MON. 7/27 4:00PM — G-2: UNMASKING A MARVEL OF AN IDEA IN D.C.: HOW GRAPHIC LITERATURE CAN BE SUPERTOOLS FOR LAW LIBRARIANS

2009 AALL ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

Date/Time:  Mon, Jul 27 4:00pm - 5:15pm
Location/Room:  WCC-Room 146 C

This program is sponsored by RIPS-SIS and the Gen X/Gen Y Caucus. It is listed here at the speakers’ request for posting handouts (see below).

This program will illustrate how allusions to graphic literature, especially when directly linked with law and/or librarianship, can bridge social and generational gaps, supplement instruction (with shared experiences from the panel), promote library services, support diversity, and foster recruitment to our profession. Today’s law student, young attorney, client or juror often uses pop culture references to define the world. Attention spans are short, learning styles are different, and image is—if not everything—a pretty big thing. With the growing number of successful comic/manga-based movies, television shows and merchandise, the influence that comics have on society is as great as it has ever been. Here’s how law librarians can Bat-Channel the medium to their benefit.

Coordinator and Moderator:
Kerry Skinner - Arizona State University, Ross-Blakley Law Library

Speaker(s):
Arnold Blumberg - Geppi’s Entertainment Museum
W. Robert Farmer - Faulkner University, Jones School of Law Library
Deborah Ginsberg - Chicago-Kent College of Law Library
Hollie White - University of North Carolina

Handouts/Resources
Robert Farmer - Handout
Debbie Ginsberg - Comics and Diversity: a Diigo List
Assorted Law-Related Comic Book Materials

Law-Related Series

**Daredevil** (Marvel Comics): [http://marvel.com/comics/Daredevil](http://marvel.com/comics/Daredevil): This dramatic series features an attorney in a small firm as the lead character, with prominent supporting characters also in the legal field. Courtroom and law office scenes are common, but not the focus of the series.

**Sensational She-Hulk** (Marvel Comics): 1989-1994, [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Sensational_She-Hulk/Covers](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Sensational_She-Hulk/Covers): This humorous series features a lead character as a prosecuting attorney. Supporting characters include her legal secretary (a former golden age hero). Courtroom and law office scenes are common, but not the focus of the series.

**She-Hulk** (Marvel Comics): 2004-2009, [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Category:She-Hulk_Vol_1](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Category:She-Hulk_Vol_1), [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Category:She-Hulk_Vol_2](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Category:She-Hulk_Vol_2): Often lighthearted, but more serious than their predecessor, these series find the lead character moving to a large private firm specializing in superhuman law. Rather than just serving as a background, law is often the focus of the series, and even though fictional, well written and solid. The supporting cast is largely comprised of typical firm employees, including runners, clerks, library paraprofessionals, and secretaries.

**Wolff & Byrd: Supernatural Law** (Exhibit A Press): [http://www.exhibitapress.com/pages/w&b.html](http://www.exhibitapress.com/pages/w&b.html): This humorous series began as a comic strip that once ran in the National Law Journal. The lead characters serve as counsel for vampires, zombies, and similar non-traditional clients, with the legal drama as the primary action.


**Batman: Streets of Gotham** (DC Comics) 2009 - The back-up feature of this new series features the lead from **Manhunter**, [http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/comics/?cm=11871](http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/comics/?cm=11871)

Notable Librarian Characters

**Barbara Gordon/Batgirl/Oracle**: First introduced in the Batman TV show, then later in the comics, she’s (as far as I know) the first law librarian superhero. Using her library & information science degree, computer expertise, and judo training, she fought crime as Batgirl,
ran the Gotham City Public Library, and was even elected to Congress. Upon losing the use of
her legs when shot in the spine by the Joker, she took on the virtual identity of Oracle, in order
to continue her crusade. By gathering electronic information on criminals worldwide and
financing her operations by siphoning their ill gotten gains for, she both shared intelligence with
other heroes, and coordinated her own team, the Birds of Prey.

Yomiko Readman/Agent Paper: Secret agent for the British Library in the Manga/Anime
series Read or Die. She has the power to control paper and fashion it into weapons, shields, and
methods of transportation.

