8. Comic, classrooms, and alternative pedagogy.

Interested contributors are requested to send the following, no later than **15th March 2023**, to comcatcon2324@gmail.com

1. a working title
2. an abstract of 300-350 words
3. 5-6 keywords
4. a brief bio of not more than 100 words
5. a list of references including 5-6 titles.

Acceptance notifications shall be sent by **15th April 2023**. Further deadlines and

details shall be communicated thereafter. The proposed volume is under primary stages of consideration by a reputed international academic publisher.

For any queries, get in touch at comcatcon2324@gmail.com

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