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Editorial issue 9:1
ABSTRACT

The journal continues to receive a large number of submissions covering comics of all types from many different countries. We welcome the widest possible coverage for the journal, and where there is a distinct topic of interest we attempt to gather work together in a special issue.

The articles in this issue deal with a wide range of material, from some of the most overtly complex work to the apparently simple. The first two articles reflect what the images in the comic and its construction can tell about comics form. Benoit Crucifix's "From loose to boxed fragments and back again: Seriality and archive in Chris Ware's *Building Stories*" looks at one of the most complex experiments in recent comic history - Chris Ware's graphic novel *Building Stories*. Crucifix argues that the materiality of the boxed set addresses a whole range of issues around collecting, archiving and serialisation. Michael J Clarke's "Fluidity of figure and space in Osamu Tezuka's *Ode to Kirihito*" examines how the representation of figures and spaces in this manga highlight, "fluidity and change as essential aesthetic resources in comic books."

The next three articles are connected through the superhero genre. Each examines an aspect of either gender or history. Logan Schell's "The good old days: Kurt Busiek's usage of historicization in 'Old Times'" looks at the three 'ages' of American superhero comics as utilised in Kurt Busiek's 'Old Times', part of Busiek's *Astro City*. Schell examines the way in which the story combines its narrative about an aging superhero with a reflection on the three ages of the superhero genre. Esther De Dauw's "Homonormativity in Marvel's *Young Avengers*: Wiccan and Hulkling's gender performance" questions whether the increased visibility of gay characters challenges the status quo. De Dauw notes how the Hulkling and Wiccan perform stereotypical homosexual gender roles to gain social acceptance. Katherine Allocco's "Could Guinevere ever be a superhero? Depictions of a warrior queen in Camelot 3000 (1982–1985)" examines the Mike Barr and Brian Bolland's influential title's portrayal of Guinevere and concludes that the sexualisation of her body problematises her heroic status.

We have published several articles on Alison Bechdel, for example Michael Rerick's "Queering the museum: challenging heteronormative space in Bechdel's *Fun Home*" in issue 3:2 and Aaron Kashtan's "My mother was a typewriter: *Fun Home* and the importance of materiality in comic studies" in 4:1. Vera Camden's 'Cartoonish lumps': the surface appeal of Alison Bechdel's *Are You My Mother?*" adds to this material by looking at probably Bechdel's second most famous work, *Are You My Mother?*" The article investigates Bechdel's apparently simplistic drawing style. By referencing the work of psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu, Camden argues that the simplicity of the drawings is deceptive, and can be related to medieval images of the human body.

Continuing the medieval theme we feature David A Hall's book review of *Medievalist comics and the American century*, by Chris Bishop and we finish with Mick Howard II's review of Tarol Hunt's digital comic, *Goblins: life through their eyes*. The latter is the first in an occasional series of digital comics reviews. We are interested in seeing more reviews of digital comics as it is a growing area in comics research.

