Visual Depictions of the American West
Le rappresentazioni visive del West americano
How the West Was Drawn and What It Showed Us

www.venicewestconference.com

Time and Location
September 13, 2021 – September 16, 2021
Ca’ Foscari University of Venice
Ca’ Bernardo, Dorsoduro, 3199, 30123 Venice VE, Italy

About the Conference
The American West has been depicted for decades through comic books and graphic novels, including by many authors living outside the U.S. Some of the most famous titles and artists are the Tex Willer series (Tex) by Giovanni Luigi Bonelli and Aurelio Galleppini, Blueberry by Jean-Michel Charlier and Jean Giraud, Bessy and Buffalo Bill, two Flemish titles published through the Belgian Vandersteen publishing company, and Jerry Spring by Joseph Gillain, all published in the decades following World War II. Even Louis L’Amour’s Western novels have been retold through a recent collection entitled Law of the Desert Born. Significantly, more contemporary comic and graphic novel titles and authors, rather than romanticizing the U.S.’s western past, depict the history of its colonization and the use of race as an ideological vector. Notably, Native American graphic novelists and comic book creators are part of this emerging new literary wave, telling stories of history, conflict, resistance, and activism from a perspective that has been long overlooked—and overdue.
This conference stems from the need to explore the various ways the American West has been depicted in comics/graphic novel form across the years and different countries. We want to pay particular attention to comparative approaches that address American (Zane Gray, James Oliver Curwood, Jack London et alii) and European (Emilio Salgari, Luigi Motta et alii) popular literature, which serve as both visual rewriting formulas and forms of neuro-narratological itinerary. We will take into particular consideration projects that explore the intersection between heterogeneous languages, or between cinema/audiovisual works and popular/auteur comics, as a means of recoding the Western genre. In particular, we invite scholars to offer special attention to rewritings, to parodies and satirical representations, as well as to Latin American production (from the Cangaçeiros to Alejandro Jodorowsky’s *El Topo* and beyond). Finally, given the U.S.’s recent policies with regard to immigrants at its southern borders, we find titles such as Duncan Tonatiuh’s *Undocumented: A Worker’s Fight* or Alberto Ledesma’s *Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer* to be especially relevant.

In sum, we welcome presentations that explore topics such as, but are not limited to:

- the significance of landscapes versus borders;
- open sky versus fences;
- Westward expansion, the imposition on native populations and the institution of reservations;
- the role of commerce and industry in socio-political conflicts or with regard to environmental and wildlife issues;
- bilateral challenges to stereotypes, with particular attention to those related to non-white peoples;
- intersemiotic translations and adaptations of West stories;
- translated, adapted and transcreated stories;
- epic and traditional stories;
- fictionalized stories of historical people;
- comics and audiovisual Western stories in the world; and
- Western schemes in alternative times and geographical spaces (eg. Austral Africa, Australia, Siberia, South Italy).
**Proposals Submission**
The official programme will include **panels/seminars of one or two sessions of 90 minutes each**. We recommend 4 papers per session (panels/seminars of fewer than 3 and more than 5 presentations per session are not permitted) to allow sufficient time for discussion.

Panel and paper proposals of up to **2000 characters including spaces** (around 350 words) must be sent to the e-mail address venicewestconference@gmail.com by **Friday 2 October 2020 at 11:59 pm CET**. Panel organizers will indicate name, e-mail address and eventual affiliation of all the organizers.

Seminar organizers are encouraged to include the list of speakers and relevant interventions in their proposal. If a proposed seminar does not contain the minimum number of three contributions per session, the Scientific Committee reserves the possibility to integrate it with paper proposals submitted individually.

The publication of the list of seminars and papers admitted on the conference website www.venicewestconference.com is scheduled for **Monday 2 November 2020**.

Seminar and paper proposals must be written in one of the official languages of the conference, which are **English**, **Italian**, **Spanish** and **French**.

**Registration**
Registration for the conference will be open to admitted participants starting from **Monday 19 April 2021** and will take place according to the schedule and fees indicated below:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Early bird (by 31 May 2021)</th>
<th>Late registration (by 2 August 2021)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regular registration</td>
<td>EUR 100</td>
<td>EUR 130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced registration*</td>
<td>EUR 70</td>
<td>EUR 90</td>
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*Reserved to non-faculty members, graduate students, accompanying persons, retired academics and independent scholars.

The registration procedures will be announced by **April 19, 2021**.
**Event Organizers**

*Visual Depictions of the American West* is an international conference hosted by the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies - Ca' Foscari University of Venice, organized by Laboratorio per lo Studio Letterario del Fumetto/Laboratory for the Literary Study of Comics (Director: Alessandro Scarsella; Coordinator: Alice Favaro) and the ICLA Research Committee on Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative (Designated Board Member: Angelo Piepoli)

Organizing Committee: Giulia Anzanel, Elisa Bordin, Alice Favaro, Nicola Paladin, Angelo Piepoli

Scientific Committee: Daniela Ciani, Valerio Massimo De Angelis, Lisa DeTora, Simone Francescato, Noriko Hiraishi, Fiorenzo Iuliano, Tracy Lassiter, Kai Mikkonen, Stefano Tani, Takayuki Yokota-Murakami

Conference Coordinator: Alessandro Scarsella