Notable Attorney Characters
Matthew “Hawk” Liebowicz/Two-Gun Kid: Cowboy hero in the Marvel Comics universe, who had
adventures both in the old West, and in the modern era. A successful attorney in the 19th
century, his prior Harvard legal education was not enough to get him admitted to the current

Harvey Dent/ Two-Face: Usually a villain, but sometimes a hero in the DC Comics universe,
he’s a former District Attorney for Gotham City, until suffering mental illness as a result of
disfiguring attack by criminals unhappy with his successful prosecutions. Obsessed with duality,
he often makes decisions by flipping a coin.
http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/heroes_and_villains/?hv=origin_stories/two_face&p=1

Jennifer Walters/She-Hulk: Green and super-strong like her cousin, she’s also a UCLA law
grad admitted to the Marvel Universe bar in both California, and New York. She has experience
in prosecution, criminal defense, corporate law, and civil litigation. Her most recent law firm
specialized in “superhuman law.” http://marvel.com/universe/She-Hulk

Matt Murdock/Daredevil: Visually blind, but possessing other superhuman senses, he maintains
a small private practice in the Marvel Comics universe, in addition to his crime fighting. He’s a
graduate of Columbia University’s law school, and he provides legal representation for much of
Marvel’s superhero community.
http://marvel.com/universe/Daredevil_%28Matthew_Murdock%29

Kate Spencer/Manhunter: As a Los Angeles prosecutor in the DC Comics universe, she became
discouraged by the release of superhuman killers to the street. She raided evidence lockers
for weaponry formerly used by villains and used it to dispense vigilante justice. After a stint as
a defense attorney, she recently relocated to Gotham City and serves as its current District
Paul Johnstone/Shadowhawk: An attorney in the Image Comics universe, he was a prosecutor who was injected with HIV tainted blood by criminals in retaliation for his work. Using a mask and powered armor, he fought crime until eventually succumbing to the disease. 
http://www.valentinocomics.com/shadowhawk.html

Notable Comic Characters in the US Government
Lex Luthor: President of the United States (DC Comics):  
http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/heroes_and_villains/?hv=origin_stories/lex_luthor&p=1  
Well known Superman villain that was elected to the presidency. His cabinet included:
  Amanda Waller: Secretary of Metahuman Affairs; Long-time government employee and expert manager of superhuman covert operations.  
http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/Amanda_Waller_(New_Earth)  
Frank Rock: Head of Joint Chiefs of Staff, he was a decorated WWII hero as the Sergeant in command of Easy Company.  
http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/Sgt._Rock
Jefferson Pierce/Black Lightning:  Secretary of Education, he was a former Olympic athlete, school teacher, and costumed hero.  
http://www.dccomics.com/dcu/heroes_and_villains/?hv=origin_stories/black_lightning&p=1

Pete Ross: President of the United States (DC Comics): Superman’s best friend growing up, he married Lana Lang, was vice-president under Lex, and assumed office when Luthor was forced out.  
http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/Peter_Ross_(New_Earth)

http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/Firehawk

Robert Kelly: United States Senator (Marvel Comics) who introduced the Mutant Registration Act, before changing his views toward anti-mutant prejudices.  
http://marvel.com/universe/Kelly,_Robert

Notable Government Agencies in Comics
S.H.I.E.L.D.: International law enforcement agency in the Marvel Comics universe with strong ties to the federal government.  
http://marvel.com/universe/SHIELD

Department of Extranormal Operations (DEO): Federal agency in the DC Comics universe that monitors and investigates individuals with superhuman powers.  
Bureau for Paranormal Research & Defense (BPRD): Federal agency in the Dark Horse Comics universe that investigates and defends against supernatural threats.
http://www.darkhorse.com/Search/B.P.R.D./

Notable Heads of State in Comics
Arthur Orrin Curry/Aquaman: Leader of Atlantis (DC Comics)
Black Adam: Leader of Kahndaq a fictional middle-eastern country in the DC Comics universe. http://www.dc comics.com/dcu/heroes_and_villains/?hv=origin_stories/black_adam&p=1
Prince Brion Markov/Geo-force: Leader of Markovia, a fictional European country in the DC Comics universe http://www.dcuguide.com/who.php?name=GEOFORCE
Prince Namor the Sub-Mariner: Leader of Atlantis (Marvel Comics).
http://marvel.com/universe/Namor
Prince T’Challa, the Black Panther: Leader of Wakanda, a fictional African nation in the Marvel Universe http://marvel.com/universe/Black_Panther_%28T%27Challa%29
Dr. Victor von Doom: Leader of Latveria, a fictional European country in the Marvel Universe http://marvel.com/universe/Doctor_Doom_%28Victor_von_Doom%29

Notable Legislation in Comics
Superhuman Registration Act: Following a deadly public incident, this US federal legislation was passed in the Marvel Comics universe. It required all persons or non-human legal entities with powers to register with the government, sparking a “Civil War” in the superhuman community, with heroes like Captain America opposing registration and facing off politically and violently with pro-registration heroes like Iron Man. http://www.comicvine.com/super-human-registration-act/12-40639/
50 State Initiative: Arising out of the SHRA in the Marvel Comics universe, this program seeks to place a government sanctioned super-team in every state (previously, most heroes operated out of the New York City area). Inexperienced superhumans must go through “boot camp” training at Camp Hammond, a training facility named for one of the first Marvel heroes, the golden-age Human Torch To date, 25 states have been assigned teams. http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/50-State_Initiative_(Earth-616)

Mutant Registration Act: A pre-cursor to the SHRA in the Marvel universe, this legislation was intended to force mutants (an evolutionary offshoot of humanity born with superhuman powers) to register. Peaceful opposition to the Act was offered by the X-Men, a team of mutant heroes, while the measures were more violently opposed by Magneto and other mutant extremists. http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Superhuman_Registration_Act
Assorted Comics Related Legal Materials

Case Law

Winter v. DC Comics, 69 P.3d 473 (Cal. 2003): Melanin deprived rock stars from the Seventies allege defamation and illegal use of their likenesses in a cowboy horror comic.

Gaiman v. McFarlane, 360 F.3d 644 (7th Cir. 2004): Copyright courtroom battle between two famous comic creators, in which Judge Posner not only defines comic books judicially, but also gives a lengthy and accurate history of the character Spawn.

National Comics Publications v. Fawcett Publications, 191 F.2d 594, 90 U.S.P.Q. 274 (2nd Cir. 1952): Long before they would do so in the comics, Superman and Captain Marvel throw down in court. Will it be UP UP & AWAY or SHAZAM?

Buckler v. Marvel Entertainment, 1992 WL 210101, 1992 US Dist Lexis 12298 (S.D. N.Y.) You may not know about the Marvel Comics cyborg Deathlok, but if you’ve seen the movie Robocop, Mr. Buckler would argue you’d just seen his character.


Siegel v. Time Warner, 496 F.Supp.2d 1111 (C.D. Cal. 2007): This round dealt with the rights to the character, Superboy.

Siegel v. Warner Brothers Entertainment, 542 F. Supp. 2d 1098, (C.D. Cal. 2008): This one dealt with the rights of the heirs to the estate.

Siegel v. Warner Brothers Entertainment, 2009 WL 2014164 (C.D. Cal. 2009): This one from last week dealt with the movie rights and the monetary value of the character. Looks like there’s going to be a Superman movie coming really soon.

Legislation
Laws of New York 1955, Chapter 836: Comic Books - Regulations
New York’s scary answer to the Seduction of the Innocent phase of comics in the 1950s

American Law Reports
Kletter Fern L. First Amendment Protection Afforded to Comic Books, Comic Strips, and Cartoons, 118 ALR 5th 213

Articles

Providing details we’d never have enough time for in one presentation, this article by a fellow law librarian presents a thorough examination of the subject.


http://collectibles.shop.ebay.com/items/Original-Comic-Art/_catref=1&_fn=1&_sacat=3984&_trksid=p3286.c0.m282


**Legal Information in Comic/Graphic Novel Form**
http://www.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics/
A funny and informative comic book, that discusses copyright law basics in plain language. Digital copies are free, and print copies are really cheap.

**National Center for State Courts, Justice Case Files** (Lane Morgan Media: 2008)
*Justice Case File 1: The Case of Internet Piracy *
*Justice Case File 2: The Case of Stolen Identity*

Developed as an introduction to the court system for the lay person and as a teaching tool, these graphic novels illustrate basic aspects of the litigation process. Digital previews are available, and multiple copies can be ordered to share with classes and the general public. Sample lesson plans are also available, to accompany the comics for classroom use.